

Personal tales of addiction challenge families



Tears roll down the cheeks of Lloyd Rock, a survivor of addiction, as he talks of the effects on his family Friday in Merrillville. (Mark Davis / Post-Tribune)

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Post-Tribune

FEBRUARY 24, 2017, 4:34 PM

At 61, Lloyd Rock is still working at pulling his life together.

Rock spoke initially through tears Friday of how his 35-year battle with drug addiction affected his family, including five sons, three daughters and various grandchildren.

"It affected me in the worst way," said Rock, of Gary. "I wasn't a father. I wasn't a son."

Rock was part of a panel discussion in Merrillville examining the multi-generational effect of drug and alcohol addiction on families and their role as a support system to struggling and recovering addicts.

Now nearly a decade in recovery, he said he has mended relationships and is motivated to stay sober to be an example to his grandchildren.

"All I can do is stay clean, so (they) can see it's possible," he said.

The Indiana Parenting Institute event included Deb Werner, a senior program manager with the federal agency Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Porter County Sheriff David Reynolds, Heartland Recovery founder David Lee and Rock.

Lee and Rock both spoke openly on how their addictions had affected their families.

Lee said he lived dual lives in high school. Once president of the student council, he ended up being arrested by the school's Officer

Friendly while battling a heroin addiction, he said.

Now 46, he partly credited his mother, who once turned to the back of an insurance card to find a facility where he could fight his addiction.

It would be the first of 25 times he entered a treatment center before getting sober, he said.

"She didn't know what to do," Lee said.

When he celebrates the annual anniversary of his sobriety on May 1, he might get noticed on Facebook, but "nobody is going to call my mom," he said.

She tried "10 times harder than I ever did to get (me) clean and sober," Lee said.

Reynolds spoke how drug addiction, namely heroin addiction, has become "our No. 1 problem in our jails."

A total of 120 of 420 Porter County Jail inmates are currently being treated for addiction, Reynolds said.

Last year, Porter County had 74 substance abuse overdoses and 13 deaths, Reynolds said. To date, this year it had 13 overdoses and three deaths, he said.

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