



Name: Damian

Age: 42

Problem: Drugs & Alcohol

Time in Recovery: 5 months substance free, 15 months in recovery (at time of publishing)

When did you first start using?

I first started drinking alcohol aged 12. Things progressed and I picked up cannabis as well as the alcohol when I was 13. By the time I was 15; I was using amphetamines, ecstasy and LSD. At 16 I started to use heroin, and crack cocaine soon followed.

When did it become a problem?

By age 17, I was physically dependent on heroin and at the time I was supposed to be studying for my A-Levels. Concentrating on school life became increasingly difficult, and although I managed to pass my A-Levels, life was very chaotic around that time. I was admitted to my first inpatient detox the week of my A-Level results and had to be chaperoned to collect them. I went off to university and life became a continuous cycle of relapsing, using and withdrawing. By the year 2000, having dropped out of university, I ended up on a methadone prescription. Over the next 21 years I had a couple of attempts to get off the heroin and methadone, but always substituted other substances into my life and soon relapsed with heroin and methadone.

What made you get help?

As my disease progressed so did the consequences. I had periods of mental illness, became involved with serious crime and ended up in prison. This last step became a bit of a turning point and I knew something had to change. At this time, a family friend suggested I attended the Basement Recovery Project upon my release from prison. Even though I struggled to maintain my recovery in these early days, my thinking had started to change. At some point during this time, I had a discussion about starting a reduction plan for my methadone prescription so that I could get clean.



Why The Basement Recovery Project?

As mentioned above, The Basement Recovery Project was suggested to me by a family friend. This person had seen others get well at the Basement so I decided to give it a go. Before this, I had always thought I could stop using on my own but the evidence from my life showed that this was not true. TBRP is right here in my local town, so it was easy for me to access.



Where would you be now?

I'm pretty sure I would be back in prison, probably serving a longer sentence than the last one. I would probably have ended up homeless and cut off by my family as they had nearly had enough of my behaviour in addiction. Even if I was not in prison or on the streets, I would be involved in crime to support my habit.

How is life today?

Life is good today. I no longer have the obsession to use any mind-altering substances. I can pay my bills, eat healthily and don't have to rely on anybody else to support me financially. I am now involved in sports and particularly enjoy my new boxing program. I have been involved in a Couch To 5K running program through Calderdale In Recovery and am now supporting other people to get fit and healthy. I am also hoping to enrol in a sports and fitness course at Calderdale College. I never dreamed I would be fit, healthy and clean when I was in active addiction.

What would you say to someone thinking about getting help?

I would just say stick with it and don't give up. Eventually, recovery will rub off on you. It might not be easy but it's not impossible.

Damian

Read more case studies on our website:

<https://thebasementproject.org.uk/addiction-recovery-stories/>