

Brothers in recovery: Torrey Pines grads overcome addiction to open treatment center



Error! Filename not specified.

Brothers Michael and Rob Weir opened Immersive Recovery, a drug and alcohol treatment center in San Marcos.

(Courtesy)

KAREN BILLING

After battling the disease of addiction for many years, Torrey Pines High School graduates and brothers Michael and Rob Weir have turned their lives around and are now committed to helping others do the same.

Along with partner Wesley Heim, the brothers recently opened Immersive Recovery, a drug and alcohol treatment center for men in [San Marcos](#).

“Obviously we put our parents through hell,” Michael said of their struggles with addiction that began as teenagers. “Our parents are incredibly happy that we are making an impact on other people’s lives. When we decided to get clean, it made a huge impact on our family dynamic, we are more bonded and cohesive than we have ever been.”

“When we get a guy come to us with nothing and we get to see him get clean and start to work and engage with life, rebuild relationships and move forward in a positive way, that’s really rewarding,” Rob said.

The brothers have been working in the recovery field since 2013, when Michael and Heim established a community of structured sober living homes throughout San Diego County called First Step. With Immersive Recovery, they have crafted a high level of care that specializes in “meeting clients where they are.” The individualized care is designed to address and effectively treat the disease of addiction while simultaneously establishing a lifestyle of recovery.

Immersive Recovery offers individual, group and family sessions, solution-focused therapy, behavioral therapy, exposure-based outings and activities, life skills training and after care, such as sober living placement and career counseling.

The Weir brothers are nationally-certified recovery coaches and their staff includes clinical and medical directors, physicians and outside counselors to guide clients through the individual therapy process.

The men are reaching a demographic they once fit into — guys with a combination of failure to launch syndrome and chemical dependency. The

Weirs said they are proof that drug and alcohol addiction is a non-discriminatory disease.

“Just because you live in an affluent area doesn’t mean you’re exempt from suffering from addiction,” Rob said, noting that, sadly, between them they have lost several friends from Torrey Pines High School to drug overdoses.

“There’s an epidemic right now,” Michael said. “Opioid abuse is killing more people than ever and it’s really important we have a strong, quality programs to address the underlying issues.”

The brothers said they began drinking and experimenting with drugs in an effort to be a part of the “party scene” at Torrey Pines.

“I felt like a normal Torrey Pines kid. It’s just what everyone was doing,” said Rob, who graduated in 2004.

Michael said he started with alcohol but was doing cocaine by the time he was a sophomore.

“It was the social norm. It was nothing to wake up on a Saturday morning with a hangover,” Michael said.

Soon their partying extended into the week days. All of that experimenting and trying to be part of the “in crowd” created bad habits of habitual drug and alcohol abuse for Rob. By the time he landed at University of Colorado at Boulder, he was in a downward spiral that led him to abuse Xanax, OxyContin and opiates.

Michael, 30, graduated from Torrey Pines in 2005 and also got deep into opiate abuse. He attended Mira Costa College briefly, but his drinking and drug use soon became his full-time job.

“My addiction was so strong I needed to use every day to not get sick,” Mike said. “It becomes entirely possessive and that’s where the issue lies. With addiction, there is nothing else in life but that. It’s rough.”

In time, they found their own bottoms. Rob got sober at 25 and Michael at age 26.

Their experiences in clinical treatment facilities and programs helped inform what Immersive Recovery needed to be.

“We need to be getting guys engaged with their passions, hobbies and interests to give them reasons to stay sober,” Rob said “By creating small, measurable successes, it builds the foundation of a lifestyle in recovery.”

The Immersive program focuses on three pillars of growth: “Discover, Develop and Deploy.”

With Discover, clients are guided through a process of self-discovery by “confronting the past, acknowledging the present and constructively preparing for the future.” In Develop, they explore the building blocks of recovery and begin to develop passion and purpose, and with Deploy, clients begin to accomplish personal goals, exercise healthy living practices and continue developing their purpose and reasons to stay sober.

Immersive Recovery offers a comprehensive partial hospitalization program (commonly referred to as day treatment) treating individuals at the earliest stages of sobriety, an intensive outpatient program, and group and individual sessions with a licensed marriage and family therapist and certified addictions treatment counselors.

Clients are offered dual-diagnosis therapies, 12-Step meetings, Celebrate Recovery meetings, social functions, outdoor activities, exercise, nutritional support, and are given the tools and assistance necessary to pursue successful, productive, drug-free lives.

While not licensed counselors, Michael and Rob spend a lot of time with their clients offering both support and hope. They want to offer insight but don't intend to be a model of what recovery has to look like.

“Everyone has their own journey in recovery,” Rob said. “We want them to understand that they're capable of going wherever it is they want to go. It's been amazing to do this alongside my brother. We are helping to change lives. What better thing could we be doing?”

Learn more about Immersive Recovery at immersiverecovery.com