

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

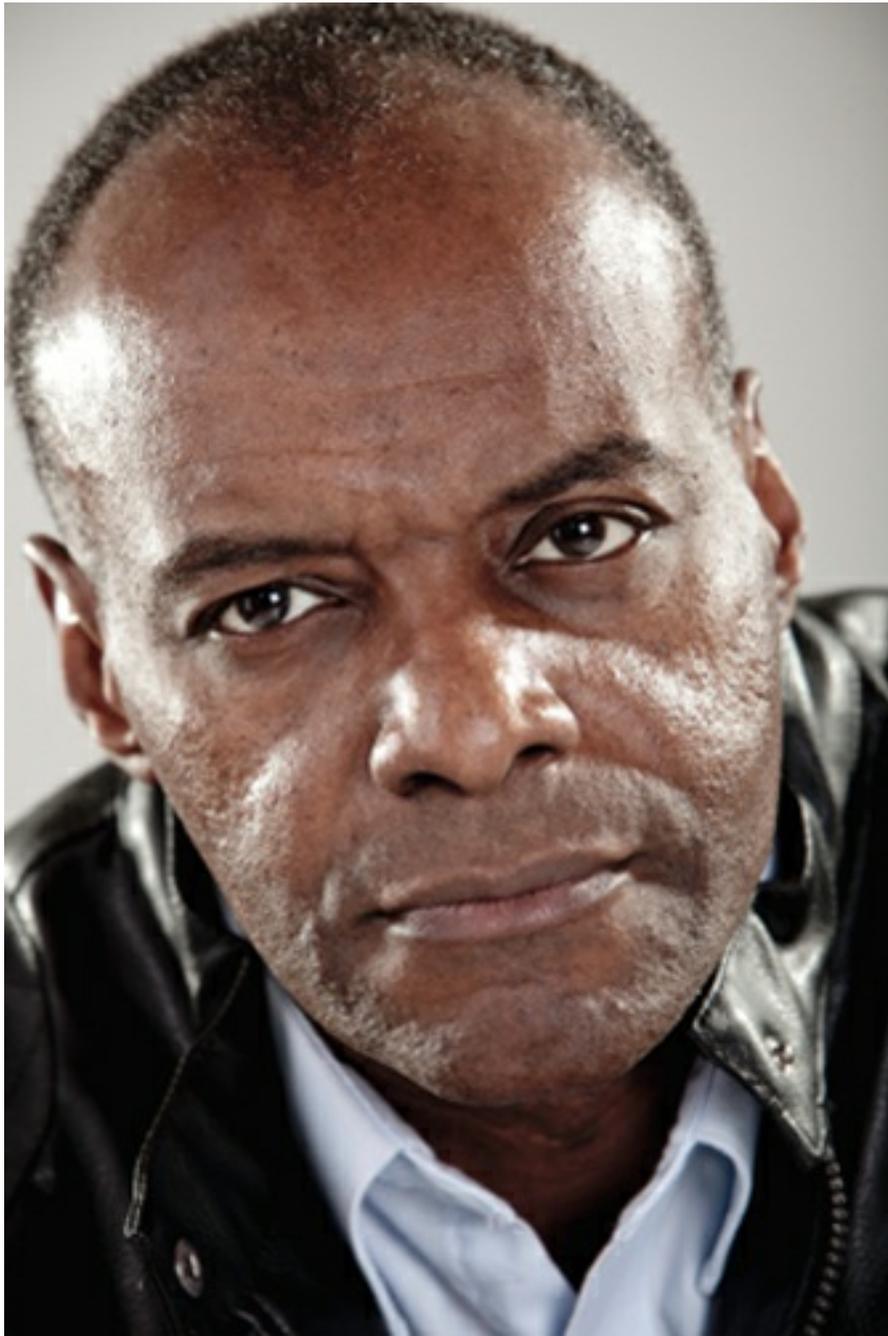
"Mom was passed out drunk, and I was hungry."



<https://www.drugabuse.gov>

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"Deon" grew up in a home where life could get crazy. His mother was addicted to alcohol. (This story is based on the experiences of real people whose names have been changed.)



One of my earliest memories is from when I was about three—mom was passed out drunk on the couch. I was tugging on her shirt and crying because I was hungry. I sat next to her all night, still hopeful that she'd wake up and fix dinner.

Life at home could get really crazy. Yelling and sometimes police sirens would wake me up. My mom's boyfriend would hit her or hit me for any little thing. I'm not sure if mom was in denial or just didn't care. As I got older I mostly hung out on the streets.

I started drinking when I was 10. At first it was just because my friends dared me. And it was easy enough to steal a bottle from my mother. But then I liked how drinking made me forget my problems. After a while, I got into harder drugs. Especially heroin. I dropped out of school...out of life, really.

But I'm in treatment now, talking with a counselor and taking medicine that helps me not use heroin.

Even though I used to hate support groups and Narcotics Anonymous meetings, I really get a lot out of them now. I've learned that kids whose parents had addictions are more at risk for addiction when they grow up. Some of it has to do with the genes passed down from parent to child. Some of it has to do with the pain and neglect a child goes through when the parent has a drug problem.

Hearing other people's stories helps me understand how my own childhood troubles affect my feelings and my choices in the present. The thing is, when I'm more aware of my feelings, I can make better choices and am more likely to stay sober. I can do things differently than my mother did.

Learn more: Read more about [Deon's heroin addiction](#).

Do you know a parent with a drug problem? [Treatment can help](#).