

Shattered Dreams: Bound by Addiction

DR. RONALD FRENCH SURVIVED A 20-YEAR ADDICTION; NOW HE'S DEDICATED TO HELPING OTHER DCS DO THE SAME.

"Success in life is the result of good judgment. Good judgment is usually the result of experience. Experience is usually the result of bad judgment." We are chiropractors helping chiropractors.

My name is Ronald M. French. I graduated from Cleveland Chiropractic College in the year 2000. I had a drug and alcohol [addiction](#) that spanned over 20 years and have seen how profoundly it can impact your career and life. I hit rock bottom and finally got help in August 2009. In August 2010, I had a year of sobriety and a 12-step study under my belt. I felt I'd received a special gift; the gift of sobriety. The clarity and shifts in my life during that time led me to want to give back and help others with similar problems.

To be able to share my pitfalls and embrace them for the stumbling blocks they were gives me an overwhelming feeling that I can overcome anything. The confidence gained from recognizing I now hold the power drugs and alcohol used to hold over me is one of the most satisfying and exhilarating feelings I have ever had. And it's a feeling I hope can be shared by others who may have fallen victim to drug and alcohol abuse, but can recognize early enough the inevitable path of destruction that will follow should it continue.



Until my recovery program I did not realize such a powerful resource and support system existed. I simply thought that these programs were a waste of time. The truth is drugs provided an empty, surface-level feeling of instant gratification; a feeling I held on to for 20 years. The recovery program helped me to go deeper into myself and realize my choices stemmed from deep-seated issues with myself. Everyone has their reasons, conscious or subconscious, and without judgment this program allowed me a forum to do the work to better myself. It takes some time, but can help make the positive shifts that last a lifetime, unlike the quick fix that lasts only until the next hit.

My own process of recovery and the realizations that stemmed from it led to the development of my nonprofit Web site (<http://4dchelp.frenchfamilychiropractic.com>), a drug and alcohol rehabilitation information hotline and Web hub established in September 2010. The site serves as a collaborative community of support to combat the growing dangers of drug and alcohol abuse within the chiropractic profession. The goal is to connect to people like myself who have let drug and alcohol abuse control, overrun and ultimately redirect their potential and the bright futures they were destined to create.

Some of you might be thinking, "I don't abuse drugs, I just occasionally use them." You might have a rationale for using them, such as a means of relaxation in the evening or taking the edge off after a busy day with patients. These were all reasons *I had* for validating my drug use, but in the government's eyes, these are all reasons to convict you, put you in prison and have your professional license revoked; your career shattered.

Substance abuse can and will eventually turn into legal problems, resulting in violations. The consequences to the DC include legal burdens, financial ramifications, loss of reputation and business, family difficulties and criminal penalties. (Malpractice generally does not cover violations of misconduct, leaving the practitioner to bear all financial burdens.) If your abuse carries into the workplace, it can also affect your patients by causing psychological damage, feelings of vulnerability, fear and mistrust, as well as possible physical pain / damage, financial loss and ultimately failure to seek chiropractic treatment in the future.

There are unusual challenges and unique considerations when a doctor has an addiction. If you are a physician who has addiction issues, you may be worried about admitting this problem. A doctor struggling with addiction worries about losing the ability to practice in their chosen field, and risks the reputation of their practice. Many times a typical rehabilitation program will not work, for a number of reasons. Doctors struggling with addiction require complete privacy and discretion, and this cannot be found in a rehab program that has numerous patients from all walks of life and criminal backgrounds.

Fortunately, there are alternatives to the average rehabilitation facilities: "impaired professional programs." Our site provides information regarding these facilities and assistance to get you to the best facility to fit your personal needs. Our goals are to:

- Promote early awareness and rehabilitation of the substance-impaired chiropractor.
- Assist substance-impaired chiropractors in their recovery process by guiding them toward proper treatment through the 4DCHelp hotline and Web site.
- Increase awareness of substance abuse issues through education, warning signs and examples.
- Protect both the public's welfare and the chiropractic profession's reputation.
- Ultimately, to avoid the consequences that are inevitable with substance-abuse issues.

My reason for creating this Web site is not only to share my own story of lifestyle choices and what can happen, but also to show that an alternative positive reality exists. If this resource can serve as a conduit for even one person making a choice to live in sobriety and reach for help, then my life of mistakes will have served a purpose.

It took me hitting rock bottom to recognize how drugs affected me and those around me, and I say can with passion and conviction that my life of sobriety carries renewed purpose. According to Tony Robbins, "Success in life is the result of good judgment. Good judgment is usually the result of experience. Experience is usually the result of bad judgment." Unfortunately, drugs and bad judgment correlate, keeping us in the vicious cycle of wrong choices. The end result, more often than not, is paying the ultimate price with our lives by self-inflicting bad experiences and never sharing in the positive success that life can and will offer you if you let it.

Please let us help before it's too late. We can be contacted on the 4DCHelp hotline at (720) 4DC-HLP8; our e-mail address is 4DCHelp@frenchfamilychiropractic.com. We offer personal counseling, as well as public lectures on business and ethics. You can "like" us on Facebook on our Web site to help us get the word out.

OCTOBER 2012