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Want a taste of Recovery?

Are you sick and tired of being sick and tired? Have the drugs stopped working? Is alcohol killing you?

Do you want to change your life but don't know how?

The Basement Recovery Project is running a "Motivating Change Workshop" on the first Monday of every month. Come and find out what Recovery is all about and how their 16 week programme has changed people's lives. Hear first-hand experiences from people who have been where you are now, and are free from drink and drugs. Contact Tom on 01422 383063

Friends and Families support gets a boost with Al-Anon Family Groups

Al-Anon Family Groups provide support to anyone whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else's drinking. We believe alcoholism affects the whole family, not just the drinker.

Al-Anon is a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience in order to solve their common problems.

Meetings are held at the YMCA, Halifax each Wednesday at 18:30 see www.al-anonuk.org.uk for more information.

What is RecoveryTimes and who is behind it?

RecoveryTimes is written and produced by The Basement Project's "Community Recovery Organisers".

Who are we? Well, we are a bunch of people just like you. Unlike some of you reading this, we suffer from an illness called addiction, specifically drug or alcohol addiction. There are many arguments about why people become addicted, from being born addicts to behaviours of choice to just being stupid. Well you sure don't get a newsletter like this from being stupid, nor would you get one if we were high on drugs or alcohol – we are in Recovery.

Addiction is a complex and gripping illness that takes over your body; physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Understanding these underlying issues is the key to long lasting recovery, a physical detox alone is not the answer. We believe putting the drink or drugs down, either stopping by yourself or through a clinical detox, is only the first milestone on your recovery journey. Aftercare and support is key to getting you well as is stable accommodation, education, training and employment and of course your health and wellbeing. The Community Recovery Organisers can help you with these, often by steering you through what seems like a monster of a bureaucratic system by signposting you directly to the right people and places. We are building close working relationships with organisations such as Jobcentre Plus, Horton and Pennine Housing,

Probation, NHS, GP practices and pharmacies, the local Council as well as getting involved with the wider Recovery Community.

We are here to spread the word that people can and do become free from their addiction, and they can do it right here in Calderdale – if they want to. We are here to help by passing on our knowledge, support and advice for those going through their own recovery journey, as well as organising events and activities that will aid the process.

Recovery is not easy, it takes hard work and commitment but the rewards are there. That's why we organise recovery events and get involved in community activities. Taking part with others in the same situation as you is proven to aid the recovery process. Many people gain so much from each other and it doesn't always have to be in a meeting room. Our recent activities have included camping in the Lake District, a table tennis and pool tournament, setting up an allotment as well as attending Calderdale Pride, Hebden Bridge Hand Made Parade and Neighbours Day events; we will feature some of these in our forthcoming issue.

We hope you enjoy this first issue of RecoveryTimes. Future publications will feature articles from guests who are working in the field as well as volunteers and those individuals going through the recovery journey too.

If you would like to contribute or sponsor our newsletter, please get in touch.

betterthanwell@hotmail.co.uk

Enjoy,



Recovery in Kirklees

The Basement Recovery Project has scooped almost £200,000 in grants from the Big Lottery to fund a new Recovery Centre in Kirklees.

Addressing the needs of those with alcohol and drug issues, the new Centre will provide a self-help pathway from crisis to Recovery under one roof.

A Breakfast Club will provide meals and hot drinks and a safety net for those in crisis, with a pathway into recovery services including peer-led recovery programmes, group meetings and one-to-one sessions. People will be able to work on identifying and challenging the situations, triggers and lifestyle that keep them trapped in the cycle of addiction.

Social groups will be set up to encourage peer support at times in the week when people may struggle with their addiction including social events and training opportunities. The grant will also pay for outreach work across Kirklees - recognising that areas out of the centre, such as Dewsbury face issues of addiction and social isolation, require local solutions.

A spokesperson from TBRP said, "We are delighted to have the opportunity to share our model of recovery beyond Calderdale. This means more people having choices – including the choice of abstinence. We are particularly delighted to be working with our neighbours as evidence has shown that there is a real need for services like ours in Kirklees."



improving health, improving lives

A view from the top

The Community Recovery Organisers interview our Drug and Alcohol Commissioner for Calderdale

A few weeks ago, back in June, The Basement Project had the pleasure of the company of Libby Furness, the person who leads the commissioning team responsible for purchasing drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services here in Calderdale. Libby spent a few half days with us, witnessing the Breakfast Club, an Abstinence Session from the Basement Recovery Programme and attending one of the "here and now" sessions.

"Our Graham" managed to get a few minutes with Libby to ask her some questions:

G - What is your vision for services in Calderdale?

L - My vision is to create a community in which all services work together along a pathway that supports an individual's recovery journey. This includes all services using the same assessment process for each of its service users. If all services work together, this would help an individual with their recovery journey. Libby supports the notion of choice and people should be able to access the service that's right for them.

G - Do you think all the different services understand that abstinence and recovery is really the ideal solution, not treatment and reduction management?

L - People do understand this but have different ideas of what this means. There's a huge myth about treatment services that they are processing clients and don't particularly care about them. Up until this year national policy has mainly been about getting people

into treatment, offering prescribed alternatives to street substances and focusing on harm reduction and treatment services have been very good in delivering this agenda. However the new policy published in December 2010 promotes recovery as the goal for all so pushes abstinence and reintegration way up the agenda.

G - Do you think The Basement Project is seen as the "last chance saloon" for clients who have exhausted other existing services?

L - No, this service is not the last chance saloon. It's about the service user finding the right service for them. As Martin Luther King once said, "I have a dream", and my dream is to see services talking and working together. For instance Becky at the hospital often refers people to this service and has great things to say about it.

G - What are your thoughts regarding the Basement "Community Recovery Organisers" group project?

L - Recovery Champions see through the challenge that some service users present and look to be supporters and role models for those ready and able to change. They can have a positive impact on someone's recovery and help them to work towards abstinence and are always around to help them maintain it.

G - Do you think other establishments such as education, schools, employment, and benefits services understand enough about addiction and its associated problems?

L - More people are beginning to understand the problem. However services such as employment, education and housing need to link and work together to understand more in-depth.

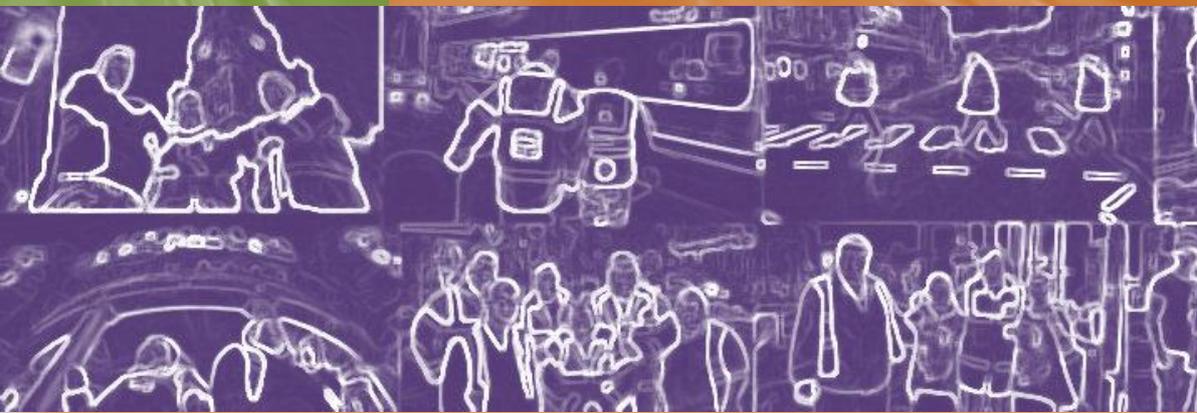
G - After your visit to The Basement Project, do you see addicts and their illness in a different light?

L - I knew absolutely nothing about addiction up until a year ago, or at least as only much as the next person. I did stereotype when being in services, I'd often ask myself if I were safe around these people, can I talk around these people? I do now feel a lot more comfortable around clients at the Basement and in other services. I guess I held a stereotype that many of the public have even though I have worked in health for many years. It's clear from my experience that we need to break that stereotype.

G - Would you agree that abstinence and recovery projects should be an option given to all service users identified with a substance misuse problem?

L - I think the new national policy is right and that we should be offering as many opportunities for people to become and stay abstinent as possible. But you guys more than anyone know how much of a challenge that is for some. I believe in diversity and that one size does not fit all so I support a commissioning approach that allows access to a range of services that have proved to deliver positive outcomes and help people to recover and lead the type of life they want for themselves.

"My vision is for services to work together and share their successes for the benefit of all our service users in Calderdale" – Libby Furness



HELP! Help us to help others

Producing our first Journal has been fun and we have so much more to share with you in forthcoming issues. But producing such a publication doesn't come free. Though we have done everything in-house we still need to pay printing costs. If you would like to sponsor RecoveryTimes please contact betterthanwell@hotmail.co.uk.

As we go to press we are currently planning our trip to Cardiff to take part in the UK Recovery Walk – why not come too?
www.recoverywalk2011.org.uk

WEBWATCH Monthly picks

Wired In To Recovery is a blogging site for all those who suffer drug and alcohol issues. The energy and experience of people affected by substance use problems is at the core of what they do. In their Charter they say: "The energy and experience of people affected by substance use problems is at the core of what we do. We harness this to give them a voice, enabling them to help themselves and others, and influence practice and policy and the views of society".
Join Wired In and start blogging
<http://wiredin.org.uk>



Walking with Angels

When you are looking forward to that night out on the town do you consider your safety? Many services and people do, including; the Police, Council, Town Centre Management, Community and Voluntary groups, Nightlife Marshals, Halifax Ambassadors and working in partnership with them all – Halifax Street Angels..

Street Angels are a group of dedicated individuals consisting of volunteers, trained medics and trained security staff who patrol Halifax town centre in mixed groups to give help and advice in many situations including elderly people leaving the theatre, young people who have become vulnerable in the

town, those who are homeless, those who have had a few too many to drink and need a helping hand, visitors who need directions, people in need of basic first aid but not a trip to A&E etc.

The overall assessment of incidents by the medics reduces the need for the call out of the emergency services thus saving money and more importantly leaving them free for a potential life or death call. Alcohol related admissions to hospital costs Calderdale an estimated £6m a year.

Because of the difference Street Angels and the partnership working has made, Halifax became a Purple

Flag town (a new standard that recognises great entertainment and hospitality areas at night) in November 2010. This accolade is a testimony to the commitment and hard work invested in Halifax on a weekly basis. Please support Street Angels. Have fun while you're in town but be aware of your alcohol intake and where it may lead.
www.streatangels.org.uk

Article by Graham.



This Month's Relapse Prevention Tips



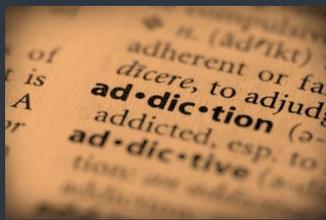
What to do in early recovery

Avoid romantic relationships early on. The 'love' can act like a drug in itself and the relationship can become the focus of life meaning that healthy activities, and in particular recovery-oriented activities, may suffer. The rock that wrecks the ship tends to be when the relationship goes wrong. Develop a relationship with yourself first and avoid choppy waters.

Don't hang out in old haunts or at events that you associate with drinking or using. There's an old

saying: "If you sit in the barber's chair long enough, you'll get a haircut". Pubs, clubs, concerts, weddings, funerals, stag nights and parties can be runaway relapse trains for those reaching for recovery.

Don't isolate. Ah, the curse of the addict: isolation. So easy to do, yet so destructive. It's connectivity to others that help many of us to move forward in recovery. Connecting to others allows us to deal with stress better, we lead happier lives and we both help and are helped. In one study, just adding one sober person to your social network reduced relapse rates by 27%.



Recovery is an achievable goal

"Living a lifestyle of drinking and crime leading to plenty of jail time" is how Brad Phillips found himself only a few years ago. Sick and tired of being sick and tired, Brad decided to give recovery a go. These days Brad finds himself as a Recovery Coach at the Basement Project in Halifax, facilitating abstinence and pre-recovery programmes to help others who live a lifestyle as the one he was accustomed to. When asked "why do this work?" Brad replied that he started working here because "The Basement Project offered a chance of Recovery where other services in Calderdale only offered treatment" and that he "enjoys seeing other people benefit from his work as they get clean and well and are able to fulfil addiction free lifestyles".

The Basement Project was born as a recovery project 3 years ago from Calderdale Users Forum (CUF) which was established in 1996. As well as the Recovery Programme, The Basement Project offers a free breakfast to anyone with drug or alcohol problems every Tuesday and Thursday 10 am till 12 noon. Brad considers that the Basement Project offers an invaluable service to addicts with an offer of Free Recovery.

Recent Events

Supporting Calderdale Pride 2011

We had a fantastic day supporting Calderdale Pride 2011, at the Halifax Piece Hall on Saturday 19th June. The Basement Project had an information stall with literature available on drug and alcohol related issues and support was at hand throughout the day from Graham, Claire, Colin, Darryl, John, Martyn, Stephen, Michelle, Tracey, Alison, Kevin, Richard, Sajid, Yvonne, Jay and others.



There was a range of attractions; children's fairground rides, acting and circus skills workshops, face painting, and stalls selling jewellery, accessories and cakes and also information on support about health and social issues. Le Metropolitan Bar and Bistro provided food, and Cookies Bar, the drinks.

X-Factor act, Diva Fever were the headline of the show with support acts including Haus of Gaga, a Lady Gaga tribute band. These were all introduced by Pulse F.M.'s, Alex Duffy and Marigold Addams was compare.

Organiser Matt Gosridge, Chairman, said "Support for Calderdale Pride in 2011 has been phenomenal". He was extremely delighted with the turnout and estimated over 9,000 visitors. Because the event had grown in the last three years it was able to attract bigger acts like Deva Fever. As an added bonus, the weather kept fine throughout.

Calderdale Pride was recently awarded "Best New Charity" in the evening Courier Community & Environment Awards 2011.

Recent Events

Recognition for Volunteers



The Annual Calderdale Volunteering Awards 2011 were held at the Shay Stadium in June. Amongst the nominees for the 'Group Award for Volunteering in Poverty and Homelessness', was The Basement Recovery Project's team of volunteers, nominated by Michelle Foster. Michelle said, "I nominated our volunteers because they always go beyond the call of duty to help others, often giving so much when they have little themselves. Their selflessness is testimony to the true spirit of volunteering and they epitomise everything about what the 'Big Society' is about".

The whole event is a great celebration of a range of volunteering experiences and in his opening speech, the Mayor of Calderdale, Nader Fekri spoke of the social value of volunteering as a way of bringing communities together.

Significantly, he also highlighted the economic value for Calderdale which is estimated at £60 million of unpaid work.

As the events unfolded, the Basement's volunteers were hugely surprised to have won their category and they came home with a stunning glass trophy, together with £40 of VAC training vouchers. The award shows the appreciation and the affection that is shown to those who serve others, and as Steve Duncan, Community Foundation for Calderdale said, "Everyone is a winner on a night like this".

In closing the event, Audrey Smith, Voluntary Action Calderdale told the audience, "Tonight has been a fantastic coming together of diverse organisations, both young and old, in a shared sense of community".

Michelle Foster
CEO

