

A Parent's Perspective: Personal Stories of Substance Use Disorder

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Aimee Manzoni-D'Arpino lost her son [Emmett](#) to the disease of substance use disorder in 2016. She vowed to not let her son's death be in vain and has been actively working to help end the stigma of addiction and help other families find essential resources.

Aimee's began her work in this advocacy space just days after losing her son. Since then she has testified before Congress, been featured in the Energy & Commerce Subcommittee's "[Personal Stories from the Opioid Crisis](#)" video series, spoken as a part of Congresswoman Katherine Clark's (D-MA) town hall series, organized several National Day of Remembrance events and met with her lawmakers countless times, specifically in regards to [family notifications after the occurrence of a non-fatal overdose](#).

Nationally, as a co-chair of Addiction Policy Forum's Families Committee, she connects directly with families that have recently lost loved ones to addiction. Aimee also moderates the Facebook support group, Families Opening Up About Addiction - Sharing Without Stigma. In early 2018, Aimee joined the team at Addiction Policy Forum as Senior Director of State Chapters, and has been an integral part in launching chapters across the country opening up advocacy & education avenues for families affected by the disease of substance use disorder.

In Massachusetts, Aimee chairs Friends of Emmett, a ministry started by her church in response to the loss of her son. The group holds monthly healing services and potluck dinners for individuals and families impacted by addiction. Beginning in January 2018, Friends of Emmett also incorporated a monthly children's' support group into their offerings, "Finding My Voice in the Storm." The group's aim is to help reduce the stigma associated with addiction and offer education opportunities within the community.