



## **Bio for Luana Olavarria**

### **Luana's experience with recovery:**

I was working as a Regional HR Manager when I was introduced to the family disease of addiction and learned about co-dependency and enabling. Being exposed to addiction for the first time, sent me in a tailspin and I felt helpless to protect and change my loved one; my desire to control the situation overwhelmed every corner of my life.

It's a scary thing to be thrown into the situation of loving someone struggling with addiction and even harder to grasp the depths and darkness that those with substance abuse disorders will go to for their high, especially since it was never my world. This is where Al-Anon saved my sanity. I had to learn to be ok, whether my person struggling with addiction was ok or not.

### **How Luana came to Next Step:**

When I was introduced to Susan, I felt like I'd met a kindred spirit, someone who truly values the best interest of the client. After meeting the rest of the team, it was clear to me that I needed to be part of Next Step team.

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I'm often the first person that clients and their families talk to about the chaos that addiction creates in their lives.

My years of experience as an Admissions Director, combined with a Master's level clinical education and 9 years of Al-Anon, has assisted me in becoming perfectly equipped to work with families and clients when they make that initial, desperate phone call.

A sense of urgency and compassion comes naturally for me on every call, to make every client and their families feel confident that they'll get the help they need.

**Luana's advice for recovering addicts and their friends & family:**

I would encourage families to use the time that they're loved ones are in treatment, to learn more about the disease of addiction, enter therapy for themselves, go to Al-Anon, and find a way to establish boundaries to encourage peace in all aspects of their lives. The disease of addiction ravages families; it destroys trust, and traumatizes everyone it touches, well beyond the scope of the person struggling with addiction.

Due to both professional and personal experience, I understand first-hand, the power of treatment done right, and that it creates a solid foundation for achieving and maintaining long term sobriety.

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I also understand the unintentional pitfalls families fall into if they, themselves, do not find help while their loved one is seeking help.

**A little known fact about Luana:**

I was born in Sydney, Australia to Chilean parents and moved with them to the US in 1984.

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