



Name: Kevin  
Age: 28  
Problem: Drinking, Cannabis & Coke  
Clean: 12 months

## WHEN DID YOUR ADDICTION START?

It started very early. I was smoking cannabis by the time I was 11. Guess I was hanging around with the wrong crowd and they all seemed to do it. They were older than me but that didn't seem to matter. I was also taking tabs at 13. Ecstasy, amphetamines etc., though to start with that was more social stuff, I guess like people go drinking socially, I did the tabs. My real addiction at the time was cannabis.

## WHY DID YOU?

I don't know really, I think deep down I just have one of those silly addictive heads, I mean even before the cannabis I used to smoke those hollow bamboo sticks that grew in the fields (since coming to the Basement I found out I was not the only one).

My mum and dad had split by the time I was six. Dad was a violent alcoholic and he and mum used to fight all the time, to the point where mum could no longer put up with it or he would have killed her I'm sure. I remember him running around with an axe one day, can't remember why. So mum moved us around a lot and I attended many schools. I never seemed to fit in though.

## WHAT MADE YOU GET HELP?

Things were just getting worse and worse. I was already stealing at 11 to feed my cannabis addiction and had even been arrested for burglary at 13. Fortunately mum forced me get a job when I left school so I had just enough money to get by and feed my habit. By the time I had turned 18 I was drinking heavily and had done my first line of coke (which meant my cannabis addiction went out the window, I'd found something 'better'). Coke seemed the 'in-thing' and with coke, came the alcohol. But it didn't mix well with my head. I became violent with it, not sure if that was from what I had seen from my dad, but it just seemed the normal thing to do growing up. I can't blame my mates really, sure they got stuck in, but I always seemed to be the one who started it off. I never picked on the 'vulnerable' though, in fact I would go to lengths to stick up for them. I wanted to fight the tough guys, the bullies, those that liked to fight. For me, the bigger and harder they were, the better (well not always of course, you always meet your match). Again, I'm not sure if this was from seeing my dad bully my mum, I guess looking back, and what I know now, it surely was.

My dad hung himself three years ago. No goodbye, no note, no nothing. I went completely mad with the drugs and booze. I had a lot of those "why" questions that couldn't be answered. After my own suicide attempt (yeah I couldn't even do that right, I felt such a failure) I had reached my 'rock bottom'. I was referred to a crisis team.

## WHY THE BASEMENT PROJECT?

The crisis team referred me to the local SMS team, by which time I had gone two weeks without a drink, so they thought I was ok and didn't need their help. I was far from OK, I was shaking like mad, my head was a mess and I was emotionally broke. They referred me to The Basement Project and I met with one of the staff there. I immediately had this nice warm feeling that at last someone completely understood me and cared. At the Basement I know it's not just about the drink or drugs, it's about addiction, how it works and how it manipulates you.

## WHERE WOULD YOU BE NOW?

I would be in some cemetery somewhere without a shadow of a doubt.

## HOW ARE YOU NOW?

Now? I feel there is a purpose in life again and I'm happily enjoying it. It has much more meaning now. I'm taking responsibility for my actions and not to blame others and hold resentments. I don't judge people in the same way as I used to.

I still attend The Basement Project, every time I go I am getting the same 'treatment' as I did on day one, but in addition to that I am now a part of someone else's day one. Everyone helps each other down there. There is always someone who you can chat with to get help and always someone you can talk to and offer help.

I have a great relationship with my son, in fact, all my relationships have improved. **Life is good again.**