

BEEN

THERE

Teens In

RECOVERY

tell IT like IT is



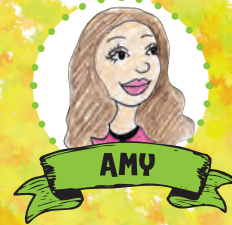
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life's waiting®

“Been There: Teens in recovery tell it like it is”
resulted from discussion with residents of
Rosecrance Recovery Homes.
The girls live at Marlowe House,
and the boys live at Hillman House.

Illustrations by Christine Nicholson,
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Meet The experts



HAVE YOU EVER SAID...

**"Everybody my age
experiments with drugs.
It's normal."**



Tony: A lot of kids experiment with it, but how many kids can actually stop? It becomes a problem, really. It's not just an experiment; you're chasing after something.

Josh: When I started experimenting with drugs, it just started to create more problems. If you were really able to do it, you wouldn't be hiding it and trying to get away with it.



Kevin: Most of us start off using it as fun and just experimenting, and then it controls you.



Gabby: It may be normal now, but it's not going to let you grow into the person you want to be in the future. You're just cheating yourself.



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Kevin: I've said those exact words a thousand times and would even tell myself and convince myself that I could control it and then try to stop. And then in the next few hours, I was getting high.


"I can stop any time I want."

Josh: I remember knowing I needed to stop, and then I would still end up getting high. I would still go out of my way to get high and do whatever I could, insane things, to try and pass my drug tests.


Darci:
If somebody said that to me now, I would tell them my experience because I know that it's really hard to stop. It's really hard not to crave that high.

Shannon:
I always told everybody that I could stop whenever I wanted to, I just didn't want to. And I don't think I ever did want to on my own until it got really bad, and then I wanted to stop but couldn't.


**"Doctors can prescribe weed and pills,
so they're no big deal."**




Kevin: I used to take pills from my grandma. They prescribe the drugs for a reason. They're not meant to be abused.



Gabby: I took my stepmom's medication, her Ambien, because she has sleep issues. I also took another one of her prescribed pills, and it was something that was really, really bad for my health. I got caught with it at school, and I got arrested.



Trevor: You have no idea who's losing out because you're getting those pills. I've stolen my mom's pain medication a week after she got out of the hospital for surgery.



Karen: It was easy to get because my mom got prescribed Vicodin. When she wasn't in her room, I would go in and take a handful.

"I only drink or use on weekends."

Casey:

I can remember saying that all the time. And at first it started off like that, smoking and drinking on the weekends, but then I started smoking every day: going to school high, smoking in the house, smoking before practice. Smoking every day, all day.

Trevor:

The first time I got high, I got high the next day and then the next day and then for four months straight. It got to the point eventually where I smoked weed and drank all week just to maintain to get to the weekends just so I could do the harder drugs.

Gabby:

When I say I partied on the weekend, that meant I partied every hour and drank; I never drew one sober breath that whole weekend. Once the stuff hit my lips, I lost all control. And Monday through Friday just became drinking to survive until the weekend.

**"If I smoke or drink a little,
it doesn't mean I'll end up
using harder drugs."**

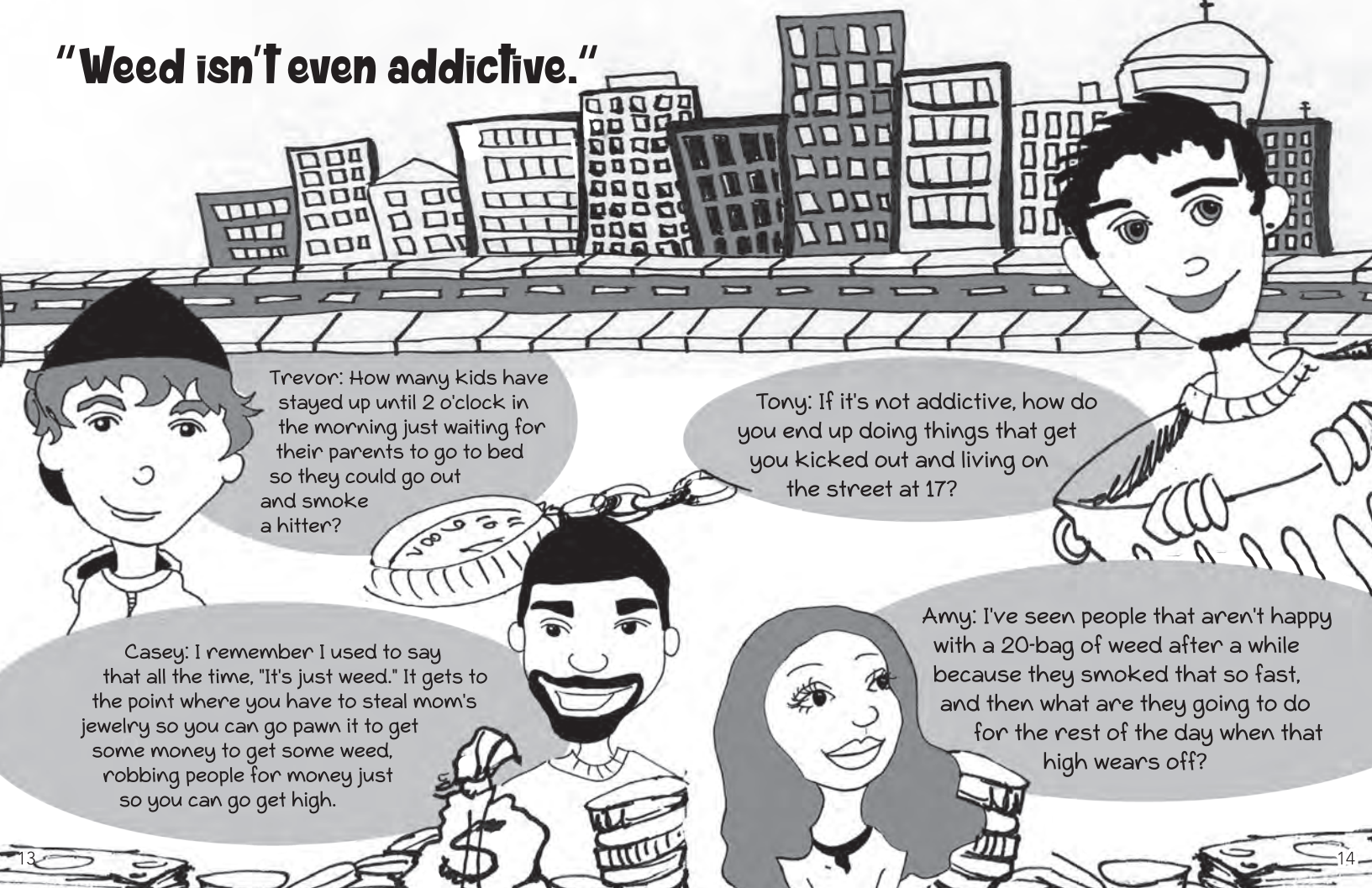
Shannon: I think we all said that and we all did.

Tony: You can only get so high for so long. After a while, you're going to start chasing a new high. One blunt becomes two blunts becomes three blunts becomes Xanax. That's how it was for me.

Casey: I remember I used to say that a lot, like "I just smoke pot." And then I remember my friend said, "How about we sprinkle some of this in our weed?" And then after that, we just started smoking PCP all the time. It's just like that.

Darci: You're going to start chasing a different high, and you're going to think it's 10 times better than weed because it's so different to you, but it's going to lead you to an addiction if you keep using.

"Weed isn't even addictive."



Trevor: How many kids have stayed up until 2 o'clock in the morning just waiting for their parents to go to bed so they could go out and smoke a hitter?

Tony: If it's not addictive, how do you end up doing things that get you kicked out and living on the street at 17?

Casey: I remember I used to say that all the time, "It's just weed." It gets to the point where you have to steal mom's jewelry so you can go pawn it to get some money to get some weed, robbing people for money just so you can go get high.

Amy: I've seen people that aren't happy with a 20-bag of weed after a while because they smoked that so fast, and then what are they going to do for the rest of the day when that high wears off?

"If pills can help you get good grades, lose weight and do better at sports, what's wrong with that?"

Tony: If you think staying up for 72 hours at a time will help you get better grades in school, then you're sadly mistaken. There's only so much Adderall you can take to pass a test. I was a three-sport athlete and had a 3.2 GPA in high school and I had D-3 scholarships, and no pill helped me get that. If anything, I started doing the pills, and it shot all that away.

Amy: For some people, it does help them because they need it. But for other people, it has the opposite effect. I would end up stealing it from my boyfriend's little brother at the time, and he needed it, you know. You're doing addictive behaviors to get it, to use it.

Gabby: I'd say it's so much fun to be strung out at soccer practice and feel like you're going to have a heart attack from taking so many uppers. It's freakin' amazing to be taking a test and be so antsy that the words are shaky and my hands are going numb so that I can't even finish a test.

**"I'm not an addict.
I don't live in a crack house."**

Tony: I lived in a four-story house in one of the richest neighborhoods. I was a three-star athlete and could have gone to a lot of different colleges, and I'm still an addict. I wear nice clothes, and I'm still an addict. It doesn't matter race, age, gender, anything.

Casey: An addict isn't just someone who lives under a bridge. I remember I used to wait until 3 o'clock in the morning so my mom would go to sleep, and I would steal her car to go get weed. It's addiction. It doesn't care who you are: rich or poor.

Shannon: You're hurting more than just yourself.

Trevor: It'll chew you up, spit you out and then ask you for some more.

**"If I don't use drugs or drink alcohol,
everybody's going to think I'm lame."**



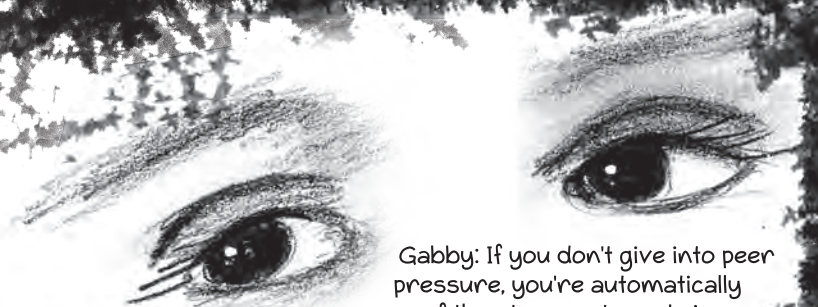
Tony: I've been to jail
two times. I'm a two-
time convicted felon.

No one wants to be
friends with a kid who's
a felon. I was in the popular
crowd at school. And now I have
no friends from back home.

No one wants to be friends with
someone who's been to jail or steals
from his parents. If that's what you
think will get you friends, it's not.



Amy: I moved to a bunch of different high schools,
and that's when my addiction progressed. When
you're so new and those are the only people who
welcome you, you wonder how else am I supposed to
fit into this new school. I don't know anyone. So that's
really hard because you don't want to be a loner.



Gabby: If you don't give into peer
pressure, you're automatically
one of the strongest people in
my eyes because I wasn't strong
enough to say no, and it ruined my life.

BTW



Josh: If you were to hand out this booklet to students after an assembly or something, how many of them would actually keep it and not throw it away without even looking at it?



Tony: ... and shares it with someone, you know. We ask you to at least take a look at this and think about it. Don't throw it away. Pass it along to someone else who needs it.



Kevin: Hear what we say, not just because we're young, but because we've been there.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. We hope what you read at least made you think.

Maybe you can relate to our stories, or maybe not. We never thought we'd end up in treatment for using drugs and alcohol, but here we are. Now, we just want to help somebody else.

The next step is up to you. Deciding not to use, seeking treatment for addiction or encouraging someone else to quit can be scary. Making those choices requires strength and courage.

If you need help or if you are worried about a friend, we hope you will do something. Talk it over with a trusted friend or go to a family member, coach, teacher, guidance counselor or pastor.

And remember:
You're not alone.



you're
not
the only
one



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