OUR MISSION

Learn to Cope is a peer-led, support-network for families dealing with addiction and recovery. Our goal is to provide information, vital resources, support, and hope to all of those impacted by the disease of addiction.

Right now in America, drug overdoses are the leading cause of accidental deaths. According to harrowing statistics, between 59,000 to 65,000 individuals lost their lives in 2016 alone. This number only increases over time, and something must be done to end the epidemic. It is our responsibility to take a stand, raise our voices, and fight to end this crisis.

LTC is expanding

New meetings are cropping up around the state. In 2016, LTC launched chapters in Hudson and West Palm Beach, FL. So far in 2017, the Attleboro and Dudley chapters have been established.

Currently, we are in the midst of launching a Martha’s Vineyard Chapter, set to start in September. The area has been hit hard by the opioid epidemic, and we want our message of hope to spread throughout and to provide Nasal Naloxone to families.

LTC gained new additions to our team of staff in 2016-2017. Linda Botelho (South Coast Reg. Manager), Kim Leman (Cape & Islands Reg. Manager), Vicky Ruvido (Senior Southeast Reg. Manager), Eileen Ruhl (Program Director), Jim Hatch (Fiscal Manager), and Patty Conant (Administrative Assistant) have all taken employee positions, and we are happy to welcome them to our team!

Introducing the new LTC Newsletter

Please enjoy Learn to Cope’s first ever newsletter. Though still in its early stages, we hope to continue passing along information to members in this way. We are eager to watch it grow and evolve over time, alongside our organization. 2016 was a busy year, marked with important events and changes for LTC. Furthermore, we look forward to 2017 and expect it to be just as eventful. In this first issue, we will recap on the past year as well as look to the future. Thank you for your support.
August 31st is Overdose Awareness Day. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have lost their lives to the disease of addiction as well as the families affected by this epidemic.

September is National Recovery Month. Use this time to educate yourself and others, as we can all contribute to breaking the stigmas associated with addiction. Together we can unite to fight addiction and support recovery.

For all of our LTC families, we must never forget those who have been lost.

Important Updates:

On April 7, 2017, the American Red Cross of the Cape, Islands & Southeast MA honored individuals who have done extraordinary things for the community at the 15th Annual Heroes Breakfast at The Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis.

At the breakfast, the Red Cross showcased how local heroes can transform and save lives, thus making a difference in the Cape, Islands, and Southeast MA. This year, they chose Founder and Executive Director Joanne Peterson as special guest presenter and Hero.

On April 28, 2016 LTC’s Joanne Peterson gave a presentation called, “Highs and Lows: A Multidimensional Look at Addiction & Impact on Self, Family, and Society” as a part of the Massachusetts Nurses Association event in Danvers, MA.

The MNA awarded Joanne with the 2016 Human Needs Services Award for all she and LTC have done for families within the state of Massachusetts.

A study on LTC entitled: “Coping with the Grave and Enduring Unpredictability of Opioid Addiction: An Investigation of a Rapidly Expanding Family-focused Peer-support Organization,” was conducted by Mass General Hospital and published in the New England Journal of Medicine. It delves into demographics and statistics of LTC, showcasing the severe toll the opioid epidemic has on surrounding communities.

This year marks 10 years since the opening of the Salem Chapter and 5 years for Worcester. Thank you for your support, understanding, and growth to all who attend!

RALLY 2 RECOVERY

This year’s Rally 2 Recovery took place on August 12, 2017. It proved an eventful day of fun, fundraising, and spreading awareness about the disease of addiction. The event itself included a 40-mile motorcycle ride, traversing from Ware to Worcester and transmitting our message of hope and recovery along the way. The rally then concluded in Worcester amid a celebration complete with raffles, special guests, food, and more. There, a father who recently lost his son to the disease of addiction won a 2017 Indian Scout Motorcycle! A special thank you goes out to Bruce Fiene, Tracy Wheeler, and Peggy and Nick Murphy for all their hard work helping to make this event a reality. Be sure to join in the fun next year. It is an event you won’t want to miss!

Individuals in picture (from left to right): Senator Joan Lovely, Kathy Day, Lori Long, Joanne Peterson, and Marguerite Roberts
Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the US.

In 2015 alone there were 52,404 lethal drug overdoses, and 59,000-65,000 in 2016. This number rises annually.

Opioid addiction drives this epidemic. Statistics from the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) propose that approximately 20,101 overdose deaths in 2015 were related to prescription pain relievers, and 12,990 were due to heroin.

What are we doing to address these harmful numbers?

LTC consists of 27 chapters throughout the state, serving almost 10,000 families and counting.

Over 200 volunteer facilitators provide hope, support, and compassion each week.

Our private online, family discussion board hosts over 9,000 registered members who communicate and lend their support/advice to others.

LTC is the first peer-led family support network in the U.S. to train members in overdose prevention and certify them in the administration of intranasal naloxone (Narcan). Since December 2011, there have been over 100 successful overdose reversals within LTC.

There is HOPE… you are not alone!

LTC Founder/Executive Director, Joanne Peterson, is now on the Board for RIZE Massachusetts, a campaign to end the opioid epidemic. Among those on the Executive Board include, David Barash, M.D. from the GE Foundation; Andrew Dreyfus of Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA; Kate Walsh of Boston Medical Center; and several more individuals who are passionate about addressing the opioid epidemic head on.

The purpose of RIZE Massachusetts is to bring about change throughout the Commonwealth, dismantle the stigmas associated with addiction, and aid those struggling with substance-use disorders. It is a statewide, private sector initiative created to build a $50 million fund. The capital raised will be used to fund grants that will be awarded on the basis of the following goals: saving lives via accessible medical/behavioral treatment, supporting community-based prevention efforts, diminishing the number of preventable deaths, and ending the stigmas associated with addiction through education and outreach across the state.

“"This is the opportunity for us in Massachusetts to do what we’ve long needed to do. And as Massachusetts always does, we will lead.”

-Maura Healey, Attorney General
Important Updates:

Our second annual Canobie Lake Kid’s Day took place on Wednesday July 19, 2017. It was a fun-filled day as children affected by the disease of addiction got to let loose and just be kids for the day.

This event was made possible due to the proceeds raised from the 4th Annual Ryan’s Run 4 Recovery that took place on June 3, 2017. All monies raised were allocated in our Forget Me Knot fund that supports children impacted by the disease of addiction.

On May 1, 2017, Joanne presented alongside various Massachusetts state officials and school-aged children at Braintree South Middle School to advocate for change. Maura Healey, Massachusetts Attorney General, put on the event as she plans to distribute $700,000 statewide to fund substance abuse prevention initiatives in Massachusetts school systems. Some of the communities involved include Braintree, Weymouth, Hull, and Norwell. Healey acknowledges the opioid epidemic as a “top issue” for Massachusetts, and hopefully this funding will bring about change.

This year’s volunteer appreciation lunch was a success thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers who attended. We hope you enjoyed it!

Learn to Cope extends our deepest gratitude to all of our Narcan trainers, facilitators, and volunteers. We couldn’t do this without you, and truly appreciate your continuous support and dedication to this cause.

Interested in getting involved? Speak with one of the LTC regional managers about opportunities to help your fellow Learn to Cope members as well as your surrounding community.

Learn to Cope is hiring! Visit: http://www.learn2cope.org/divi/ for more information.

Joanne Peterson, Jack Reilly, Doris Kraemer, and Marcy Julian served on The Commission to Study Licensed Addiction Treatment Centers. They were appointed by Governor Baker to serve throughout the year by attending meetings, conducting research on the topic, and discussing potential legislation to improve the current situation. The Commission held nine focus groups in total, six of which involved consumers, two were with families of consumers, and one was with service providers. By the end of this experience, they had engaged with over 118 people to reap vital data and information.

Learn to Cope will dearly miss our long-time employees, Merielle Paul and Ry-ann Bonilla. Merielle worked at LTC for the past 4 years as a Senior Regional Manager, and just recently took on the role of Coordinator of the Plymouth Area Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative at High Point Treatment Center. Meanwhile, Ry-ann served as Director of Staff Operations for over 2 years; she is now a social worker at St. Anne's Hospital. We thank both of these incredible women for all of their hard work, and wish them all the best in their future endeavors!
Are you or someone you know dealing with a loved one struggling with a substance-use disorder?

Seek the help and support you need at LTC’s private, online discussion forum. With over 9,000 members registered on this forum, there is a wealth of information, knowledge, and resources that can be accessed 24/7. Always remember: There is hope. You are not alone.

Visit http://www.learn2cope.org and select “Forum” to register today.