



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.

Adam Holmes

What was life like for you at rock bottom?

My rock bottom started back when I was a kid. I started drinking and smoking cannabis when I was fourteen. I stopped going to school. I grew up in a single parent family which was hard back then. I was always fighting with my siblings, then left home at sixteen and moved into a youth hostel.

Once I was there I carried on drinking and started taking amphetamines, initially snorting but then started injecting. I got into ecstasy too, and was just going out enjoying the recreational side of things, in the bars and clubs, having a great time.

But then my amphetamine use got worse and became a bad habit. I started dealing and was increasingly getting into trouble with the police - in and out of jail, and this just carried on until I burgled my Mum's house when I was 28, along with some other burglaries. She reported me, which I'm glad about now, but that sent me to prison and I came out with a heroin addiction, having never touched it before I went in there.

I was in my early 30s by this time and moved to Derby and was living in hostels there, mixing with all the guys in the hostels, up to all sorts. They used to hang out with some prostitutes and that's how I got introduced to crack. That's when everything started to unravel.

Life just spiralled out of control from there. I was snowballing, injecting heroin and crack together, selling drugs, anything to keep on top of what I needed. I moved back to Sheffield, met a partner and had my daughter, but was soon homeless and begging. I tried selling the Big Issue for a bit, more shoplifting. I'd been stopped from seeing my daughter, which I completely understand - my life was just pure chaos back then. Things continued to spiral. I started a new relationship, but when that turned toxic it gave me the kick I needed to sort myself out. I went to see a worker at Fitzwilliam Centre and asked for help.

I knew something had to change. I'd lost everything that I loved and had nothing left. Complete rock bottom.

What was the turning point for you?

I went to a two week detox in Nether Edge until Christmas time in 2015, then went to rehab in January 2016 in Scarborough. I remember thinking about leaving detox and how I was going to manage to get to the train station without scoring drugs. I was scared to death in that first meeting at rehab, thinking, 'what on earth am I doing here?' but I knew others had been through the same rehab place and that gave me confidence that it was the right place for me.

I had to do a lot of work there. Going over old trauma, abuse from when I was a child, my drug use, the damage I'd done over the years. I came out after six months, with all the foundations in place for recovery. I got myself a job, which isn't advised as it can be too much to take on, and it proved to be the case when I relapsed after six weeks.

But I needed that to prove to myself that I was well and truly done with drugs and didn't want them in my life anymore. I was done.

What helped?

What's helped me most has been De Hood Boxing Centre and the team there. I set up a recovery group up there and I'm a trainer now too, doing classes some mornings and evenings. It's all about recovery through fitness, but it's not just recovering addicts who are there, there are people with mental health issues, anxiety and depression, and just people from the community who want to get fit and work out in a safe space.

It's got a real community feel, not like other gyms where everyone is trying to outdo each other. NA was great, and I got a lot out of the meetings, but I needed to move on from the meetings to be able to move on in my recovery journey.

I've come to understand that I need that human connection every day, and that's what I get from De Hood - that's saved me.

What is life like now? How are things different?

Well, I'm 4 years clean now. Before I'd never ask for help or admit that I'm struggling - now I'm the first person to talk and ask for help.

On my 4th anniversary my daughter arrived at De Hood to surprise me with balloons and a cake to celebrate and let me know how proud she is of me. She's at college now. We've been back in touch for the past few years and she always supports me in what I'm doing. For anyone reading my story, I'd say, 'recovery is possible - if I can do it anyone can!' Just talk, ask for help and the support is there.