The Forgotten Epidemic

Ten years ago, the CDC declared the United States had an opioid epidemic but the COVID-19 Pandemic has drawn our attention away from the opioid crisis. On this podcast, we discuss the opioid crisis with Samantha Osterlof a Community Outreach Coordinator at Promises Behavioral Health. She has a Master of Science with a focus on Criminal Justice and Behavior Management and serves as an Adjunct Professor at Lebanon Valley College as well as Berks Technical Institute.

While her professional and academic credentials are impressive, Samantha has also been in long term recovery for substance use disorder giving her a unique perspective on the current state of our crisis. Samantha was hospitalized at the age of 22 as an infection spread to her heart due to intravenous drug use. Placed on a ventilator, she was given a 10% chance to live, but this was still not enough to stop her drug use.

However, with the help of her family and the kindness of one police officer on Christmas Eve, Samantha started her journey of recovery and a lifetime of helping others. Now she helps others suffering with SUD as well as training law enforcement and healthcare providers.

Samantha’s story is compelling and poignant. We discuss not only her recovery, but the current state of the opioid crisis faced, the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on those suffering with SUD and the looming shadow of a possible third epidemic, a mental health crisis.