

## Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course Grant Proposal

**Submitted by:** Learn to Cope  
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**Date:** March 28, 2019

**Amount Applying For:** \$5,000

### **Mission Statement:**

Learn to Cope was created to provide support, resources, education and hope for families dealing with addiction and recovery.

### **How will the funding be utilized?**

Learn to Cope will use the funding to support the families that we serve. In addition, Learn to Cope will utilize some of the funds to purchase laptops and program supplies.

Some examples of what we have done in the past include: Hosting Canobie Lake Park days and Disney on Ice outings for the children of our families affected by addiction; helping pay for college text books for a child being raised by a grandparent; putting a person in long-term recovery through yoga training class so she could become a yoga instructor; purchasing gift cards for families in need to purchase winter coats for their grandchildren; paying for a hotel for parents of a young man who was in the hospital following an overdose so they could remain nearby; helping offset the cost of funerals for families who have lost their loved one to an overdose.

### **Leadership – Experience and Qualification:**

Learn to Cope was formed in 2004 by Joanne Peterson, it's executive director, when she discovered that her son became addicted to heroin following experimentation with prescription drugs. This motivated her to speak out for all families suffering from the stigma associated with the disease of Substance Use Disorder which she continues to do at the local and national levels. Ms. Peterson is a very well-respected parent advocate. She is a 2015 recipient of the Advocate for Action award from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and that same year was Senator Markey's guest at the State of the Union Address. In 2016 she was asked by Governor Baker to be a panelist on the National Governors Association Health and Human Services Committee to discuss the nation's opioid crisis. She was invited to the White House to participate in a discussion by the National Drug Control Policy Director on the Administration's efforts to address the country's opioid epidemic. She currently sits on the Governor's Special Commission to Study Licensed Addiction Treatment Centers and RIZE Massachusetts, a state-wide, private sector initiative created to build a \$50 million fund focused on bringing real and lasting

changes to those struggling with Substance Use Disorder in the Commonwealth. Ms. Peterson is an active member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

#### **Vetting Process for Hiring New Employees and Volunteers:**

Along with advertising positions on various job boards, many of our current employees were former Learn to Cope volunteers who have a loved one with Substance Use Disorder. Applicants submit resumes and letters of application. If the individual is a possible good fit for the position being applied for, a telephone interview will take place. Candidates who do well on the telephone interview will be asked to complete a job application and will come into the office to meet with their immediate supervisor and the executive director. If offered the position, the individual's references will be called, and a background check will be conducted prior to the official start of work.

Volunteers who are trained as meeting facilitators, Narcan trainers or those who are ambassadors for Learn to Cope at various events around the state are long-time members who are at a good place in their journey with their loved one and want to give back to the organization.

#### **Short-term and long-term goals:**

Learn to Cope is working with an outside contractor on a grief project to help better equip us to serve those of our members who lose a loved one to the opiate epidemic or for those who mistakenly attend one of our meetings thinking that it is a grief support group. Our groups each become a "family" of sorts, so when a family member loses a loved one, it affects all the group immensely. We want to protect our staff and volunteers from unnecessary trauma, while offering grief resources for those who need them. As such, we have created a grief resource packet that we have on hand at all our meetings. In addition, we have formed staff and family grief advisory groups, to share and discuss ways we can best serve those grieving due to the loss of a loved one from the opioid epidemic or staff and volunteers affected by the loss a group member suffers.

Learn to Cope is currently working with a group in Maine to start a meeting there. We hope to use this project as a pilot for other meetings outside the state, as we receive numerous requests for meetings throughout the United States. The need for our meetings is great and the cost to start them outside the state prohibits us to establish them without additional funds. However, a long-term goal is to create new meetings throughout New England and beyond to help as many families as possible by providing resources, education, peer support and hope.

#### **Partnerships with other organizations:**

Learn to Cope staff serves on numerous coalitions and task forces throughout the state. We are asked to attend events on an on-going basis to where we provide information on our services by hosting tables, speaking to groups and serving on panels. Several of our staff serve on state commissions focused on the opioid epidemic, including the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Commission and the

Recovery Coach Commission. We are also represented at the Criminal Justice Workshop of the Holyoke District Court, the Braintree Partnership on Substance Use, the Plymouth County Outreach, the Family Day Program at the Hampden County Correctional Recovery Wellness Center, PCO Hope and Speaking Out Against Addiction. We are also working on a grief resources project with Franklin Cook who we recently signed a second-year contract with.

By working with these organizations, we can reach a greater number of families in need of our support while gaining useful information and innovative ideas that we can share with our families.

### **Evidence of Learn to Cope's Success:**

The following statistics are for the fourth quarter of 2018:

#### Massachusetts Learn to Cope Meetings

239 volunteer facilitators  
82 Narcan Trainers  
17 doses of Narcan were handed out  
438 attendees per week average for all 25 meetings combined

#### Online Forum

126 new registrants  
134 new topics discussed  
767 individuals contributed to the topics  
10,503 views

In 2017 the below Learn to Cope study by Dr. John Kelly was published:

<https://www.learn2cope.org/learn2cope/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/1.-LTC-FINAL-PUBLISHED-PAPER-2017-1-1.pdf>

A letter written by a Learn to Cope parent:

<https://www.learn2cope.org/learn2cope/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Fathers-Letter.docx>

### **Recent organizational setbacks and why they occurred:**

The only setback Learn to Cope has ever experienced is the inability to fund the number of out-of-state meeting requests we receive on a regular basis. Additional future funding would allow us to serve even more people who desperately need our services.