

POSITIVE PEER ~ Melisha Montañó

"I was hurting and I wanted to stop the pain."

After losing custody of her son, spending time at seven treatment centers, countless detox facilities, jails, and detentions centers, Melissa just kept hitting it harder and had a will to die. Alcohol was her drug of choice and her escape. When she drank the off switch didn't turn on.

No matter how much her family and employers tried, there was no human power at that time strong enough to make a difference over the power of her addiction. Her fifth DUI was in Florida and she ended up in a detention center for 90 days and then a halfway house and had to stay in Florida for a total of 2 years. She was alone. There was nobody to pick up the pieces or to enable her. She was treated very poorly at the Florida jail and she got deeply humble. She stayed sober those two years but something was missing so upon her return to New Mexico she relapsed and spent time at the St. Vincents Psych ward. The women from AA would visit and one of them told her "It is not our job to deliver you to your family in a box. Accept that what we have is a solution. We will go the ends of the earth with you but we want you there with us so we can lock arms."

Little by little the hole in her soul was getting filled up with light but those first few years it took diligent work to deal with all of the inner anger and to confront the impact of abuse, pain and loss from her childhood. Her sobriety birthdate is 7/17/2010. While working the 7th step she had a beautiful awakening. In the presence of Our Lady of Guadalupe, she felt a tap on her shoulder and heard the words "I am the mother of all mothers, you have to let me do this, you are OK and you did the best with your son." The obsession to drink and do drugs was lifted.

Now, she is proud to walk with purpose (and ride her Harley with style!). She became a CPSW in 2016 and she gets to help others realize they are not alone. She has a great relationship with her son, daughter in law and her grandson and she is making amends with the county that fired her in 1995 by working as a CPSW and case worker at the Rio Arriba County Detention Center.

Best advice from Melisha:

"Alone I am nothing but together we can do anything!"

We are so inspired by the work Melisha is doing and grateful that she has also trained to be a CPSW Trainer. It is people like Melisha with her gigantic spirit, will to help others, and a strong commitment and faith to live a life of recovery, that is helping grow the Peer Movement in New Mexico and more importantly working to save lives everyday.

[Melisha Montañó Video Interview](#)