

Jessica Fisher: Not my Kid

Jessica is a Social Worker at River City Ministry. Following is a heart rending example of what is experienced almost daily in this work.

Not my Kid

Many of you know that my work involves seeing a lot of sad things and hearing a lot of sad stories. While this has become the norm at the workplace, there are still cases that hit too close to home or really touch a nerve. I think today the case just hit my some of my deepest fears.

He's 22 and his parents just dropped him off here. They came in to meet me quickly and had the intention of staying left and he said, "They don't have to be here, do they?" They obviously love their son but don't know where to turn next. Years of possession/drug felonies, rehab, court dates, probation, treatment programs. He began stealing from them to feed the habit. They saw the scars on the his arms and found out he shoots up every day. That was the last straw.

How must it feel to walk into a day shelter and drop off your son? They will go to bed tonight hoping me made it to the shelter. I'm sure they will toss and turn all night wondering if he is ok, who he met, what he is doing. It's so much easier to keep them with you and end up enabling them, but so hard to let go and let him learn the hard way.

I guess I've always thought this will never be "my child" because my family is not in poverty. We don't have a history of substance abuse, we are well too do, we live in the suburbs, we LOVE our son and would do anything for him. Not my kid!

But these downtrodden parents walk into my office, not knowing what else to do. They are dressed nicely and obviously have money. They have funded his treatment thus far. The mother placed her hand on her sons head and told him she loves him as she walked out.

He's not ready to change. No one has forced him. He has to learn the hard way. He's homeless now.

Not my kid!

I suppose I expect I will raise my child and he will go to school, excel in AP classes, get a scholarship to a great university and become a respected professional. He'll have a family, drive a nice car, buy a nice house and live a good life. I'm setting the foundation for him now. I don't imagine the possiblities of drugs, unwanted pregnancies, negative peer influences, mental health issues.

Not my kid!

Sometimes the best intentions and efforts fail and parents end up with the child that was every other parent's worst nightmare. But they still love him as much, more, than the day he was born. Do we prepare ourselves for the worst or expect the best. Am I setting the bar too high for my own?

Who ever thought that being a parent was an easy job? A good job? It's hardest and most risky job out there.