



Name: Shadey  
Age: 38 years  
Problem: 26 years  
Clean: 4 Months

## WHEN DID YOU START DRINKING AND DRUGGING?

I was 12. It started with cannabis, petrol, glue, gas etc. I was smoking cannabis most days, before, during and after school. I fed my habit by dealing at school and through petty crime. I had soon progressed to acid trips, ecstasy, amphetamines and alcohol, and by the time I was 15 my addiction had progressed to heroin.

## WHY DID YOU?

Well to start with I guess it was down to social pressure. My mates did it, so I did it. It was mostly weekends for the amphetamines, ecstasy and trips. It wasn't meant to last. We used to hang around most nights and only really smoked a bit of cannabis. We would save up for the weekend, putting money into a pot so we could go a bit wild from Friday to Sunday. Then a big thing happened in my life. Just before I was 15 my younger brother died. He was only 4 minutes younger – my twin. We did everything together, were inseparable and did the drugs too.

One Monday night we were running along the top of our school roof with £7000 and the police right behind us. Yeah we had broken into school and stolen the dinner money for that week. It was a lot of money for two 14 year old boys. That would have kept us in drugs for a while. As we ran across the roof my brother fell through a skylight of one of the classrooms. As he fell, he hit his head, flipped over and his head hit the corner of a desk.

My mum understood it was an accident and knew it could just as easily have been me, but my step-dad blamed me. He favoured my brother more than me, just a clash of personalities I guess. All I got from him for six months was “and all for £7000”. I felt guilty about my brother's death, ashamed and angry with myself for not looking after him better. So I ended up turning to drugs big style. I became a smack head just like those I had taken the piss out of when I was younger. “Look at that waste of space” I used to say.

## WHEN DID IT BECOME A PROBLEM?

Well it's always been a problem really, I'm an addict and I do things to excess. It became a problem the moment I started. Cannabis for example, I started with a spliff and within a month it was bucket and bongs. But I still managed to do well at school. I got 9 GCSE's; all grade A, 7 with distinction. At College I sat four A levels and got two A\*'s and two A distinctions. I went onto Sheffield Polytechnic and sat two degrees; mathematics with physics and sociology with behavioural patterns where I achieved a Masters and Honours degree respectively.

Well, most of my student loan money had gone on drugs. I needed money. I didn't do things by half; if I was going to go to jail I was going to go for a “good” reason. So, needing money, a friend and I held up a post office with a shotgun. Three and a half hours after the alarms sounded I was in the cells. Being in jail (another long story) I got clean, there was no methadone program back then. But I came out and went right back into the old habits, except I left the crack and smack alone. I knew that was a dangerous path to go down and the social stigma that went with it. So I stuck with cannabis for the next 10 years. Got married, started my own business in gardening, window cleaning etc. I bought my own house and employed one of my younger brothers, he moved up North to live near us. I couldn't drive, drugs had caused my epilepsy.

## WHAT MADE YOU GET HELP?

Well I won't bore you with the detail but I lost everything, the business, my marriage etc. For one reason or another, I ended up living in Halifax. Things had just gotten to the point where I became sick and tired of being sick and tired. Getting up, committing crime, using drugs, committing more crime, using more drugs, sleeping, getting up and so on. I was in a vicious circle. I was sick of living in 'pig shit', sick of not being a dad to my kids, sick of life.

## WHY THE BASEMENT PROJECT?

I had been accessing the Basement Breakfast club for about 3 years (that's all it was then). I was getting two meals per week, and another at Salvation Army so I had more money for drugs. Not that I would have spent it on food anyway. When the Basement

Recovery programme started, I had seen people go through it and get clean and well. People who I used with, people who I know were just like me were getting better. I had seen something in them, getting their lives back together and I wanted some of that.

## **WHERE WOULD YOU BE NOW?**

Dead.

## **HOW ARE YOU NOW?**

Alive, clean, in recovery and being a proper dad to my kids as well as working towards a better life. I have worked The Basement Recovery Programme and they have given me the tools to deal with the issues that used to lead me to use. Recovery is like a roller-coaster, you have to learn to deal with the ups and the downs without them leading to use. As an addict, I used on both the ups and the downs. I never expected this to be easy, and it's not. It has been mentally very challenging at times. I have spent a lifetime making myself ill so I know there is no instant fix. I know I have to work hard at this and I will. I'm not a bad person, just a sick person getting well. Today, life is looking good.