

Ari's Story

Ari: I'm Ariel. I go by Ari. And I am a drug addict in recovery and a mom.

Jen: My name is Jen Merwin and I am a Early Head Start home visitor. Ari came home from sober living. And so, things seemed to be going in the right direction and seemed to be OK. I guess I was caught by surprise at the visit that I actually had with her, where I saw the needles coming out of her sweatshirt.

Ari: I could be on my way to go be picking up my child and find myself taking a left-hand turn to go get drugs instead, and there's nothing that can stop me. All I remember is them being like, "We can't leave your child with you like this."

Jen: Ari went away to treatment. I think a lot of people don't realize that when somebody is in recovery, it is common for them to relapse. I didn't judge her; she knew that I didn't judge her, and that allowed her to be open with me with her addiction, and I was still there to support her every way that I could.

Ari: The whole time that I was away in treatment, Jen was checking to make sure I was OK. So, she just reassures me that like I'm OK, he's OK, and we're going to be OK. That helps me because I'm like, "Whoa, somebody like professional is telling me that like I'm – I have a lot of strength and courage," and I don't hear that often, you know. And for me to take that and be like, "OK, well I'm going to show you I can be a mother." And for them to be like, "OK, we see it. You're doing what you need to be doing, like we're going to give you back your child." Like, that's huge. I can only imagine the pain that I've put people through, but god, am I happy that they stuck by me because if they didn't, I wouldn't – I wouldn't be here.

Jen: You're a piece of the puzzle of their life and it's yeah, it's pretty powerful.