

2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress on

**ADVANCES IN ADDICTION SCIENCE AND MEDICINE**

&  
10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on

**DEMENTIA AND DEMENTIA CARE**

July 24-25, 2019 | Rome, Italy



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### **Parents as resources for recovery: A view from the trenches**

Drug addiction has long been shrouded in stigma, supported by a prevailing negative profile of the user. In recent years thousands of people in recovery have shared their personal stories to help change that profile and reduce the stigma surrounding addiction. Yet stigma is attached not only to the individual user, but to his or her family as well. While there has been general agreement that addiction impacts all levels of society and that there is no “cookie cutter” approach to treatment for the user, there seems to be a reluctance to recognizing that dynamics within families also varies widely. The view that parents are enablers and that dysfunction within the family lies at the heart of addiction often is an impediment rather than an enhancement to treatment. Just as the challenges for treatment providers have changed over the years, models of treatment and perception need to change to adapt to the shifting landscape of drug usage.

Research indicates that family support contributes to positive treatment outcome and yet families continue to be ostracized from treatment and in some cases blamed for their child’s drug use. Just as we need to meet the user where is his recovery process, we also need to recognize the complex challenges faced by families trying to help a loved one on the pathway to recovery. Parents have much to contribute to the treatment process and should be viewed as resources, not as stumbling blocks to effective treatment.

#### **Biography**

Lynda Hacker Araoz has a master’s degree in both Clinical Social Work and English Literature and has worked as a Prevention Coordinator, adolescent/family therapist, Director of Support Services and faculty member at several colleges. She is also the author of **The Weight of a Feather: A Mother’s Journey through the Opiate Addiction Crisis**, released by Morgan James Publishing in November 2018. In her book, she vividly describes the impact of her son’s addiction on other family members as well as the trials along his road to recovery. She is currently a member of Friends of Recovery-NY, the Board of Directors of Columbia County Pathways to Recovery, CCPR help-line staff for parents and others looking for treatment options and college faculty at HVCC.

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