

# Ep. 77 - Addiction Stigma

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

addiction, people, recovery, drugs, talk, kevin, piece, crystal meth, life, addicted, international coach federation, alcohol, stigma, thought, day, disease, foundation, employers, coaching, listeners

## SPEAKERS

Mia Voss, Kevin Hyer

### **Mia Voss** 00:04

Hey, welcome to the latest episode of Shit We Don't Talk about the podcast that takes on topics that need more open and honest discussion, which means some of these topics are triggering. So please take care when listening. And I'll always give you a trigger warning. For instance, here's one. Every episode contains swear words, you've been warned. Make sure to check out the show notes which include an accessibility transcript of the podcast and all of the links for our guests at ship. We don't talk about podcast.com. Hey, welcome to episode 77 of shit we don't talk about. My guest is Kevin Hyer CEO of the Hyer calling Foundation, a Philadelphia based 501 C three that destigmatizes the disease of addiction in the workplace. And this episode, Kevin shares his own personal story of addiction and recovery and how he now helps to tackle addiction stigma to an end. It gets good. Here we go. Hi, Kevin.

### **Kevin Hyer** 01:18

Hey, good morning, Mia.

### **Mia Voss** 01:23

you have shit we don't talk about to talk about, don't you?

### **Kevin Hyer** 01:26

We Indeed Do.

### **Mia Voss** 01:30

Yes, we do. All right. Let's start with identifiers. I am Mia Voss. I'm a blonde white woman in my 50s with what would be probably termed as day old hair. But hey, it's a podcast. Nobody cares. Tell us what you look like having give us your identifier.

### **Kevin Hyer** 01:46

I am a Caucasian male and early 40s with strawberry blonde hair and us.

### **Mia Voss** 01:53

Listen, you have a bang and hot suit on today to sir.

**Kevin Hyer 02:01**

We may be talking about crystal meth. But I'm still a lawyer. Which

**Mia Voss 02:05**

we don't put those together too much. So today's topic, addiction stigma. And what I love is that we got connected through my darling friend Ande, you had popped in on a live stream that I did. And when you gave your qualifier identifier for Hyer calling, which is your foundation, I was immediately taken and then I've had a lot of things come up lately that are leading me to say this is definitely shit we don't talk about is Addiction Disorder, the the myths and all that and then just your type of face to all this. So I'm excited for you to share everything so. So tell us about you.

**Kevin Hyer 02:43**

Oh, where do I start? Well, I'll start here. I'll start at the age of 39 years old. I was a lawyer in Philadelphia, I am still a lawyer. I was practicing employment law and a large Philadelphia law firm. And I found myself newly single after a long time I've been in relationship with another attorney in a big firm another man. And I was kind of upset about being 40 and single and feeling a little lost personally, even though I was put together professionally and some friends said, Let's go to Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. And I went to my friends and I say, you know picture How Stella Got Her Groove Back, but a group of like 40 ish gay men. And somebody said to me in a moment of weakness, have you ever tried enough enhances intimacy has very exhilarating effects. And I just had a moment of insecurity without ever having done drugs before I went with it. And within eight weeks, I was shooting up in crack houses and very much out of a job. And that started an 18 month descend into service drug addiction. That ended with me overdosing. When fentanyl got into the methamphetamine that I had purchased. I spent 10 days on dialysis and after I got off dialysis, my life I started the higher calling foundation to go give back because I've got a second chance that not everyone does.

**Mia Voss 03:59**

And I have to go with the the beauty and the magic of that your name "Hyer" . And you know, I've said it before we hit the record button there there is a beautiful symmetry to it that you've started something with that name as well, too. And then to go through experience and wow, Kevin, I mean that they're just things that I think that is part of the stigma and the myth that we can talk about as well. Of, I'm sure you were probably functioning for a while until you weren't not long.

**Kevin Hyer 04:29**

Well, people personally don't really have to understand what addiction is. Everyone does react to substances a little differently. It's why for example, why are some people holics and other people can drink socially, with a drug like crystal meth, you're gonna get it that's it's just too powerful. Some people do a little better on longer than others. What I say is I went off a cliff the third time, and by that I mean I started blowing off going to work. That's when I started shooting up as I put it in and that's the word for it. You know, crack houses, drug houses, whatever you want to use. You keep it real here. So I'm giving your audience that gift, you know, after only three times, that's how quickly my life spiraled it's a very powerful drug.

**Mia Voss** 05:07

It's incredible. And I think many of us who have not faced addiction or have like, Yes, right. It could be coffee porn, interior design. I mean, there's a lot of drugs of choice that people can use to what would be a lack of better like, sort of stifle feelings? Did you feel like let me ask you this? Did you feel like before that happened to you? Or that you hit this? Was there something that you were using to also kind of say, I need to deaden my feelings at all? Or was this just a completely new thing for you?

**Kevin Hyer** 05:41

It's an outstanding question. Now, I wasn't using any substance or process to dumb my feelings. What I was doing, though, is in effectively managing some of the frustration in my life. And I think that looking back, my closest friends will say, they weren't really shocked by this. I had certain insecurities, that even being in a relationship, you know, relationships don't solve all of our problems and make them worse, that I had some demons that I have not ever fully addressed. And I think that they were just slowly a ticking time bomb. And then this sudden transition of going into midlife, being single for the first time having this such existential angst almost set the stage for somebody to say, Hey, have you ever tried meth and just in a moment of almost rebellion, I had, I had tried to edibles maybe a few times, but I had, I went from the kid and the reporter, the defendant, and short straw and I got addicted. I will say this, I got hooked the first time and was if not addicted, I wanted to find it. The third time was when I saw it last functionality, meaning I stopped going to work. And then it was just a matter of weeks before my performance deteriorated so much that, you know, they said, settled on, you know, closing time, I don't care where you go, and you can't stay here.

**Mia Voss** 06:55

Right? I think a really important distinction in this conversation, too, is one, it does open it up. It's like, and I appreciate you sharing those little circumstances that led up to it. And I think for a lot of stuff, get these little gaps or holes or places where we're like, No, I'm okay, I'm okay. It can lead to this perfect storm, that you add in those variables. And then And then again, I love that you said to that, that everybody is different. I think that is so important when it comes to either observing addiction in yourself, or in other people is we have a lot of well, I'm not this i I'm not this bad. Or I can I can do this or I can function here everybody's function and then taking a look at what is destructive for you, is pretty important. And I think a lot of times we don't find that I find that out until it's too late circumstances play

**Kevin Hyer** 07:46

a huge role in how addiction affects you. And I also talk very candidly, about, things like race and class. All right, and I tell us,

**Mia Voss** 07:54

thank you, I really I literally have notes that say, What's disproportionate gender, race and orientation so that you appreciate

**Kevin Hyer** 08:01

orientation and gender to but I think in my observation, in the 18 months, I was addicted to crystal meth. It was race and class. I mean, I share a story. And I mean, again, I'm not a millionaire. I'm not rich, but

I'll share a story that will make it take something home. That obviously keeps you up for several days. There were more than a few times when I had been up for three or four days knew I was becoming psychotic was not safe to drive a vehicle, I was able to pay a couple \$100 several times had my vehicle towed 300 miles. So I sat in the front seat beside the tow truck driver who some dumpster and the tow truck driver didn't care that the car was making some weird sound and my buddy was a mechanic and I was erring on the side of caution and didn't want to drive it home and they didn't care, they're getting paid. So by doing that, I avoided the risk of a DUI and DUI on drugs. Not everyone has the ability to get their car towed. Now, I'm not saying I should have been doing that in the first place. But if you're going to stay up for three or four days doing drugs, and at least don't try it if you're going to do that, I know many people in addiction who ended up getting arrested to situations like that, or they went to a hotel hotel people don't realize it but so much broke smaller hotels, okay. You don't know what when you're there. But they do if you're doing drugs at the econo lodge a little more likely to get arrested than if you're doing drugs to help

**Mia Voss 09:15**

so that there is just the the monetary things that you have the monetary advantage. And then let's face it, we also have the advantage of not being profiled. It's I mean, we've seen

**Kevin Hyer 09:31**

talk about it in situations like this. But I won't get into

**Mia Voss 09:35**

this when I say advantage. I'm definitely not touting that. I want the people to have

**Kevin Hyer 09:39**

that reality. Honor privileges is how I call them earn privileges.

**Mia Voss 09:43**

Kevin, I love that. Oh, it really is and it's it but unfortunately and this is why we have the conversations that we do. People don't realize that so they just think that's not a problem because it's not happening to me. So I really appreciate that you're shining light on on Religion again, we're sitting here speaking as to Caucasian people what it is. So the great distinction on that, too. I really appreciate that. Talk to me about filling the with the insurance gap, so to speak of how much of a gap there is because you can mean it and to clarify it, you did not have any judicial. For a year I got

**Kevin Hyer 10:21**

out of my addiction with no justice involvement. My law license has never got affected by this. I literally overdosed, but i By the grace of my higher power fully recovered, I had no long term kidney damage, and I spent 10 days on dialysis. And so I am incredibly grateful. I jokingly say to people, I feel like my during my day, like we are working on a Word document, he's like me save it compulsively to like, make sure you don't lose it. I like focus on gratitude compulsively. Because I never thought I would get a second chance at even a sliver of phobic professional redemption. I mean, going from the 23rd floor of a of a pretty established law firm to a field where it's where they found me when I overdose, you know, along the country road, you know, by a woman named Tina, which is ironic because Methamphetamine

is known as Tina but Yeah, girl. Yeah. And, you know, I have I'm trying to give back. That's what this this is this whole exercise. I mean, I walked away from practicing law voluntarily to do this, I could go back to I chose not to. So when we speak of voids in the market, my foundation, the higher calling foundation and higher spelled by er, because it's my my last name, it's a play on words. And certainly, I like to think this is a higher calling breaking stereotypes of hard drug addiction, meth in particular. So what we do is we do really three things, but the two nuts and bolts of this. It's providing services that insurance does not cover to help men and women in recovery reintegrate into the workforce. So you go to rehab, you leave rehab, health insurance paid for rehab, health insurance will probably pay for a one on one therapist when you leave. And that's great stuff, too. I mean, I see a therapist, therapist, attorneys, both therapists, but there's a lot more you need than just that. Okay, drop placement assistance. coaching through the International Coach Federation is one of my most popular services, we believe in helping expunge certain convictions for people so you're not shamed in the selection process. One example is there are women with old prostitution, convictions from addiction, sometimes they were trafficked didn't even ask to be there. And even if they did choose to be there, we all make mistakes, we shouldn't shame someone. One Two years later, I'm thinking of one client in particular, this happened with one years later, she still has to bring up in a job interview, and will prostitution if he admits wrong or putting stuff. So in jurisdictions where we can do that, we're gonna step in and pay with our resources to have outside attorneys at a reduced rate. Okay. We also repair smiles, which I'm very proud of, which is a nice way for saying dental damage from addiction. And that is something that insurance may cover, but not everyone has the money for that kind of, you know, we spent two or three, it was \$2,500 recently to get our first client, actress, but you know, we call it preparing smiles and what it does for someone's confidence. Just, it's beautiful. So we do a host of other services, reference advocacy, going back to a former employer and saying, Look, I get, you may not be able to take this person back, I think they're not necessarily even looking to go back. But can we get some endorsement of something they did, to help them move on with their life. And most, if you do it appropriately, carefully, most employers will do that, you know, interview preparation, networking events for people in recovery, and our allies, as I put it, you know, I came of age in the early 2000s, you know, when gay rights was just gaining mainstream acceptance, and I remember in college, you know, the professors would have stickers on the doors, it said, Ally, so you knew they were safe to talk to and the other professors, if they didn't, doesn't mean, that just means they're staying out of it, which is completely their business. You know, we're trying to do that in the workplace. Now, imagine how cool it would be if people at work could identify as an ally to people in recovery. So someone did that, again, doesn't mean she's gonna stay out of it, which is probably there, right. But those who do want to get into it can give that sense of support, which leads in perfectly to my last piece of what we do, which is we educate employers on why hiring people in recovery is such a great business, and how to have a recovery friendly workplace and that's an employment attorney, a little bit of a leg up onto on that and some credibility with them. And I talked about, and this is where a lot of our revenue comes from selling these trainings. We're a 501 C three to employers saying like, how do you have a recovery from the work? How do you handle a relapse? How do you handle falling into addiction? How do you stand and well, family members? We also work with family, so the other side of addiction, and they go to hell on that too.

**Mia Voss** 14:34

They do and I love it's like empathy one on one in a sense to of getting people started of breaking that stigma and and it's interesting because they I think a lot of us in the last 20 years are first somewhat introduction into what can be the seedy underbelly of addiction is intervention, the a&e show, which I don't know what But your your thoughts on that I can see how it's helpful and harmful. Because there there are a lot of people that you do get to see people have that the conversation and you've harmed me in this type of way. But any we've been mentioned that you've, you know, spoken with people, too, that are not ready to even have that conversation because they've been so damaged by, you know, folks who have who, you know, caused harm.

**Kevin Hyer 15:25**

I thought on the show intervention, and this is something you would know, but I have a brother that I have not seen in 12 years. Last time I saw my brother was an interventional. I have a brother has a serious alcohol addiction, and he's married to a woman. So it takes when your spouse has the same problems, you can validate and reinforce each other. So to me an intervention is not something that you were televise as a reality TV show. So I respect that show. I'm not knocking it but in I can't really use imagine laying up the personal emotions that go involved in a family has been devastated by addiction like mine, on national television, but so I don't know how accurate it is. I don't watch it because it reminds me of the pain in our family. But, you know, my mother lost her brother to suicide from untreated addiction. So this devastates families, it runs in families. That's the other point 50% of addiction is genetics. Okay. And then this is there's one thing your listeners take from this, aside from the genetic predisposition. Addiction is generational addiction is fundamentally about being effectively managed trauma. Okay, so when children are damaged by the chaos of adults, chaos of the addictions of the adults in their lives, that causes them trauma, to further traumatized by the stigma that they know that their adults, parents, grandparents have, okay, you don't think there are kids on playgrounds that haven't heard your mom wasn't drunk. But of course, kids who kids aren't dumb. So those kids then have trauma that they take into adulthood, and don't effectively manage.

**Mia Voss 16:56**

And kids aren't filtered either. They don't say the quiet part out loud, unfortunately.

**Kevin Hyer 17:02**

So damaging addiction is so much generational and we're trying so proud of my foundation to try to break this cycle. Addiction itself is a cycle. But it becomes a generational one. And I say we think they could our foundation. I say no, I want to stamp out addiction. Because it's a disease like we stamp out polio. Realistically, will we ever fully do that? Probably not. But we could make a huge dent in this disease by ending that's why when I go on the weekend, I say to people that have seen my running please, you're hurting innocent children, when you excessively stigmatize addiction, because you are preventing the adults in their lives from feeling safe about asking for help. They don't want to be canceled and are canceled culture, I use that analogy a lot. So they don't get help. They don't get healthy, keep creating trauma in everybody's lives. And eventually they either end up in jail institutions or death. That's what we often say to death really, because even if you go to jail, many people still do drugs. Okay, we're drinking. Sure. So it becomes you have to treat it, but you can't. So I'm saying a lot because I have all this excitement and passion around it. But you know, it's we have got to address addiction in America, to my foundation stuff up to do it.

**Mia Voss** 18:08

It really is and I what I think the first part of that is just changing the wording, changing the dialogue. I think that's that's a huge part. Even again, I just like even using the word disorder, I think is so empowering to that and I have a lot of addiction in my family and and I thank you for bringing that up to that it is generational. And I think just saying that alone can keep people from feeling very isolated of it's just me and what's wrong with me and why can't I get the comparison piece I think is important to bring up so that we can have that empathy of like just because I can drink like you said socially. And all that don't Lord that over people as well too. We all have these different things that we have no idea how you're going to react to it right.

**Kevin Hyer** 18:59

The other thing is whether you're a whatever you're addicted to, and you're always the same so whether your addictions to heroin, and opiate, fentanyl, which is an opiate or any of the other, many other opioids like oxycodone, or stimulant which was my case, nothing ketamine, and then to a lesser degree, cocaine at the end, okay? or alcohol, the ends are going to be the same. Some are more coolly efficient, that's unwilling to say than others, the meth addiction will set in much faster than alcohol addiction. But the end of the day, the alcoholic, the meth addict, the coke addict and opiate addicts are all going to deal with the same perforate, it's always a progressive, incurable disease, but you can manage it as long term chronic condition in recovery with diabetes, HIV, you can recover, you can enter recovery. And I'm one of those people there are many people that have so there is hope it's got to get treatment, and that sort of thing.

**Mia Voss** 19:49

I think the emotional piece is is really important as well, too, and I need to look it up. I first learned that from a TED Talk Was it TEDx mile high, and it's a young man who was a victim at Columbine. And he, what I thought was initially going to be a talkie, it comes out in a wheelchair, it was impaired by this horrible incident here in Colorado, I think was 990 99. And so I thought the topic was going to be about gun control. And it turns out was him talking about his opioid addiction, because he was giving these incredible power, incredibly powerful painkillers at 17. And the crucial part to the story was that he was not emotionally equipped. There was there was no calf injury, and then also the ease with which he was given these drugs. And then of course, this was right when the Sackler family had their big giant rise to fame of awfulness. get me started on that. That's a whole other podcast. But it was, it was, it was very eye opening to see that piece. And this was about five years ago. And I will tell you, unfortunately, this young man lost his life. He helped a lot of people but then succumbed. And so there's an importance in having that conversation to have this emotional piece, which is I know what what you're helping people to understand to, like, Oh, you're, you know, you'd like it's a weakness.

**Kevin Hyer** 21:18

Now, it's, the brain chemistry gets changed in addiction. This is absolutely a disease and one thing, and I think I have all the answers. I'm an appointment, one of the worst in the recovery world. I'm not a mental health professional. But what I tried to do is, I do like to be aware of words, because words matter very much. And we're like drug addict, junkie, tweaker, certainly, especially words like that are deeply offensive, and they're so damaging, because for the people using tweaker, with metal, for

people who fit it, and obviously, some people do they internalize it, they think of themselves as that I'm just a tweaker, a trailer program, they internalize it, they rise to the occasion. And then for the people that don't fit it like myself, you may not think you have a problem when you do, and it's bad for even everybody else, because it then lulls you into this false sense of security. Well, I'm only I'm only addicted to some pills, I'm only addicted to alcohol. Well, in our foundation, again, double the clients, we have half my clients right now are people who are in for alcohol. And you know what alcohol can absolutely devastate lives, I've seen that my own family, you know, 3d was the felony in many states. You know, that's, that's a tough process to have to bear around. You know, having spent five years in prison for killing someone driving drunk in an accident. You know, alcohol can, I mean, it's everywhere to men and women who overcome alcoholism, in my opinion, are the strongest, because it's everywhere. You can't cut alcohol on your left. Nobody offers me a bump of meth or coke at lunch, but they're going to offer to you a list of cocktails, you know, you have to have the strength and a taste for humor.

**Mia Voss** 22:41

I love it. No, it's so true. Like, Hey, how about we go do a bump in the bathroom as opposed to oh, you know, you're up for that. And there's so much ease in how alcohol is, is just so indoctrinated into our society such a great point, Kevin.

**Kevin Hyer** 22:55

I mean, who socially should Smith, nobody socially suits people socially, Trent, you know, I mean?

**Mia Voss** 23:04

It's really true. And, and again, I think that the the piece of regarding insurance and out as far as now that the Sackler family has had to give a lot of money, they're still pretty protected. And much, much, much too late for, for treatment. And for agonist. There's a lot of people like they get addicted. And then and I've been listening to a lot of YouTube, there's a channel that has a lot of the stories of fentanyl and I think it's important to also talk about this because the the time difference from when you were recovering from your addiction to what is happening right now in the street. I mean, it is, it is so fucking dangerous, right?

23:42

Scary. It is downright scary.

**Mia Voss** 23:44

I had to F bomb , I had to bust out

23:48

your fine this this shit we don't talk about. I hope none of my humor has been in poor taste. You have to have a little bit of humor to talk about this stuff. You know, you?

**Mia Voss** 23:57

Yeah, it's a spoonful of sugar to me. So



**Kevin Hyer 24:00**

well, you know, somebody said, why would you take a you know, Meth at 39 I said, Look, if you're gonna take a crystal meth at 39 Do it right. And I did. And that's also in all seriousness, though, part of the problem. When you have the resources to buy drugs, or by alcohol, it can sometimes get worse. So we also tried to say out that, you know, all people's lives aren't perfect, but you see on the surface isn't necessarily what's going on in the back. And that's not a huge part of our work. But it's for saying, you know, people never thought you know, when I would take Ubers and is for a long time I was able to hide this because nobody thinks the lawyer is fun out on crystal meth in the middle of the day. Right, but like,

**Mia Voss 24:33**

just seem energetic and snappy. He's effervescent,

**Kevin Hyer 24:37**

progressive. You know, but where I'm trying also is, is tell the stories authentically as I can, because there is appropriate around this. You know, I mean, this isn't heartbreaking disease, and there's no other word for it. It destroys families and destroys communities. And it harms children. I mean, this diseases in that cycle, and it's a generational cycle, and I'm just so proud about getting out the door to one, rate the stereotypes that reinforce the stigma, because the stigma makes it harder for people to ask for help. And then they don't ask for help, they're not able to go get the help that they need, and then they die, or they continue creating wreckage in their lives, that creates trauma for everyone around them, you know,

**Mia Voss 25:19**

made such a good point. I mean, it's really it's just about that. It's literally just down to speed. Because it's the same without bootheel being treated, it's going to be the same result, you will

**Kevin Hyer 25:29**

you will die from this disease, if you don't get treatment, eventually it may not be tomorrow may not be next year may even be in 10 years, that's where this stuff has independent variables that play into it. But it is the plane always crashes. And I think I can speak for I will speak for 11 I think most professionals in this field would agree, it is not sustainable, there always will be some kind of a crash. At some point, you have to address it, but you can. That's the message I hope we're offering. And in our foundation, it comes to a second chance at our career. So just so it's all clear to your listeners, the higher column Foundation, stone, hy er tire column.org is our website, we're a 501 C three, that has three roles, the softest piece that is legitimate is breaking those stereotypes that reinforce the stigma, because stigma makes it harder to ask for help. And when you don't get help you die. Okay.

**Mia Voss 26:13**

And do you think that through education or programming, speaking

**Kevin Hyer 26:15**

education, yeah, it's on our website, it's just the smallest piece, but it's a legitimate component. The second piece is filling that void in the market for addiction, recovery, insurance, there's nothing to help

you and you leave rehab, get back into the workforce through re entry, securing employment and maintaining it. That's why we're so big on our coaching to the International Coach Federation, mentoring programs, you know, networking events for people in recovery and their allies. You know, like I said, the legal services that help you get back to work, the referee, I love the reference advocacy, that's really to help someone go back from parties, they can't do it themselves, somebody else has to be the one to do

**Mia Voss 26:52**

it. And again, the reference advocacy Yes. Is having that. That is a piece Kevin, I never even thought of it's just the burn bridge.

**Kevin Hyer 27:03**

Oh, it is it is. And sometimes that's what most of the employers are afraid you're gonna ask them to take the person back and we say no, we're not. I don't think it's even good for a lot of these people to even go back.

**Mia Voss 27:12**

Because sure. That's the same location where they were. And if they're not strong enough, I don't Yeah, I don't that doesn't

**Kevin Hyer 27:18**

want you to make it clear. But what's also kind of neat, though, is we've had some people eventually get hired back, but places that fired them after they've had enough year. I'm thinking of two people right now enough time in recovery that they showed they came back and how beautiful is that? For that employer say, You know what? I like the new me the new Kevin, you can? Yeah, there's so much positivity in the so when you hear me talk about the heavy parts, there is positivity. And we do other stuff with paying for someone to get to interviews, within reason, I'm not going to fly you across the country for something but the people we're helping a lot. And in that moment in time flying across the country for interviews, we're talking about stuff in their communities.

**Mia Voss 27:52**

And you're also talking about healing, which is such a huge piece that I think is also unsung in a way too. There's, there's recovery, but then like this healing, healing through the employer healing to them, that heals their stigma as well. And then they can go out into their community. I mean, think about that, you know, that subtle, you know, butterfly effect almost of them being healed of the stigma. And then everyone loves a story like that. Do you know

**Kevin Hyer 28:20**

her stories, you know, I mean, my main, mine may be a little different. So he's but everybody's story is unique and powerful. And no one's is better or worse than the others. Oh, I had one thing your client, your listeners may appreciate you, we'll help you get to work until you get your first paycheck. If that's a barrier, some people are so low that a lot of sub catastrophically in addiction, they can't even afford to get to the interviews, they can't afford to get to work till they get the paycheck. So the budget, it's all individualized, me and we if it is within reason, like we paid 500 bucks to get some of the Microsoft

Office training and paid for the baby sitting in. It has to be within reason I don't have \$100 million sitting here to do all this work. I wish I did. But if it's within reason is related to helping you secure and maintain employment, or your family members, we will do it our donors are good, generous people. And then the last thing is going to the employers. That's the last piece in selling what I call cultural competence training around recovery. You know, how to talk about the sort how to attract, develop and engage employees and recovery in our families. You know, and there's so many ways, you know, here's one, do you offer Narcan, training to your staff as a form of giving back to the community and to let some people know

**Mia Voss** 29:27

can I do can I just ask you to clarify for our listeners for folks who don't know the importance of Narcan and,

**Kevin Hyer** 29:33

yeah, of course, naloxone is the name of the ingredient. Narcan is a brand name of something that reverses opioid

**Mia Voss** 29:41

Oh, sorry, I spelled that wrong and Arca and yes, yes. Yes. So that's Khanewal

**Kevin Hyer** 29:44

Narcan Nasal spray us the brand. And I think there may be one or two others but most people know that it's Naloxone and a l o x o ne bottom line, it reverses an opioid overdose and it can be very effective and it's not hard to use, and I feel like it should be like using a fire extinguisher or teaching CPR. Even if you don't know people in your circles that use drugs, okay, but there are people that do if you could save a life, you would think more people, I think most people would like to try to be able to do it. And you don't know if you're in traffic you see it. I mean, it's out to be like using a fire extinguisher CPR, people to know how to use changing a tire. Yeah. Like I say, don't call yourself more when you're recruiting for positions. What if you said in your job postings, you know, people of color, LGBTQ plus individuals, and people in recovery are especially encouraged to apply or whatever minority group you're protecting. What if you posted job postings at rehabs as people were leaving Sober Living houses, you know, make it a part of DEI diversity, equity, inclusion . And as an employment lawyer with a big HR network for the society of HR management in DC, had had a real life it's a Kevin hire esg.com is my background prior starting. Kevin hire Hulu and espn.com shows you everything I did before I got addicted.

**Mia Voss** 31:01

And I'll put I'll put the links in the show notes as well. I would love for you just for people to see that because you are the living embodiment of this, this gap that this gap right here and you can see it isn't on it, but I'm holding my fingers up. And that people can fall right in that crack after they they get out. And it's it's super tenuous, right. It's it's very delicate,

**Kevin Hyer** 31:24

because they don't have enough support. And then they feel worse about themselves. And then society shakes their finger, I don't know, extent told you. So like, it's not fair, you have to do people real second chance. And that's where you hear my voice gets more passionate, it's got to be a real one. I mean, that's not fair to say it has to be a real one. And then the gratitude, you have a second chance and the meaning and purpose you get from a career or whatever it is around that second chance, draws the pull of the addiction to a manageable level with treatment. And I'm someone who had a very serious addiction to a highly addictive drug, arguably the most addictive drug that I use in the most extreme way. And I've been out of it for 10 years now, and I've been able to do it, I'm gonna continue to do it because I get the meaning and purpose from reading this and giving back to others.

**Mia Voss** 32:09

Thank you for taking the courage. I think it's incredible. And thank you for, for the courage on that too. I really want to acknowledge you and tell you that I see you for this work, too. And then I just learned a ton as well to about these practical pieces, which is exactly why I do this podcast of the misunderstandings. And then there's other discussions like this about addiction stigma that people think they know about, and they don't. So I love this. I have two more things for you. One, just to talk real quickly about the ICF, the International Coach Federation how you got involved with it. And I have.

**Kevin Hyer** 32:45

Absolutely so we have on our website right now five, exceptional life and career coaches, they're all practicing professionals are not therapists, which is a perfect complement to therapy. So it's not in place that it's in addition, your outstanding. They're all trained with credentials to the International Coach Federation, which is one of the most probably, I think it is the gold standard of coaching in the US. And just like you have coaching or the kid does coaching is that and it is so helpful. It's unlimited time, because it's all individual. So what I mean by that is instead of saying you get six sessions, what do you need to get back to work? I really like how we individualize. So some people may need six sessions, some people may need 12, some people may need 15, or 18. I'm not gonna keep somebody on coaching for five or 10 years. But the bottom line is, what do we need to do to give you a second chance? How do we get reset on my LinkedIn? Main bio, so hitting reset, is what I talked about here toward towards getting bought. And you do have to get bought, and we're not speeding. But my message is on the other side of let's hit reset, what do we have to do to as much as possible reset the clock for you? And if we can't, because you can't go back to a prior role, like saying you have felonies that prevent certain physicians? How do we transfer those skills? So our coaching is something any of your listeners have during recovery their family members are eligible for? Just contact me through our website? And, and yeah, it's a beautiful thing. It's so helpful. It's, I get it myself. It's neat. It's really neat stuff.

**Mia Voss** 34:11

That is beautiful. And actually just thought of one more little side question. Where do you think would be a good resource? From a proactive standpoint? If someone is either observing someone in their life that is pre hitting that rock bottom, or they feel that themselves? Do you have any suggestions for us?

**Kevin Hyer** 34:28

Sure. I mean, I'm on the recovery side of addiction. But I understand the question. I mean, I think at the end of the day, you have only you can answer you have an addiction addiction is absolutely a disease but there's no I don't think really what tests you can give for it. Now if you're overdose Ospital from fentanyl and methamphetamine it's kind of hard to say you don't have a drug problem, as in my case, okay. Right. But you have to look in the mirror and say, you know, is this hurting my life and to me the essence of my addiction was the cycle the You something bad would happen in the upper four days saying, you know how many times I mean, obviously themselves, never, never, never, this has to stop, this has to stop this never happen again. And I would believe it in the moment and then I'd be good for a while, and then I start to miss it. And that is the essence of addiction and then back. And then it happens again, and it gets worse. And then relationships get heard, and was so scared with the trembling method, least from me, with my judgment gotten more and more impaired on it. And I did stay out of prison. Thank God, that was only fair, it wasn't. So I wasn't on the cops radar. But the bottom line was my third my psychiatrist, I'm going to look him in the island, he said, Kevin, you're going to end up in prison. If you don't stop. Just you're going to just matter time your judgment will become so impaired by this drug. And even if you're an end user, you're going to do something, you will do something, and then your life. Perfect can't be redeemed, but it would have taken a very different. So you're not seeing yourself, are you? Are you going down that rabbit hole and if you aren't, we'll get help. And we'll help people find sources if they don't fit with somebody.

**Mia Voss 36:01**

I appreciate that. Thank you for letting me add that aft asset distinction, and more of a distinction. Alright, one more question. Do you have a favorite swear word or phrase that you'd like to bust out? What is it?

**Kevin Hyer 36:17**

Don't believe your own bullshit.

**Mia Voss 36:18**

Oh, I love that. Yeah. Because

**Kevin Hyer 36:21**

you say that it works sometimes. Some people need to be reminded some more than others. But yeah.

**Mia Voss 36:31**

Thank you for giving great advice with a swear word in it because that's, you know,

**Kevin Hyer 36:37**

the art of telling somebody to go to hell in such a way they look forward to the trip. I like that. You say that again. Diplomacy is the art of telling someone to go to hell in such a way that I look forward to the trip.

**Mia Voss 36:50**

And, you know, I'm, I just feel like I just got a sweet treat that I'm going to keep repeating over and over again. Andy likes to say just sat on a pill out. Mine is just my favorites. Whoever's like, what's it? A well

motherfuckers actually just it just fills every little gap. So it certainly can that is for sure favorite that doesn't involve a swear word. But it's it properly evokes my frustration is Oh Christ on a cracker. And that makes Yeah, it makes when when is he on a cracker? You tell me? Never. Or maybe he has a cracker. There he goes. In the form of that. No, thank you for asking me. Oh my gosh, this has been so delightful. So we're gonna have everything in the show notes. Kevin, thank you for staying true to your message and putting that out there. We need it.

**Kevin Hyer** 37:44

Thank you. I appreciate your letting me have the opportunity to speak to your listeners. I hope you guys can hear us and we'll passionate I'm happy to talk to anybody about this offline just contact me through the website. And I promise you I will we'll get back to you may take me a day or two but I will return everyone's email.

**Mia Voss** 37:58

I don't know you call me pretty quickly got back to me. I was excited. So I love it. Alright everyone. Thank you for tuning in. Hey, thanks for tuning in. You can check out the show notes and guests links at shit we don't talk about podcast.com If you liked this episode, please subscribe and give it a like or leave a review, especially if it's a good one. See you next time. Bye