

Critics...

Through review of anti-Pathway websites and blogs, several key critics have been identified. Based on their own statements, critics are primarily defined as 1) Non-Clients: individuals who have not been treated by Pathway nor have they even visited a Pathway location, but they allege to have been abused in a drug treatment program 10-20 years ago, which had a "similar treatment model", or 2) Clients: individuals who claim to have been Pathway clients. It is recognized that drug treatment in general will have advocates and critics.

A true critic of any business or service, whether medical treatment, drug treatment, or otherwise, would be professional and reasoned. Any alleged issue would be addressed with the applicable business providing the products or services, to communicate the issue and validate whether it is an isolated incident of misunderstanding, miscommunication, or legitimate error. This professional process typically can get to a prompt resolution. However, Pathway critics have chosen to bypass any means of professional decorum to clarify their misperceptions. Instead, they promote hostile actions, accusations, and implications against Pathway through picket demonstrations and other public defamations via the Internet, the media, and by contacting Pathway supporters.

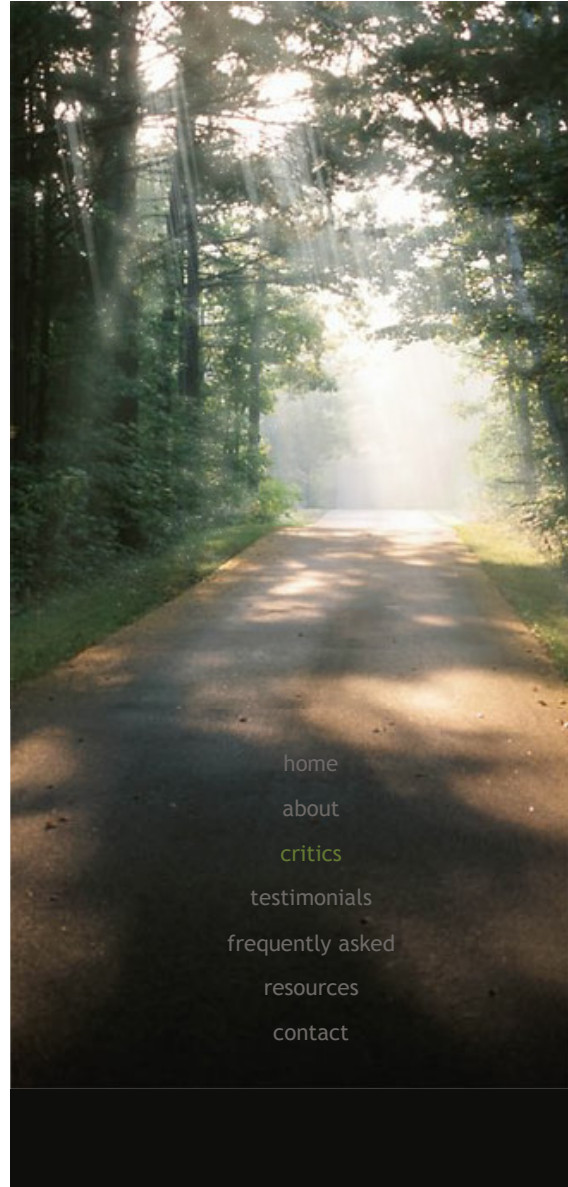
Critics work to capitalize on the "shock value" and sensationalism of their alleged experiences and accuse or imply that Pathway employs the same practices. Pathway absolutely does not do so. If there is abuse, why would they not call the police to investigate? If there truly is abuse, arrests would be made and Pathway would close. This process is not followed because critics know there is no abuse, but they simply want to publicly defame Pathway through the Internet and media. These hostile attacks contradict their claims of objectivity, "wanting to help the kids", and just wanting to prove that Pathway isn't like other drug treatment programs that allegedly "abused" clients. If they wanted

information about Pathway's treatment program, they could easily obtain that through direct contact with Pathway. One key critic claims that he wanted to visit Pathway and was denied. That is patently false. He was invited to Pathway's Indianapolis facility but he declined. Observation of their website content and blog postings reflect more of the same hostile accusations rather than true objectivity and desire to understand. Preview their comments below.

Non-Clients

A small group of critics claim they were abused at a drug treatment program(s) well before Pathway was even in business, however they claim or imply that Pathway is guilty of similar abuse. Since they do not have first-hand experience with Pathway, their claims are not based on factual evidence. In fact, many of their public comments are in the form of questions about Pathway, which indicates they do not have the answer. Yet, they will assume Pathway is guilty of the worst and post comments accordingly. It is healthy to ask questions. It is wrong to make accusations and implications that are untrue.

Repeated claims they have filed, or clients have filed, with organizations that license and accredit Pathway have been investigated and have consistently been found to be without merit. Such nuisance claims are not legitimate, but rather are filed to harass Pathway and to try and suspend licensing or accreditation, or move to probation status during the investigation, so that the critics can publicize that



Pathway's licensing and accreditation "has been placed on probation for (claims of) abuse." In addition, they berate parents and graduates in support of Pathway as being "idiotic", and "brainwashed", and attempt to discredit their life experience testimonials. Many Pathway graduates are grateful for their recovery and life skills acquired at Pathway, and based on events involving their past friends, indicate that without Pathway, they very well may be either dead, incarcerated, or insane. Critics routinely are humored by this.

It appears that this group is motivated by revenge for abuses allegedly experienced years ago by staff at treatment programs that were not Pathway. While the claims of their experiences are not scrutinized or even verified, they vehemently claim or imply that Pathway imposes the same abuse. These public accusations are designed to defame Pathway and incite fear of Pathway and avoidance by parents researching viable drug treatment options. Additionally, they directly contact corporate sponsors, boardmembers, and supporters of Pathway and alledge they are "supporting child abuse" through their support of Pathway. Even false claims and implications can be effective in the court of public opinion, despite investigations that find no evidence substantiating the claims. Critics who are non-clients, and have no personal experience with Pathway, attempt to actively recruit former clients wherever possible to further their cause against Pathway.

Former Clients

Pathway's treatment program is one that requires a dedicated commitment to helping the drug using teen. It involves sacrifice of personal time and self-reflection by parents to facilitate their own changes that are healthy and compatible with changes of recovery made by the teen. Most parents enjoy the opportunity to actively participate in the program, while also encouraging their teen. Unfortunately, a select few choose not to. Pathway is not a "drop-off" rehabilitation program where parents leave their child and come back months later when their teen completes the program. A key element of the program's success is active participation by the teen's parent(s). This helps parents make important changes to support recovery in their home. Just like some abandon the commitment to a fitness program, college degree, dieting, smoking cessation, or other self-improvement regimen, some people decide to not complete the Pathway program. Sometimes divorced parents elect to be civil and participate in the program for the mutual benefit to their teen. Sometimes they do not, and instead, strive to create conflict. Sometimes a parent has a substance abuse problem and does not choose to participate. Sometimes a parent refuses to pay for the treatment program and finds it easier to make disparaging statements about Pathway than to fulfill their financial responsibility. When a parent abandons the program, their teen also does not receive the long-term treatment necessary to effect recovery. Some teens enter the program with a short time before their 18th birthday. At age 18, they are considered "adults" and are no longer required to be under parental care. Most elect to remain in the program and graduate. Some do not. Sometimes, those who do not stay try to apply the skills acquired at Pathway and commit to their recovery program through additional counseling and support. Some do not and return to their previous drug-using behaviors.

Who are the people making these accusations and implications against Pathway?



William Earnshaw Sr. (non-client)

Earnshaw and his wife have developed a website with anti-Pathway comments, allegations, and implications. Neither were treated by Pathway, nor have they personally observed the Pathway program.

Pathway, pathway family center, pathway truth, pathway critics, teen treatment, teen drug treatment, troubled teens, teen counseling, teen abuse, treatment abuse, brainwashing, teen drug addiction, Pathway Family Center, help for teens, teen behavior issues, teen behavior treatment, teen drug addiction counseling, teen disorders

Reader Note : Earnshaw and his wife, Shelby, were named as defendants in a February 2005 Utah lawsuit in which they are claimed to have invaded plaintiff's privacy with intent to interfere with business relationships and prospective economic relationships of the plaintiff by contacting government officials and publishing false, defamatory, and misleading information about plaintiff on the Internet and to business and public officials, claiming false allegations of child abuse, criminal business practices, and criminal conviction of the plaintiff.

[View lawsuit filed against Earnshaws in Utah 5th District Court PDF>>](#)



You know, the type of mindset that is prevalent in PFC supporters is one of a cult. "They saved my life". Ok, sure. . Did you know that if you do not ingest drugs that you will not be under the influence? If anyone is going to save your life, it will be you. Drug use is voluntary and so is treatment. WCPO blog posting 2/6/2009

I met a dude in Washington DC during the July 4th festivities. He was about 70 years old and was on his way to get high on some pot. He'd been doing it for YEARS and could still walk and talk. No testicular cancer or depression. After all, he was 70 and was fairly content with life. Folks like him used to all sit around passing joints, pipes, etc... right there on the Mall. It was called a "Smoke In.". It was never violent or any danger to the public. SCREEEEEEEECH!!! Then the BIG BAD drug warriors came along and made pot out to be this horrible addictive narcotic, well, it ruined all future "Smoke In" events. So much for enjoying being an American. WISHTV blog posting 2/11/2009

I do not accept that it is a disease. It is a choice each and every time a person uses drugs, or eats, or drinks, or consumes any substance. I do accept that there are people who become physically dependent on some drugs, such as heroin addicts. Detoxification works, and then those people have to learn to make good decisions again WISHTV blog posting 2/13/2009

Imagining PFC closed is a most wonderful thought! Take someone who needs help and HELP them. Give them hope when they go to bed at night. Support them with happiness and love. Sports works well, keeps them busy and out of trouble. WISHTV blog posting #1540



Anthony Connelly (non-client)

Connelly has developed a website for the specific purpose of making anti-Pathway comments, allegations, and implications. Connelly was not treated by Pathway, nor has he personally observed the Pathway program.

We attack this program, not only because we are angry, but because we want these kids to NOT end up messed up in the head like we were. WCPO blog posting 2/7/2009

I will strongly oppose Pathway. WISHTV blog posting 2/17/2009

AA gives you the opportunity to improve your life. You can come and go as you please. AA is a great "voluntary" tool that is used by a lot of people. Furthermore, people can only recover from addiction when they are ready. WISHTV blog posting 2/18/2009

I completely understand the addiction part and that it is a condition, but I can't agree that it is a disease. I would like to see some scientific data backing up this idea of drug addiction being a disease. WISHTV blog posting 2/19/2009

A family counselor would be the best alternative because it keeps the child in the least restrictive environment, which has shown to be very productive compared to more restrictive environments. I cannot give you a complete answer because I am not a health professional. I do agree, there are few options for parents concerning this type of problem (drug addiction). WISHTV blog posting 2/8/2009

Looking back, it looks a lot different than when we were involved with that program. I don't agree with most of the supportive Pathway parents. I can also see why no parent or program supporter would want to speak to anti-program people who come across as rude and angry. WISHTV blog posting 2/11/2009

I am surprised that you, as a program parent, were allowed in the group. This would have been unheard of in KHK. I appreciate your honesty. WISHTV blog posting 2/9/2009

I admit that I have been very diligent and headstrong against Pathway. I am dedicated to questioning Pathway Family Center aggressively until I am certain that there is no abuse of any kind happening in this program WISHTV blog posting 2/12/2009



Michael Crawford (non-client)

"BINGO! And all the parents say the same things too for the most part, "dead insane in jail", "would be dead without the program", "program saved my kid's life", etc... " WISHTV blog posting #28



I am not a therapist WISHTV blog posting 2/15/2009

I tend to ignore "the program saved my life from deadinsaneinjail" stories. History shows it's irrelevant. Lobotomies would work too to keep kids off drugs, as would the cliff throwing therapy I suggested (at least they're sober on the way down!) WISHTV blog posting 2/16/2009

Whatever your parental philosophy (control or laissez faire) there are at home options for kids who have problems, do drugs, or even have addictions. WISHTV blog posting 2/16/2009

I want is to understand how it (PFC) works to determine whether it should be a primary target of my (personal) advocacy or not. While I personally oppose all forms of forced treatment as both ineffective and a violation of rights (i speak for myself here and nobody else), I recognize that goal as having a very low likelihood of success and as such do prioritize "targets". Right now, PFC is pretty high on my list. WISHTV blog posting 2/17/2009

I like the european approach to educating kids about substances: moderation. WISHTV blog posting 2/19/2009

The problem is that all this is based on the false assumption that drug/alcohol abuse is a one way street... that it's a progressive primary disease bla bla bla. Often times if you ignore the substance abuse entirely and instead deal with what causes a person to abuse substances, the substance abuse issue will disappear. WISHTV blog posting 2/19/2009

It's no huge secret pot is illegal because of racism. WISHTV blog posting 2/19/2009



Michael Patrick Carey Jr (non-client)

*I HAD ONLY SMOKED POT TWICE. I GOT A PROBLEM. A PROBLEM WITH UNFEELING **** LIKE YOU. UNTILL YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE SAYING I SUGGEST SHUTTING THE **** UP .* WISHTV blog posting 2/16/2009

I WAS PLACED ON JUVENILE PROBATION FOR PULLING A FALSE FIRE ALARM IN HIGH SCHOOL. I VIOLATED PROBATION BY COMING HOME AFTER CURFEW. MY GRANDMOTHER WAS WRAPPED UP IN THIS TOUGH LOVE MOVMENT AT THE TIME SO EACH TIME I WAS LATE SHE WOULD CALL THE PO AND I WOULD GO BACK BEFORE THE JUDGE. ON THE THIRD TIME THE JUDGE COMMITED ME AND STRAIGHT WAS THE NEXT STOP. A LITTLE EXTREME I THINK. WISHYV blog posting 2/16/2009

MR FAGER PASSED AWAY 3 DAYS AGO AND HE MEANT A GREAT DEAL TO US. I THINK A MODICUM OF RESPECT WOULD BE IN ORDER. DONT TALK ABOUT HIM YOU F U C K I N B I T C H WISHTV blog posting 2/16/2009

I SHOULD CLARIFY....THE BEHAVIOR THEY EXHIBIT WHEN OFF THE MEDS IS THESAME BEHAVIOR THEY EXHIBITED BEFORE THEY WERE ON THEM. THE MEDS DEFINATLEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR THE BETTER. WISHTV blog posting 2/20/2009



Maia Szalavitz (non-client)

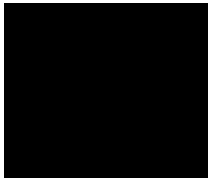
An author and journalist, Szalavitz, a former injection drug user, is frequently quoted in, or has articles published, on StopTheDrugWar.org , and other print and online media.

"While Ramstad has serious credentials on treatment and recovery, his opposition to needle exchange programs spurred drug policy analyst and author Maia Szalavitz to oppose his nomination in an article in the Huffington Post. "Ramstad may be a drug warrior in recovering person's clothing," she wrote,

noting that he also opposes medical marijuana." From Drug War Chronicle, 1/16/2009, StopTheDrugwar.org, on Szalavitz's opposition to Former Minnesota congressman, self-acknowledged recovered alcoholic, and treatment and recovery advocate, Jim Ramstad, being appointed head of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP -- the drug czar's office)

In an article in American Prospect, 10/2007, Szalavitz comments on residential teen drug treatment programs and "people who were allegedly denied medical care, starved, beaten, and "forced to eat vomit, lie in urine and feces, forced to use toothbrushes to clean toilets and then on their teeth." In the same article, Szalavitz references "Pathway Family Center, has sites in three states and support from major companies like Emmis Communications and the professional basketball team, the Indiana Pacers. Founded by Terri Nissley, whose expertise lies in the fact that she had an addicted daughter and her family participated in Straight, Pathway opened in Detroit in 1993. What makes these "tough love" programs uniquely dangerous is that they are led by amateurs who believe they are experts. No qualifications are needed to own, operate, or work with kids at such programs. Careful regulation is desperately needed to ensure that adolescents with mental illnesses and behavior disorders are not subjected to it or to similar forms of quackery."

Readers Note: Szalavitz has never visited any Pathway Family Center location to observe the program operations. Pathway Clinical operations are led by licensed, Masters Degree Therapists with emphasis on adolescent substance abuse treatment, and supported by licensed Physician, Nurse, and Psychiatrist. Also, a licensed teacher is on staff to facilitate daily classroom education and coursework.



"Carmel" (anonymous non-client)

I think that very often they replace their addiction with an equally obsessive problem. For example, and I see this as a big one....they find religion. Jesus replaces the crack pipe, and before you know it these people are preaching in church, singing in the choir. They are walking around witnessing and saving souls. I dont think this is any better than doing drugs. WISHTV blog posting 2/25/2009




Richard Mark West (uninvolved parent of client)

West is a non-custodial parent of a teen in the Pathway program. He has made allegations against Pathway directly to licensing agencies and to television media in Cincinnati and Indianapolis. He did not address any of his claims with Pathway. All of his claims are absolutely false, and [independent reviews have confirmed his accusations are unsubstantiated](#). It is apparent that his objective was to publicly defame Pathway with allegations that are false. If not, his first course of action would have been with Pathway directly. Although his teen is in the Pathway program, as are the teen's mother and step-father, West himself has not been a program participant. West is a defendant/respondent in several court filings in Hamilton County, IN. (as R Mark West and Richard M West) [Case search results >>](#) On at least one occasion, West entered the Pathway facility and became verbally abusive and physically threatening. Indianapolis Metro Police were called to escort West from the facility. It appears that West's aggression towards his ex-wife and apparent frustration over not having custody of his teen may foster motive for his deliberate public defamation of Pathway.



Amanda O. (former client)

Amanda did not complete the Pathway program. She has provided a declaration statement about Pathway that is posted on an anti-Pathway website and also on a social networking blog. Numerous claims in the statement have been refuted by several graduates and former staff members of Pathway. In fact, Amanda provided an email message to a graduate who inquired about her false allegations. In



the email message, she recanted the allegations and apologized.

"I was very confused at that point and was soo mixed up that yes some things were jumbled and like that, i was wrong about my statement and confused in my own brain. i should have changed it, but have so much going on that i guess i'd just overlooked it, its not like i check my blogs often. i have since changed it since you pointed it out, and thank you...i don't wish to spread lies of any sort. believe it or not but i am able to drink and control it. i haven't been to a bar in over 2 months due to \$, i haven't been drunk in about 3 weeks (remember i am 21 and at college) due to work and school, and am able to drink with the friends when i have time without a problem."

Amanda O. email 10/24/2008

Amanda O. has a library of photos titled "Drunkeness" on her social networking website. In addition, there are photos of her with captions "cheesing" and "starting to cheese." Cheesing has been referenced to the use of "Cheese", a recreational drug formed by combining heroin with certain over-the-counter medication ([more info>>](#)). Amanda O's statements and allegations against Pathway are fabricated and false, as she admits per the email communication above.

Update: On 3/27/2009, Amanda's mother threatened legal action if reference to Amanda remained on this website on 3/30/2009. All information and photos related to Amanda were researched and obtained from publicly available sources.



Rose Gagen (parent of former client)

Gagen's teen did not complete the Pathway program. Gagen has posted negative comments about Pathway on blogs and made statements to media. Her actions may be a retaliation tactic, motivated by her failure to pay for treatment services and Pathway's civil case filing against her in Marion County, Indiana (Cause# 49D050308CC001440) [Case search results >>](#)

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