

BOB CANDITO REMARKS AT COUNCIL'S 2019 SPRING LUNCHEON

Good Afternoon I 'm Bob Candito and I am honored and grateful to be here co-chairing this event. Thank you to our speaker Andrew for being here and to all the amazing staff and volunteers at the Council on Recovery.

Houston is a great city and only becomes better when the Council is active and thriving.

I am not an alcoholic or addict so why am I up here? Well I may be a little addicted to fly fishing! Seriously though, I'm a parent with 2 children and 4 stepchildren. 15 years ago my teenage daughter was diagnosed with serious mental health issues. We tried all kinds of Drs and therapists to no avail. Serious drug use became part of the problem. I had absolutely no idea about addiction. Sure I knew people that drank too much but I hadn't been exposed to the tragic and devastating consequences of addiction.

Surely my daughter could get help and get back to being a "normal teenager".

It wasn't until I jumped on the hood of a car to stop my daughter from leaving my imposed grounding when police were dispatched, something clicked briefly in my mind.... I knew I was going to die trying to save my little girl. It was brought to my attention in a not so subtle way that I needed as much help as my daughter if I were to become part of the solution instead of being part of the problem.

Al Anon, steps, sponsors and education about the brain, I went along for the ride and slowly realized that the gifts of recovery are there for me too.

During the last 15 years, my daughter Kristina has struggled with mental health issues, trauma, alcohol and addiction.

18 months ago Kristina was in Neuro ICU after an OD. She was in a coma for 6 days and spent 6 weeks in the hospital.

Today Kristina is here and sober. She went back to school finished her master's degree and has a job offer as a licensed therapist.

Recovery must be earned and nurtured. It is her job, not mine. My job is to maintain my own recovery and sanity.

My passion is to improve the confluence of mental health treatment and treatment for addiction especially in psychiatry.

Let's be clear addiction is a mental health and brain disease. If a patient has other co-occurring mental health issues think depression, anxiety, Bipolar, etc., caregiver

coordination is critical. Most patients presenting with co-occurring mental health issues will end up on multiple trials of psychiatric meds many of which are addictive, from Adderall to benzos. These drug should be monitored and substituted when possible to account for addiction science and to treat the whole patient.

So while Kristina was in a coma in Neuro ICU, staff at the hospital tried to talk me out of giving her a feeding tube, another DR said why are you bothering she'll be back on drugs as soon as we check her out. This is common bedside manner for the mental health treatment of addiction in non-addiction settings.

This is a real reason we need to continue and expand the educational processes at the Council on Recovery for both the community at large and the Medical Community not properly versed in addiction.

The Council on Recovery has many programs that serve to from 7 yr olds at Kid's camp for children of alcoholics to the Wellderly program helping people in their 80's deal with grief and addiction. The Cradles program in concert with other health care providers is going out to serve at risk and pregnant or postpartum women to reduce the rapidly rising incidence of maternal mortality and NAS (neonatal abstinence syndrome) think babies born into detox in Houston.

Please if you or someone you know needs help call the Council for the most up to date and correct information, treatment, education and referrals.

Houston needs the Council on Recovery and we need all of your support, please do what you can do, write a check, volunteer, or just stop by to learn more.

What does recovery mean to me?

18 months ago today my beautiful wife Kathryn passed from Brain Cancer, we were married for only 6 months.

4 yrs before that my amazing wife Linda passed from ovarian cancer.

My Recovery, my family, friends and an army of recovery friends gave me the support and strength to be present for these difficult times and become a grateful human for all my gifts rather than a bitter grief filled and hopeless soul.

The Council on Recovery is truly there for Houston from Womb to Tomb.

Thank you.