

Fentanyl, Narcan, and the Fight to Save Lives

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Fentanyl is an overwhelming problem that had its time in the spotlight but drifted away after people just didn't care anymore. Sadly, that's the truth. In 2018 over 200 people died per day to Fentanyl. So, to re-open the book of time, I sat down with Cheyenne Ruiz, who lost her brother Jackson (17) to Fentanyl in 2023.

When I asked Cheyenne to tell me about Jackson, she shared that "He was a super, super smart kid with dreams of attending OU, just like his sister. He was truly one in a million." Jackson was a normal kid, with dreams and goals, and his life was suddenly cut short way too soon.

I asked her what something was that she wished more people understood about fentanyl and I received an unexpected but insightful answer. As a member of the 1:11 Group, (a network of families raising awareness about fentanyl) many might expect her to discuss the specifics of overdose versus poisoning. However, she instead wanted to emphasize how fentanyl devastates families. "It only takes one time. Jackson is gone. He can't be here anymore," she said.

Cheyenne also wanted to address the connection between substance abuse and mental health. "I want people to know that reaching out for help, whether it's through a school counselor or mental health services, is so much more important than self-medicating with substances," she shared.

Fentanyl's impact is devastating, as Cheyenne's heartbreaking story of her brother Jackson shows, people so full of life are suddenly no longer here and families are left to deal with the aftermath. It's a problem that continues to impact families across the nation, and too often, it feels like there's nothing we can do to stop it. While knowing the dangers and spreading that word is important, there are also steps we can take to save lives when the worst happens.

One of the most effective tools in reversing a fentanyl overdose is Narcan. Narcan is a powerful nasal spray that can quickly block and reverse the effects of fentanyl, possibly saving a life in a matter of seconds. With the number of overdoses on the rise, carrying Narcan could truly be the difference between life and death.

Anyone, adult or student, should consider carrying narcan. If you don't know where to get it, local police or fire departments are good resources, and many organizations provide Narcan free of charge.

On behalf of myself and Odessa Crime Stoppers, we want to express our deepest gratitude to Cheyenne Ruiz for sharing her story about Jackson.

For the full interview click [here](#).