



When Addiction and Motherhood Collide

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Losing Lia: A Mother's Story of Addiction and Loss

Mothers, drug use and the law



CAPTA - Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act

- ▶ The key Federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect, enacted in 1974
- ▶ Provides federal funding to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution and treatment activities
- ▶ In order to receive this funding, states must require health care providers to notify child protective services when a provider cares for an infant affected by illegal substance abuse

ASFA – Adoption and Safe Families Act, 1997

- ▶ Child safety became the top priority of the American child welfare system; family preservation was now the secondary goal.
- ▶ ASFA established strict time lines for returning children to their parents or terminating parental rights. If a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the state must file a termination of parental rights petition.

NJ CPSAI- Child Protection Substance Abuse Initiative

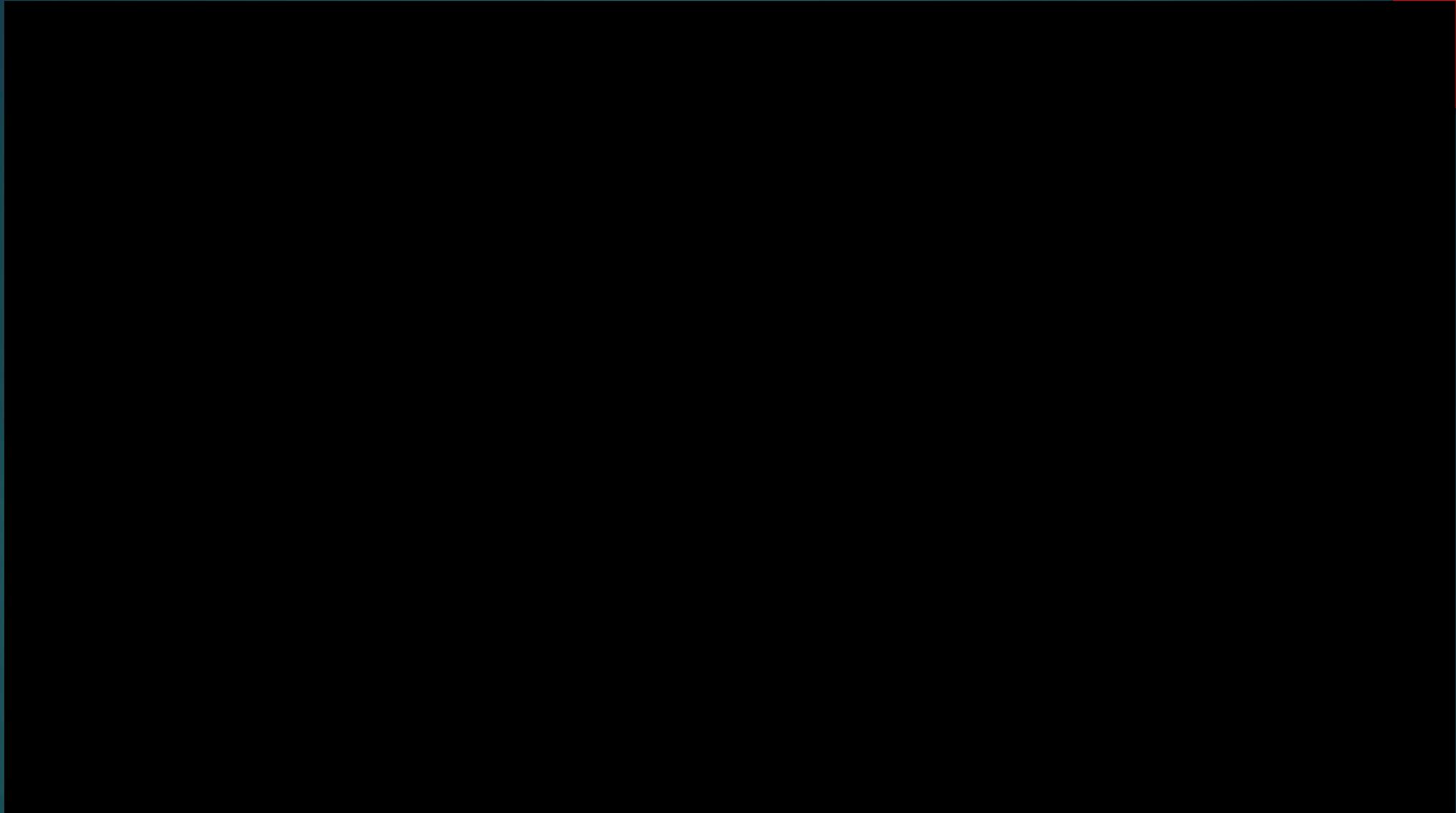
- ▶ The Child Protection Substance Abuse Initiative (CPSAI), initially created in 1997, became an important player in child welfare reform. A CPSAI worker was placed in each DYFS office to train caseworkers on how to identify potential substance abuse issues in families and how to make a referral.
- ▶ CPSAI worker conducts a substance abuse evaluation that assesses the extent of their substance use and makes recommendations for an appropriate level of addiction treatment.
- ▶ In NJ there was concerted effort to increase the number of treatment options available for substance abuse treatment including the creation of “mommy and me” residential treatment programs where a mother could bring her child into treatment with her and access funding for treatment.

Other state policies

Guttmacher Institute, July 2014

- ▶ One state allows assault charges to be filed against a pregnant woman who uses substances
- ▶ 18 states consider substance abuse to be child abuse
- ▶ 3 consider it grounds for civil commitment

Tennessee: A new law that went into effect on July 1, 2014 permits arrests of pregnant women for the crime of fetal assault, with special focus on the “illegal use” of “narcotics” by pregnant women. Tennessee is the first state, through legislative action to make pregnant women criminally liable for the outcomes of their pregnancies.





Substance abuse = child abuse?

Drug use and pregnancy



The myth of the “crack baby”

- ▶ After nearly 25 years of research, one of the nation’s largest long-term studies on the so-called “crack baby” epidemic of the 1980s has concluded that there are no statistically significant differences in the long-term health and life outcomes between full-term babies exposed to cocaine in-utero and those who were not.
- ▶ Instead, researchers found poverty to be a key determining factor in how well children performed later in life. As Hallam Hurt, the former chair of neonatology at Albert Einstein Medical Center and the study’s lead researcher, told the Philadelphia Inquirer: “Poverty is a more powerful influence on the outcome of inner-city children than gestational exposure to cocaine.”

Methadone

- ▶ Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding can safely take methadone. When withdrawal from an abused drug happens to a pregnant woman, it causes the uterus to contract and may bring on miscarriage or premature birth. Methadone's ability to prevent withdrawal symptoms helps pregnant women better manage their addiction while avoiding health risks to both mother and baby.
- ▶ Undergoing methadone maintenance treatment while pregnant will not cause birth defects, but some babies may go through withdrawal after birth. This does not mean that the baby is addicted. Infant withdrawal usually begins a few days after birth but may begin two to four weeks after birth.

www.SAHMSA.gov

Suboxone

- ▶ In a comparative effectiveness trial, buprenorphine was found to be superior to methadone in reducing withdrawal symptoms in the newborns, according to a recent study funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), a component of the National Institutes of Health.
- ▶ This study found that, compared to methadone, buprenorphine resulted in similar maternal and fetal outcomes, yet had lower severity of NAS symptoms, thus requiring less medication (1.1 versus 10.4 milligrams) and less time in the hospital for their babies (10 versus 17.5 days).

NAS -

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

- ▶ The national rate of newborns diagnosed with NAS has nearly tripled from 2000-2009
- ▶ The body of an infant that has been drug exposed (not addicted, which implies the drug has been voluntarily consumed) is bombarded with chemical reactions that had been suppressed in utero. These babies clench their fists, and resist being held or touched. They may cry inconsolably, have trouble breathing and sleeping, and suffer from bouts of vomiting and diarrhea. (Dr. Sharon Burke, Children's Specialized Hospital, www.nj.com, Dec 28, 2014)
- ▶ This condition is treatable and if the mother is trained in how to care for her substance exposed newborn, the symptoms can be alleviated.

Pre and post natal care

- ▶ Pregnant women who are abusing drugs often avoid seeking prenatal care
- ▶ If they do, they withhold information about their drug use due to the fear of being reported to child welfare and losing custody of their child
- ▶ Once their child is born, they are reluctant to seek medical attention or early intervention when problems arise due to the guilt that their drug use may have caused the problem

Stigma



Mothers: Madonnas or Monsters

- ▶ Motherhood is an enduring ideal in our society and mothers who don't measure up are placed in the 'monster' category. Drug abusing mothers find themselves demonized because they are not considered self-sacrificing and nurturing.

A is for Addict: The Modern Scarlet Letter

- ▶ Substance abuse and good parenting are considered incompatible activities. The negative impact that parental drug and alcohol use has on a child is unarguable. Therefore, the concern that arises when a mother is discovered to be in active addiction is warranted: “Can this mother care for her child?” This is the question that must be answered.
- ▶ Unfortunately, the powerful stigma that accompanies the label ‘addict’ can overshadow the facts and lead to life altering decisions by the entities who are responsible for protecting vulnerable children.

The Influence of the Media

- ▶ Helpless and Hooked

NAPW's Lynn Paltrow responds...

- ▶ This Reuters report is the latest in a long line of journalistic reports that perpetuates stigma
- ▶ An old narrative with an updated epidemic: opioid abuse
- ▶ Presents a selective correlation rooted in the bias of the “war on drugs”
- ▶ The series does not let the reader hear from experts who point out a number of other conditions – psychiatric medication withdrawal, low blood sugar, infection or lack of oxygen to the brain – can also cause severe tremors in newborns
- ▶ Does not report that these symptoms are treatable and transitory
- ▶ It suggests that methadone, a proven treatment for opioid addiction, is a large part of the problem
- ▶ Vilifies pregnant and parenting women who use drugs

National Advocates for Pregnant Women

Things to consider in effective treatment

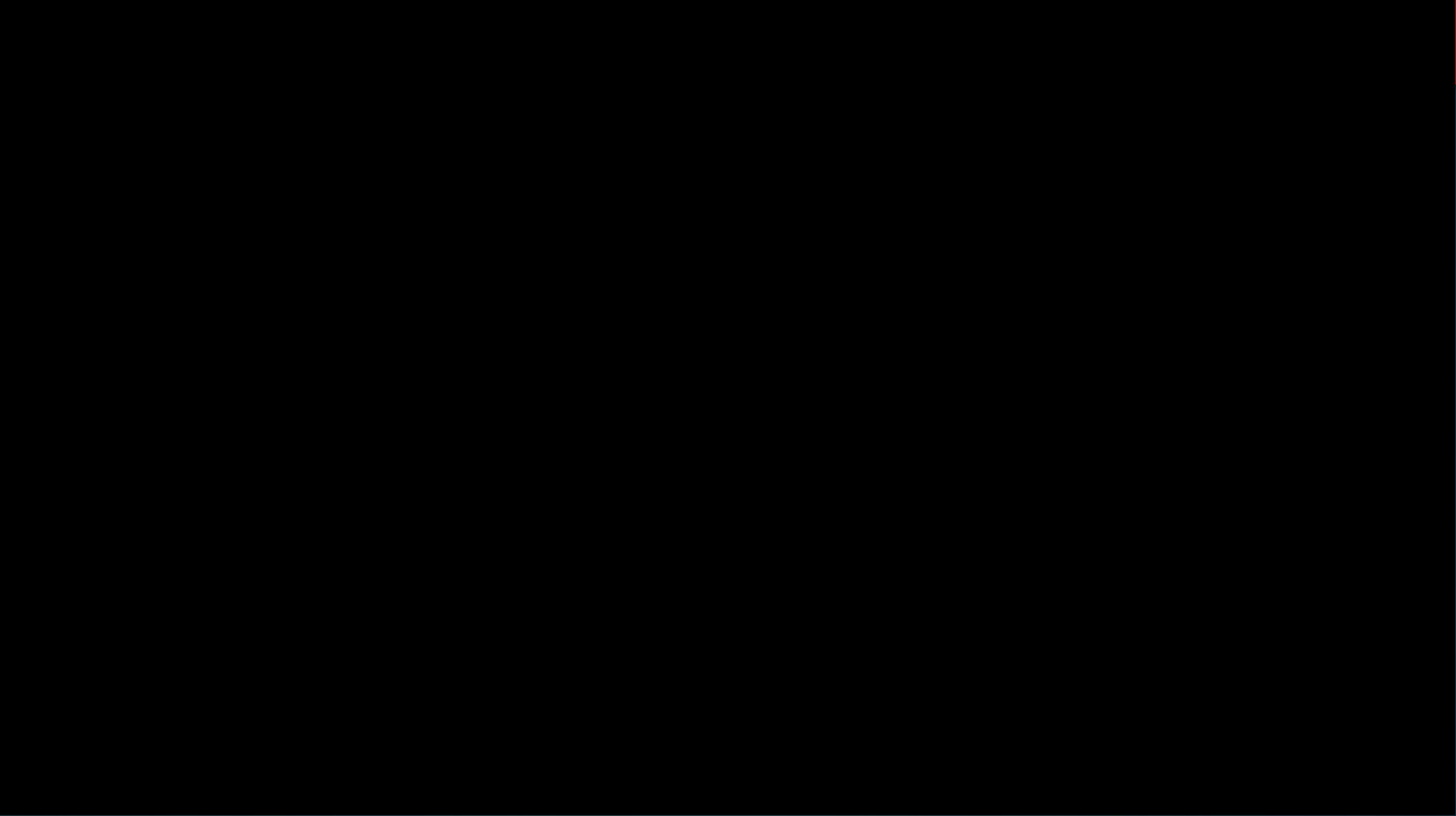
- ▶ Attachment
 - ▶ Intergenerational transmission of poor attachment
 - ▶ Focus on the mother-child relationship
- ▶ Trauma
 - ▶ ACE's study
 - ▶ Protective responses
- ▶ Nurturing not punitive

Attachment Repair

- ▶ Traumatized mothers parenting traumatized children
- ▶ Intergenerational transmission of attachment patterns
- ▶ Parent Infant Mental Health

Trauma and Addiction

- ▶ The connection has been made
- ▶ ACE's Study
 - ▶ Women were 50% more likely than men to have experienced 5 or more adverse childhood experiences
 - ▶ The higher the ACE score, the higher the chances of addiction to alcohol and other drugs in adulthood
 - ▶ 4 or more ACEs = 500% increase in risk for adult alcoholism
 - ▶ 6 or more ACE's = 4600% increase in risk for IV drug use



Nurturing not punitive

- ▶ Failed drug war has taught us that punishment is not effective
- ▶ We need to work towards transformation, not compliance
- ▶ Understand the role of shame
 - ▶ As a mother
 - ▶ As a drug user

The Center for Great Expectations Treatment Model

- ▶ Trauma informed Care
- ▶ Parent Infant Mental Health
- ▶ Nurtured Heart Approach

Trauma Informed Care

- ▶ Key Principles
 - ▶ Safety
 - ▶ Trustworthiness and Transparency
 - ▶ Peer Support
 - ▶ Collaboration and mutuality
 - ▶ Empowerment, voice and choice

www.samhsa.gov/nctic/trauma-interventions

A paradigm shift

Punishment



Safety

Distrust



Trust

Confrontation



Collaboration

Patronizing
Treatment



Choice and
Empowerment

Compliance



Transformation



Parent Infant Mental Health

- ▶ PIMH intervention is crucially important in repairing destructive intergenerational patterns especially for parent/child relationships unfolding in a traumatic environment
- ▶ Addresses the early attachment disruptions that result from less than adequate care and nurturance
- ▶ Considers the mother's attachment style, the child's attachment style and intervenes through the dyad relationship

Nurtured Heart Approach

- ▶ Nurtured Heart Approach as an organizational change process
- ▶ Defines our interactions with our clients and with each other
- ▶ It is a way of thinking and a set of strategies that use strong positives in conjunction with consistent limit setting along with a refusal to accidentally reward negativity.
- ▶ Transformation is the goal; transformation of a person's natural intensity, or life force, into personal greatness and success
- ▶ Model and teach as a parenting strategy

childrenssuccessfoundation.com

The Collision

- ▶ The criminalization of drug abusing mothers
- ▶ Medication assisted treatment and substance exposed infants
- ▶ Substance abusing mothers in the child welfare system and the risk for termination of parental rights
 - ▶ Recovery takes longer than the ASFA timeline
- ▶ The impact of stigma on pregnant and parenting women with substance use disorders

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- ▶ National Advocates for Pregnant Women
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