



Learn English Through Stories

G Series

G7

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1. Youth Drug Abuse

Youth drug abuse is a growing concern that can have negative effects on individuals, families, and communities. In order to address this issue effectively, it is necessary to understand the possible causes and identify **strategies** to control it.

One possible cause of youth drug abuse is peer pressure. **Adolescents** often face social pressure to conform to the behaviours of their peers, and drug use is no exception. Young people may feel compelled to experiment with drugs in order to fit in with their peers or to appear more mature. This can lead to a cycle of drug use and abuse that can be difficult to break.

Another possible cause of youth drug abuse is a lack of parental involvement or supervision. Children and adolescents who do not receive adequate attention and guidance from their parents may be more likely to experiment with drugs. In addition, parents who use drugs themselves may be more likely to pass on this behaviour to their children.

To control youth drug abuse, a **multifaceted** approach is needed. Education and prevention programs can help young people understand the risks associated with drug use and provide them with alternative coping strategies. This can be done through school programs, community outreach, and social media campaigns. Treatment programs, such as counselling and therapy, can help young people who are struggling with drug abuse to overcome their addiction. In addition, law enforcement agencies can play an important role in controlling youth drug abuse. By cracking down on drug dealers and distributors, law enforcement agencies can help to disrupt the supply chain of drugs and make it more difficult for young people to obtain them.

Education: listen to the stories of people who had been through a hellish journey of addiction.

Vocabulary

1. **Strategy:** a detailed plan for achieving success;
2. **Adolescents:** a young person who is developing into an adult;
3. **Multifaceted:** having many different parts or sides.

2. This is My Story

My Name is Aidan and I am A Drug Addict.

I am 25 years old. I spent some of my childhood in Belfast, Ireland. I also spent some of my childhood in Edmonton, Canada.

At age 14, I was smoking marijuana and tobacco daily, multiple times a day. Smoking marijuana helped me forget who I was, the feeling of getting out of my own skin was amazing. Since that first hit, I loved it. I knew then, I am able to get out of myself and I can use this substance to change how I feel, or not feel at all. That's exactly what I wanted at that point in my life.

At age 15, I was smoking marijuana any moment I could and soon found out that everyone around me was drinking alcohol so I thought I would try it. I thought, "My parents and siblings drink, so it couldn't be that bad." I drank so much that first time that I got very sick. Truth is I didn't like drinking but it was socially acceptable, so I drank as much as I could. I couldn't seem to get enough. My drinking and using marijuana continued for two years.

At age 17, I began to wonder, I began to realize I was not good at school or sports, so what am I going to do with my life? I was hanging around with the wrong people who told me that I didn't need school and all I needed was them, and it will be all right. I believed them. I was looking for something to belong to, and I felt at home.

I said yes and used cocaine for the first time. It didn't faze me and I began using cocaine at school and eventually got enough so that I could make some extra cash. One of my mistakes was bringing this substance to school to sell to my classmates. I was very 'successful' but the principal caught on and cut a long story short, I got kicked out of school. My family was furious. I continued my schooling at home and did quite well. My family thought it was all over there. But it did not change who I was spending my time with. It did not change my relationship with drugs and alcohol.

From what I remember, it was to be 'cool' to fit in with a certain crowd. As far as I could remember I did not fit in with anyone and wanted to be a part of something. I just wanted people to enjoy my presence and to like who I was, but to tell you the truth, I didn't know who I was and I didn't like myself. I felt worthless from a young age and that developed into an even lower level of self-esteem as a teenager.

A few years went by, which were the most eye-opening years of my life, now that I look back at them.

It was a 'Brown sugar'. That brown substance was heroin. Something that I had never felt before in my life. I had never felt so lost in my mind. It was amazing. I was hooked. I loved it.

At this point, I am in my 20's and didn't drink, didn't smoke marijuana, didn't use cocaine anymore. I was using strictly heroin, that substance I was so curious about.

What I thought was heroin, turned out to be a substance called fentanyl. Something I didn't know about. I loved it, I couldn't feel worthless, I couldn't feel in pain, and I felt loved, not by people but by this substance. This was the sickest and most toxic relationship I have ever experienced in my life. I was addicted since day one. Since that first time, I smoked a joint. But I thought this was life. This is the way to live. This was the connection I had longed for. Nothing stood in between myself and the relationship.

I was lonely. I lost everything including an amazing career and lifelong friends. I burnt those bridges. I didn't mean to.

Even before we were born, my twin brother, Ciarin, and I were inseparable. It's hard to describe the bond of siblings, as many of you will know, but it's probably even harder to really understand the connection between two people who've shared a womb together, at the same time, and took almost every breath of life not more than a few metres from each other. But the only way I can put it is that, my twin was my other half.

Ciarin and I found ourselves, without really understanding how or why, addicted to opiates among other things. We hid our addiction well from our family. But things got bad really fast. Ciarin and I began to not get along so much, even though we lived together, worked together, partied together and even used drugs together. We still kept our secrets and nobody seemed to know what was going on with us.

Then, on November 25, 2013, he and I talked. We made up after a period of not being together. We told each other that we loved each other and hugged. He did his drug test that day at work. On the morning of November 26, 2013, I noticed his truck was still in the driveway, and I went to get him out of bed.

I found Ciarin had passed away at some time during the night. He overdosed on fentanyl. It was the moment my life changed forever.

We had done everything right. We worked hard. We loved and were loved by our families. We were young with everything ahead of us. But Ciarin didn't make it. And I did.

If that wasn't hard enough, it's crazy to know that I still used it for a month after finding out my twin brother died from an overdose of fentanyl. That's how hard this thing is. It wasn't easy to take the first step, even after that. Don't ever underestimate the power of addiction.

But I went to treatment at Cedars at Cobble Hill and began my life of recovery on January 5th, 2014. I have been clean and sober ever since. And every day I live and am clean because of the strength I have been given by my brother, my family and an amazing network of people around me supporting my recovery: for some, it is also their recovery. Ciarin is still my other half, though he is not physically with me; he is guiding me on my path through life: clean, conscious and coming to terms with the darkness of my grief, loss and sadness.

I lost him, and I may never know why. I only understand what his loss compels me to do: to choose life, every day; to live for myself and the people I love; to help others so that they might not be faced with the same fate. Addiction and recovery involve everyone they touch. My family has undergone major transformations: some positive, some not so positive, but with each change, a consequence of dealing with and moving beyond addiction and toward a more conscious life path.

Drugs didn't do this to us; addiction did. That is what we have to overcome, because there will always be drugs no matter what. Even if drugs were eradicated, there would be something else feeding addiction. We must deal with and think beyond addiction.

When Ciarin passed away that was the deciding point in going to treatment for addiction. My decision changed my life for the better, I got help with that problem. That's not to say that I am perfect. I do absolutely have problems. Being at Cedars helped me realize quickly that it wasn't so much the drugs but my behaviours as well. I found out through my family history that I was wired an addict since the day I was born. But now I can deal with that. I have the tools to be all right with myself. I love myself today. I love who I can be and who I am. I learnt that it is okay to be who I was. I'm proud of who I am today. Thanks to a 12-Step program I can work through all of the behaviours and catch myself before I act out on them.

The program I am in today helps me actually feel my feelings and I am constantly reminded of the fact that my feelings will not kill me. The program gives me meaning today, it helps me move forward in life. The 12-Steps are amazing tools for myself and others to work on throughout my life.

I thought that I had been through it all but I was mistaken. When I thought all was well, tragedy hit my life again...

Once again, I lost the closest person to me, my best friend. In January 2016, my best friend overdosed and passed away. He was the person who understood me, who understood what exactly I was going through with my brother. He was always there for me, always. Now I have lost two extremely important people in my life.

I got through it clean and sober. All thanks to my recovery and the 12-Step program. Being in a 12-Step program gave me the tools to get through the tragedy. I sit here today writing the story of my life, grateful for being alive, for being able to live again. I am not here to say that it was easy, because it is extremely difficult to keep going, without my twin brother Ciarin and my best friend Matt. I know that they would both want me to be happy and continue on in my recovery.

Ciarin and Matt are with all of us. They are here with me now, giving me the courage to talk to all of you, to courageously share my story and to encourage others to feel compassion for people like us, people who love and are loved and who need your solidarity to overcome this powerful thing called addiction. I am finding ways to complete myself, to compensate for the loss of my other half; as well as my best friend and I will get there if it takes a lifetime: because I am worth it. Life is Valuable and Deserves Happiness.

We appreciate all the support we get, even if it doesn't seem like we do.

Vocabulary

1. Marijuana: a drug, **illegal in many countries**, that is made from the dried leaves and flowers of the hemp (Bhang) plant. Marijuana produces a pleasant feeling of being relaxed if smoked or eaten. Repeated use may lead to psychological dependency. Other side effects are cognitive (mental) impairment, anxiety, and paranoia (confusion). Other names for marijuana are cannabis, pot, etc.

2. Heroin: a powerful **illegal drug** made from morphine, that some people take for pleasure and can become addicted.

Heroin is derived from morphine. Morphine is derived from opium. Opium is derived from the poppy.

3. Cocaine: a drug used in medicine to prevent pain and also used **illegally**, often in the form of a white powder that is breathed in through the nose. Other names for cocaine are coke, crack, etc. This drug has many very serious side effects: heart disease, lung damage, etc.

4. Overdose: too much of a drug taken at one time, so that it is very dangerous.



Hemp plant

3. Grammar Page

Unit
7

Present perfect 1 (I have done)

A Study this example situation:



Tom can't find his key.

He's **lost** his key. (= He **has lost** ...)

he **has lost** his key =

he lost it and he doesn't have it now

have lost / has lost is the *present perfect simple*:

I/we/they/you	have (= I've etc.)	finished
		lost
he/she/it	has (= he's etc.)	done
		been etc.

The present perfect simple is **have/has + past participle**. The past participle often ends in **-ed** (**finished/decided** etc.), but many verbs are *irregular* (**lost/done/written** etc.).

For a list of irregular verbs, see Appendix 1.

B When we say 'something **has happened**', this is usually new information:

- Ow! I've **cut** my finger.
- The road is closed. There's **been** an accident. (= There **has been** ...)
- Police **have arrested** two men in connection with the robbery.

When we use the present perfect, there is a connection with *now*. The action in the past has a result *now*:

- Tom **has lost** his key. (= he doesn't have it *now*)
- He told me his name, but I've **forgotten** it. (= I can't remember it *now*)
- Sally is still here. She **hasn't gone** out. (= she is here *now*)
- I can't find my bag. **Have you seen** it? (= do you know where it is *now*?)

Compare **gone (to)** and **been (to)**:

- James is on holiday. He **has gone to** Italy. (= he is there now or on his way there)
- Amy is back home now. She **has been to** Italy. (= she has now come back)

C You can use the present perfect with **just, already** and **yet**.

Just = a short time ago:

- 'Are you hungry?' 'No, I've **just had** lunch.'
- Hello. **Have you just arrived**?

Already = sooner than expected:

- 'Don't forget to pay the bill.' 'I've **already paid** it.'
- 'What time is Mark leaving?' 'He's **already left**.'

Yet = until now. We use **yet** to show that we are expecting something to happen.

We use **yet** in questions and negative sentences:

- Has it stopped** raining **yet**?
- I've written the email, but I **haven't sent** it **yet**.

D You can also use the past simple (**did, went, had** etc.) in the examples on this page. So you can say:

- Ben isn't here. He's **gone** out. *or* He **went** out.
- 'Are you hungry?' 'No, I've **just had** lunch.' *or* 'No, I **just had** lunch.'