



Making recovery visible

In Sheffield we know that there are 100's if not 1000's of untold stories (often shared in closed groups) that the general population don't get to hear about. Sheffield Recovery Forum is STILL on a mission to change that.

David Turts

I had problems with addiction - I was in and out of cocaine addiction for about 4 years. I'd always worked for myself and ran a successful roofing business, turning over half a million pounds a year, employing 10 people. To the outside world everything was going well. I was secretly using coke, at first just at the weekends at private parties at home, but then it progressed to using every evening, and every day. I was still getting up for work, still running my business, but I just put a mask on at work and carried on. I was easily spending £200 a day on coke. I lost my relationship with my girlfriend and ended up alone.

What was life like for you at rock bottom?

My rock bottom came when everything came crashing down. I had under-quoted for a couple of jobs, big roof conversions, basically because I wasn't thinking straight or concentrating on the business. I was paying out a lot of money on materials and for wages, and was hiding from the fact that I knew the money was going to run out. I woke up one day with literally no cash left in the business and had to declare bankruptcy. That meant that some of the guys who worked for me went without pay and I couldn't finish the jobs I was working on. It was awful thinking about the affect my bad decisions had on people and how I'd left their homes unfinished. That's when I realised that I had serious problems. I hid in my bedroom for about a month and was still using coke, until my personal cash ran out too

What was the turning point for you?

I made an appointment at Sidney Street and spoke to Mick Holmes. I told him everything, laid my cards out completely on the table and asked for help. He advised me to try Kickback Recovery with Mick Hartley, so I went along and started to share my story in the group sessions. The twice weekly sessions at Kickback became my new drug, and with Mick's support, the sessions were the stepping stone I needed to turn my life around.

What helped?

The more I shared at meetings, the easier life became. I needed to learn to love myself again, because I hated myself at this point. I hated what I'd become and what I'd done to people along the way. I knew I'd let clients down and let my staff down. I knew I was more than this. After 3 or 4 months attending meetings at Kickback, I set my business back up again and as work came in I started to pay off the debts to my staff and to the clients who's jobs I hadn't been able to finish. I needed to get that off my conscience.

Now 15 months later, I've almost repaid those debts and that's really important to me. I feel like I've earned people's respect back and they can see that I just made some really bad choices. I'm working with a business and life coach now, Mike Lawrence, and he's helping to keep me accountable for decisions that I make in my life and for my business - his support is invaluable to me. It's a big investment in myself but I get so much from it. It's important for me to surround myself with positive people who have my best interests at heart. I'm a firm believer that you can move on from recovery in the sense of attending meetings and accessing support groups. I believe you can change your own behaviour yourself, and take control of your life again. I'm still learning to make better choices - I know there's still work for me to do.

What is life like now? How are things different?

I know who I am now. I'm not a bad person, I'm just someone who made a few mistakes, but I'm doing my best to make up for it now. I still struggle, and during lockdown I had a lapse. The stress of the situation got to me and I went back to what I knew, which was going on a massive 10 day bender and spending loads of money on coke. I'm not proud of it, but it quickly made me realise that I don't want to go down that road again, that's not who I am anymore and I don't want to get sucked in again.

My aims for the future are to continue to pay off the debts from the mistakes I've made, and to be a successful businessman again. My business is doing really well and I want that to continue. I want to show people that it is possible to turn your life around and become a success, to show people who may be suffering now with addiction, like I was, that they can do this and make something of their lives.