

# **James Dallin Gives Addiction Talks to Schools across Utah**

I had the pleasure of connecting with James Dallin (@addictiontalk) on Instagram. I discovered he was doing BIG things in the recovery community—giving Addiction Talk presentations to high schools—and I wanted to know more. So, I asked him if he could send me a recording. Thankfully, he did.

## **What is James Dallin's *Addiction Talk*?**



James takes the students on a journey—accompanied by photos that portray the evils of the drug world—through alcoholism and methamphetamine addiction. In a time when drugs often hijack the lives of teenagers, James' Addiction Talk leaves a mark.

He starts by telling the students he is a people lover.

Raw. Real. Unfiltered. His delivery is clear, fast paced and keeps the attention from drifting.

# A Sixty Year Old Gun Expert



“Can a sixty year old gun expert, who has never had an accident, *have an accident?*”

James wasn't a sixty year old gun expert, but it seemed he was a thirty four year old who knew a thing or two about life manageability. He tells us of his happy family. Wife. Kids. Good paying real estate job. He articulates his story well, but it is laced with a sense of impending darkness.

## **The                      Dawning                      of Unmanageability**



When the real estate market crashed in 2008, James' job suffered, and so did he. At thirty four, depression hit and he sought comfort in alcohol. It gave him happiness, he said. But it was fake happiness. The kind that doesn't last. The kind that is a lie. That fake happiness dug in him a deeper hole and left him on a hospital bed with two options.

1. Keep drinking and within six months die by the liquid grip of alcohol.
2. Get sober.

James white knuckled it and got sober. Depression remained.

## **Impending Doom Arrives**



This is where the, "Holy s\*#t this s\*#t is real," comes in. James tells the students of how after he got sober, he started working seventy hour weeks as a manager of a local store. A customer came in one day and offered him some meth. He obliged and took the pipe. What followed was a five year run with the deadly drug that caused him to abandon his family and his compassion—it had robbed him of his love for people. His retelling comes equipped with graphic images of his drug paraphernalia, faces of meth and images of those whose lives have been taken by the drug.

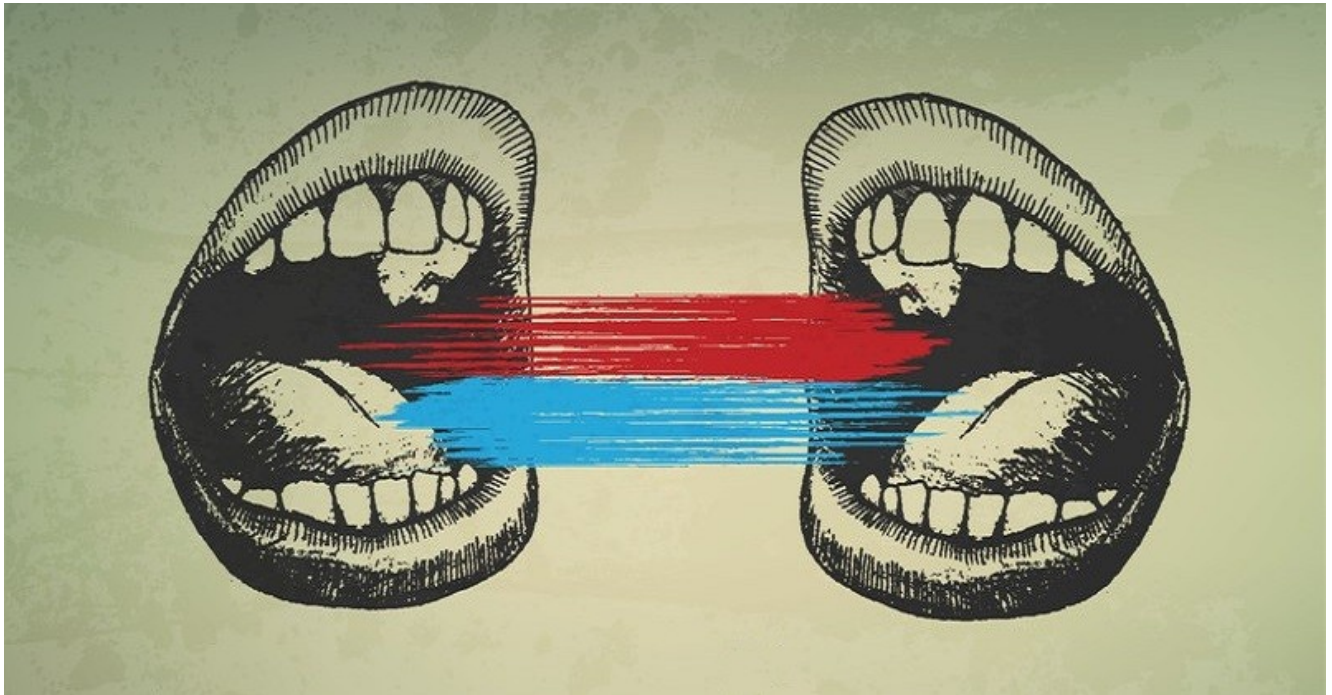
## **The Bee and the Sting**



Once the stomachs in the room have had a chance to settle, James intertwines a deep lesson into his presentation. *The Allergy.*

James is allergic to bee stings. If he gets stung, he'll have an allergic reaction that will kill him if he doesn't get treatment. He stresses that he is allergic to drugs and alcohol in the same way—if he puts them in his body, he will lose everything and possibly end up dead in the ground. He turns his attention to the students and ensures that they hear him when he says some of them in the room are also allergic to drugs and alcohol—that if they put them in their body, there is a strong possibility they will also lose everything and end up dead.

# Why is Addiction Talk Crucial to Have?



Addiction doesn't discriminate. A rich sixty year old gun expert can accidentally shoot his foot off if he doesn't approach his gun as if it's always loaded, just as a thriving thirty-four year old real estate broker can fall into a methamphetamine induced hell if he isn't aware of the trap. And, a high school teenager can get caught in the trap too.

Adderall, cocaine, meth, xanax, vicoden, oxycontin—**ALL OF THESE DRUGS WERE SOLD AT MY SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOL.** This is often the place where it starts. Seeing the reality of what can happen, although dark in experience, can shed invaluable light onto the topic.



With Addiction Talk, the students can experience the hell of drug abuse from James' point of view. They can walk in his shoes and feel the feelings he felt and see the things he saw without ever having to go there themselves. They can then ask questions about the experience once the presentation is over. Addiction Talk is gritty and it isn't comfortable but it is a conversation that needs to be had to prepare the younger generation for the time when drugs come knocking on their door.

Speaking out on a topic so commonly shunned and despised is a courageous thing to do. And, James standing in the flesh giving Addiction Talks is a message of hope in itself. He has given talks to over thirty junior highs and high schools across Utah and has impacted hundreds of students. You can contact him at [www.jamesdallin.com](http://www.jamesdallin.com). Or, find him on Instagram **@addictiontalk**

If you have any questions or would like to share your experiences about Addiction Talk, you can do so in the comment



section below.

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Jacob O'Cain is a recovering drug addict and teaches ESL to kids in China. He's the author of *The Addict with a Thousand Faces* (not yet published) and believes we are all on the hero's journey. He is actively looking to connect with people in the recovery community. Send him a message on Instagram @jacob\_ocain or contact him through [www.jacobocain.com](http://www.jacobocain.com).