

FREE

Issue #6

REC VERZINE

DUNDEE

Dec • 2023

EMPOWER
Share
stories

ENCOURAGE
Help, support
and advise

CONNECT
Services in
Dundee

**Connection
& Self-Care**



Welcome to this edition on
CONNECTION & SELF-CARE
from Jack E. Soutar

“Pull yourself together.” How many times have you heard that? Did you ever stop to reflect upon what it might mean?

It implies that your “self” is divided and that it is possible to somehow draw those parts back together.

The themes we are working with in this issue of Recoverzine are Connection and Self-Care. To care enough to make the effort to do “good” things for our self.

Brain scientists tell us that we are wired for social connection and that if we don't have it then parts of our brains actually lose their connections.

Being alone too often we are told causes cognitive decline and if we are older can promote Alzheimers disease.

It seems to me there is an epidemic of brain fog these days, some of it perhaps brought about by a breakdown in connectivity of the electro-chemical connections in the brain caused by social isolation and actual brain changes such as loss in the temporal lobes, frontal lobes and hippocampus.

It is said that a depressed person has a smaller hippocampus, also weakened electrical transmission between brain parts as a result of inflammation.

Drugs change the brain! Over longer time, more changes, and things can begin to go out the window.



But what to do?

Get out of your house, see other people preferably those who wont try to convince you to “be weak along with me!”.

Go for a walk, walk somebody's dog, do a cross word or sudoku. Treat yourself as you would a little child with love respect and good food.




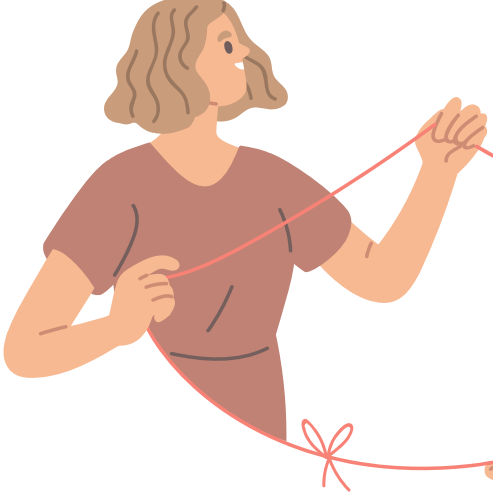
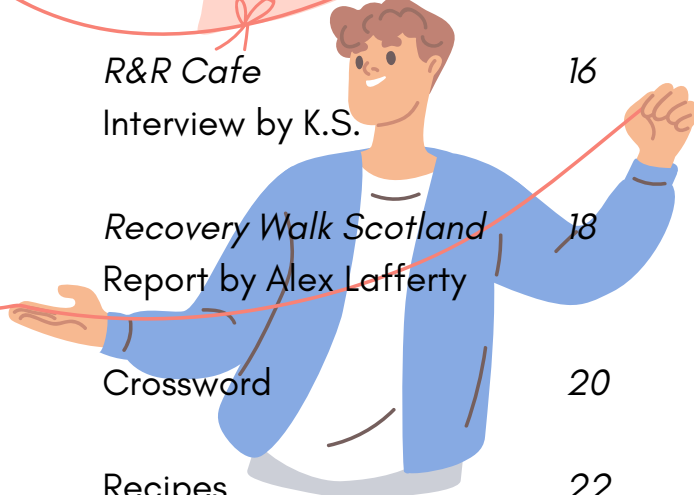
Exercise is proven to reduce anxiety and depression and it doesn't have to be extreme; even cleaning up can be good exercise.

Get back to your real SELF.
Like a child.

To be continued...

Recoverzine Dundee is a free quarterly magazine produced by people in recovery with a connection to Dundee.

If you'd like to find out more please drop us an email at recoverzine22@gmail.com or pop in to meet us on a Monday morning 10am-12pm at Lochee Library.

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Full Circle

A poem by Alex Lafferty

Recovery recovery
what can I say?
Very hard to chase away,
baby steps all the way.

So scary so draining,
so let's start more peer training.

Keep them busy with goals to achieve
before these people leave leave leave.

It took a long while to get back to me
and now for me it's sun and sea,
off to Spain in Febuary,
coming full circle for me me me!

So let's take a journey we me to see
what you can be be be.



Rebuilding for the future

A recovery story by C.M.

Within the space of a year, I lost my mum, gran and my brother.

That was when I hit the drink, and I just got worse and worse.

I spent 16 years drinking. I was in a violent, abusive relationship and I would drink to numb the physical and mental pain I was going through.

Losing my children made me spiral even further; I'd never drunk in front of them so when I lost them I had no reason not to drink. It took for me to get the jail to realise that I needed help.

When I was sentenced I started to seek out help with my addiction, mental health and traumas.

I did bereavement counselling and anger management, I found

recovery meetings like SMART Recovery really helpful and I grew to really enjoy them.

I liked learning from other people who have similar experiences, and learning how to challenge my own behaviour.

I've learned that sometimes I need to cut toxic people out of my life, and I need to put myself and my children first.

I'm rebuilding relationships that I had lost in the past, and I'm really happy and grateful for that.

I'm hopeful for the future, I have more faith in myself and I want to become a counsellor to share my story and help others.



A New Day

A recovery story by T

My upbringing was as normal as it can be as I have cerebral palsy.

I had a good family around me who wrapped me up in cotton wool to try to keep me safe.

I moved out at the age of 16 and having my own flat meant more freedom for myself but before I knew it drink and drugs came into my life.

I had more confidence as it made me feel like people couldn't see my cerebral palsy and that was my coping strategy.

My mum and sister were my heroes, as they were there when I was bullied through my life and sorted my bullies out.

Then I met an older man and before long I was in a controlling relationship.

After a while, chaotic with drink and drugs, circumstances led to me being given a life sentence in 2015.

My mum died 7 days after I was convicted. She had been my rock who I had phoned daily, so losing her was a hard blow. This was a massive trigger as my sister had died one and a half years before I went to prison and I still hadn't dealt with it.

Jail is tough, but having cerebral palsy makes life even tougher in jail. "How will I cope?"

I was terrified, feeling vulnerable and thinking I can be a target to get bullied once again.

When it comes to living in a cell, it was just me and the four walls feeling like I was in a cage.

First time that cell door shuts, it's me, myself, thinking "Is my family going to disown me?" Feeling like I'll never survive in here.

Coming off drink and drugs was hell as I couldn't sleep and if I did I was having nightmares. I couldn't settle. Nowhere to go, no one to talk to or turn to.

A new day.

Once I found my feet I got to know other people and the officers and realised prison is not like what's on T.V.

I went to education and got a job to fill my time. I wanted to use my time as wisely and positively as it can be. I kept taking my visits with my family.

I'm nearly at the end of my sentence now and have gained a lot of confidence. I've learned a lot about myself from programmes as now I do believe I have got a lot of positives in my life, with a different thinking pattern.

I also know how to express how I feel and how to cope with my emotions.

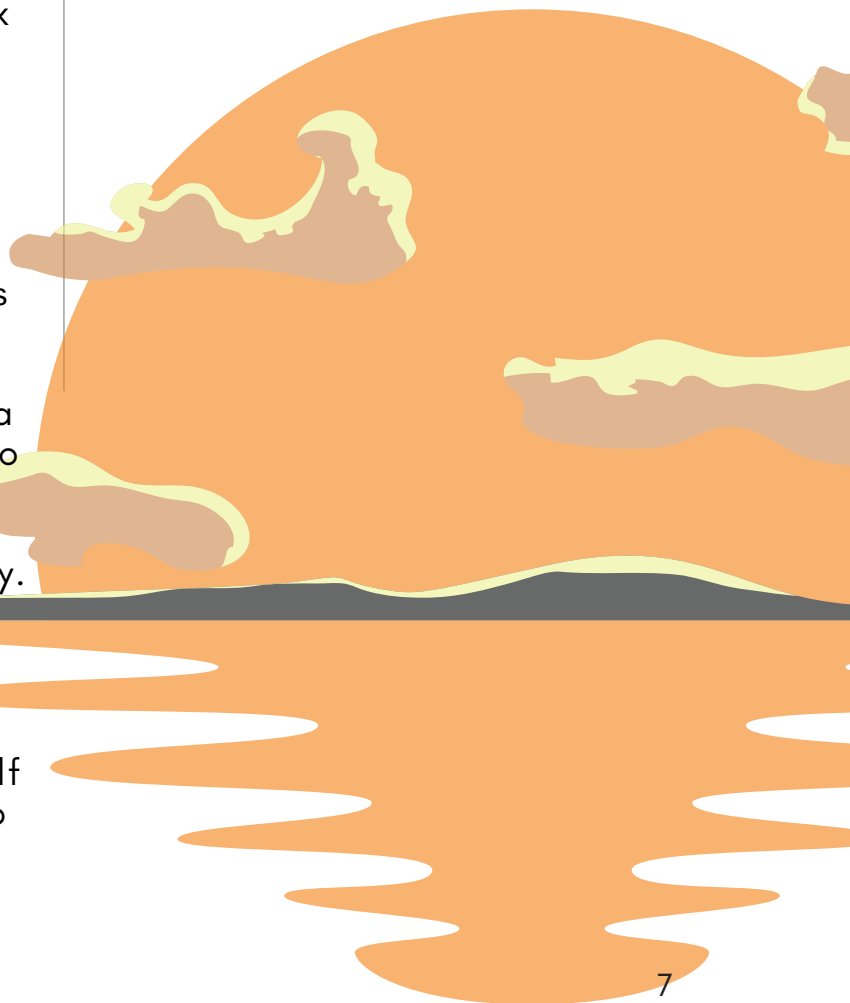
Now I can finally say "I do like myself now". I'm also thankful that my family have stuck by me as they also gave me strength.

My cerebral palsy does not define me in any way.

My quotes are:

"Don't be a can't, be a can."

And also "The sentence will never break me as I will break the sentence".





Recovering Myself

A recovery story by Megan

Like most in recovery, my personal journey has been long and fractured.

My addiction was to heroin, and over the years I made repeated attempts to get clean; I tried cold turkey, different medications, I attended meetings, I moved back into the family home, I changed jobs, changed relationships.

At the time, none of these things worked to keep me sober. The pivotal moment in my recovery journey came when I was arrested.

Suddenly I found myself facing a long prison sentence. I remember how I felt as if I had been harshly jolted awake.

It's hard to describe the fog of addiction, when you are aware of what you are doing and aware of what is happening, but none of it feels real or seems to have any consequence, as long as there is still a way to get high.

The sudden realisation that I had lost years already to drugs and could potentially lose the rest of my life in addiction if I didn't change terrified me. From then on, I resolved to try anything and everything anyone suggested to help me.

Medication helped me with the physical withdrawals, but more importantly it allowed me time to get used to the scary idea of being sober.

I was able to receive extensive counselling for unresolved issues, and I truly believe that this was one of the key things in my recovery. I often feel as if the mental health issues that addicts face are overlooked when it comes to treating addiction and supporting recovery.

As my recovery had begun in prison, I had a lot of adjusting to do when I came home. I was incredibly lucky to have a support network around me who helped hold me accountable and give me the structure I needed, especially at first.

Setting goals for myself helped me immensely, and still does- I try to always have something I'm working towards.

I look after my mental health as best as possible by monitoring my stress levels, practicing mindfulness, giving myself time to rest and not putting too much pressure on myself.

I've also found physical exercise to be very helpful in helping me get out of head, but also in helping me reconnect with my body and how I feel.

My experiences have taught me that there is no typical recovery journey. What worked for me won't work for everybody.

Recovery looks different for everyone, it's not about ticking boxes and meeting the expectations of others.

To me, the important part of recovery is recovering yourself- whether that means finding the person you were before addiction or discovering for the first time the person that you actually are underneath.

Addiction causes people to become so separated from themselves. The lifestyle of denial, constant stress, blocking events and feelings out, doing or being around things you don't agree with, makes it so easy to lose sight of who you are as a person.

Once you begin to reconnect with your sense of self, it becomes easier to make better decisions and value yourself.

Often in my recovery I felt that treatment emphasised what I could no longer do, who I could no longer see etc., rather than all of the things I could do.

People with substance use and mental health issues often face being dehumanised in society and media, but we are worthwhile, our knowledge and experience of addiction and recovery is valuable, and we deserve to be listened to.

The Road Not Taken ***A poem by Frost***

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.



The Cafe and Me

A recovery story by K.S.

The R&R Cafe has played a significant part in my own recovery journey.

The cafe is a safe place for people in recovery to make connections with people who don't have addictions. And it's also a place where people who have loved ones caught up in addiction or people who are isolated can find a positive, supportive and a non-judgemental environment.

When I was regularly attending the cafe back in 2014 I was given the responsibility to handle the week's expenses, so I could go and purchase the food supplies which were needed for the following week.

It was great that I was given the responsibility to

demonstrate I could be trusted to get the correct supplies and to be trusted I would turn up every week with the supplies in hand.

We used to make filled rolls in Ann Street. When we moved we managed to get a toasty machine, and at one point I can remember having loads of plates lined up with a lot of customers coming through the doors.

Being given the chance to demonstrate that I was trustworthy and reliable certainly helped with my self-confidence.

With working in a kitchen I had to have my Health and Hygiene Certificate. On two separate occasions I got the opportunity to do that

as it has to be done every 3 years if preparing food in a kitchen. So that was another certificate I had to put with others.

Later on in 2014 I had to leave the cafe as I was excelling in other areas of life where I could no longer be in the cafe.

I went off to achieve what I set out to and I overcame obstacles I never thought possible.

I returned again to the cafe in 2018 and while lots had changes, lots had stayed the same. The toasties were changed to filled rolls, mince, hot food, soup and the same beverages as always; tea, coffee and diluting juice.

We were also distributing food parcels to families and generally people who were in need.

This was such a lovely thing to do always thinking of others and how to support them.

While I can remember my anxiety was really affecting me at times, I'd always have someone come with me to give me moral support.

This chapter of my life was really distressing to say the least.

Even though I had the support of Lucie and the other volunteers back then, I felt I needed that person to come with me as I had been experiencing a lot of panic attacks not too long before this.

Anyway I left a few months after this as I went on to have my youngest child then Covid hit not too long after that.

I later returned to the cafe about a year and a half ago.

I have been going back for support and at times I will help do the dishes and put the tables away if I can.

I go when I can manage to go as it's my go-to place where I feel comfortable with the people who are in the cafe and I never get judged or stigmatised.

I've known Lucie, the co-ordinator at the R&R Cafe, since 2014 but it's only been in the past year I've been able to trust her with private issues where I could ask advice and get emotional support if needed.

This has been huge for me as I don't trust easy yet everyone needs someone to talk to, just to have that listening ear and confidence in her to keep it to herself.

Whether offloading personal issues or more complex issues she has given me sound advice and helped me confirm my thoughts or to look at things from another point of view.

When I walked into the cafe last Friday I got the feeling I always have of safety, positive energy, calmness and familiarity.

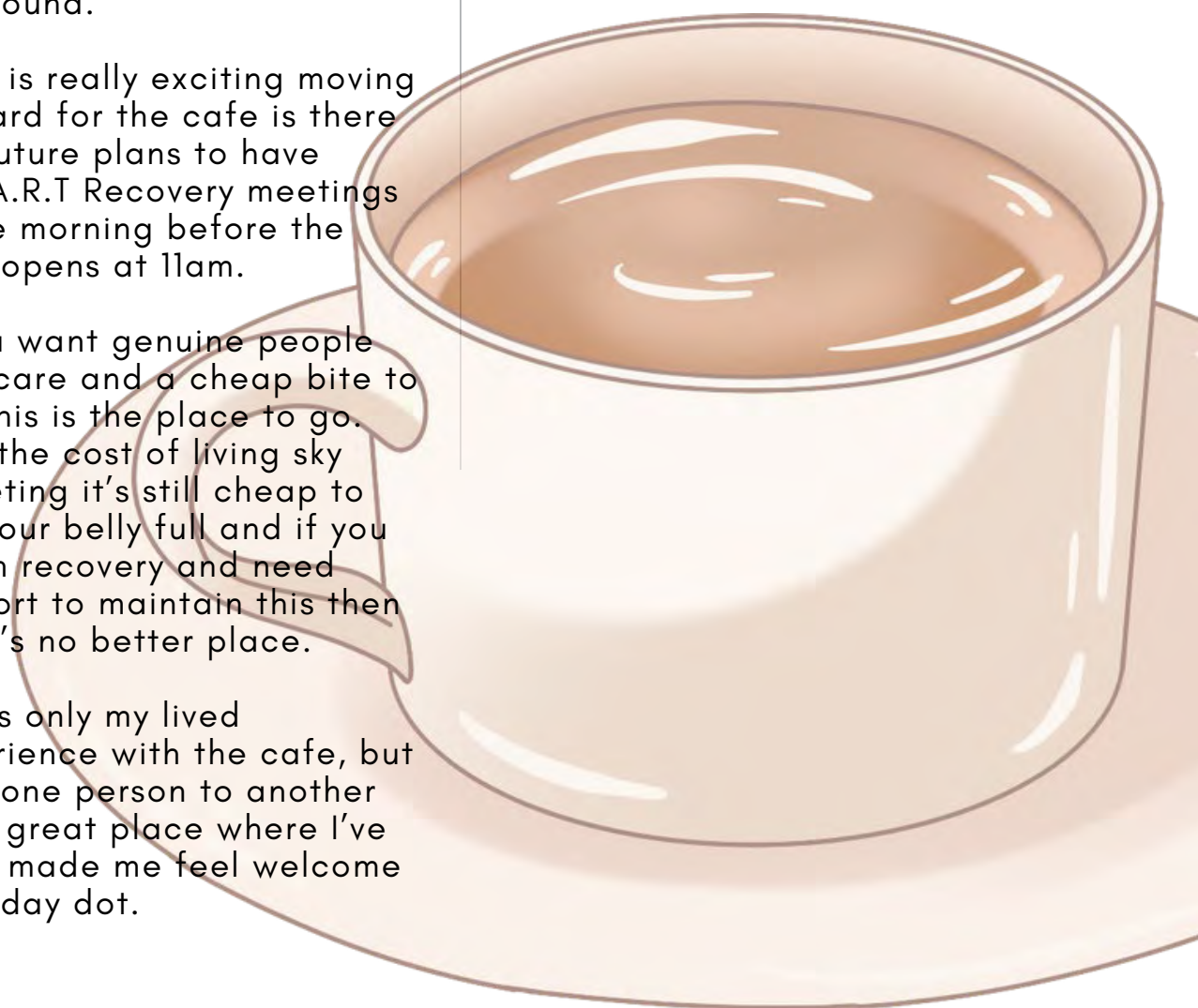
This is the type of energy I need in my life and the type of people I would choose to be around.

What is really exciting moving forward for the cafe is there are future plans to have S.M.A.R.T Recovery meetings in the morning before the cafe opens at 11am.

If you want genuine people who care and a cheap bite to eat this is the place to go. With the cost of living sky rocketing it's still cheap to get your belly full and if you are in recovery and need support to maintain this then there's no better place.

This is only my lived experience with the cafe, but from one person to another it's a great place where I've been made me feel welcome from day dot.

There is no doubt about it, this cafe has helped me and still does on so many levels.



Trigger Tree

Margaret Williamson



Image by R.

Christmas can be a triggering time for many in recovery. Knowing ourselves and our own triggers can be a really important part of our recovery journey.

The trigger tree looks at your personal triggers and can help you to work out your biggest triggers as well as smaller ones.

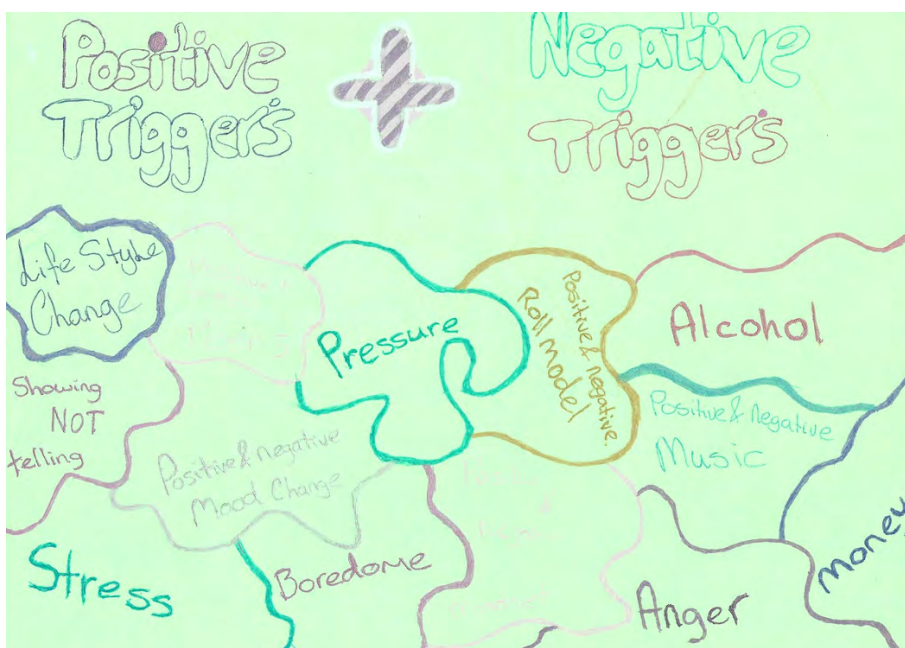


Image by M.

Trigger Tree

Margaret Williamson

Think about the things that trigger you. A trigger is something that takes you back to a traumatic event and can cause problematic behaviours, such as drinking, to return.

A trigger could be anything from a certain song to the sound of raised voices, from a glass to a bicycle. It is unique to you.

Use the template below to record your triggers. You can start with your biggest trigger at the top and work your way down the tree revealing smaller triggers as you go.

A green outline of a Christmas tree with a yellow star at the top. The star contains the word "BRAIN". There are seven empty rectangular boxes around the tree: one at the top, two on the second level, two on the third level, and two on the fourth level.

R&R Cafe

Interview and photos by K.S.

The R&R Café is a recovery cafe based at Coldside Parish Church, Main Street in Dundee, open every Friday 11am-2pm (last orders 1.30pm).

I went to meet Lucie, co-ordinator at the cafe, to get an insight into what they do and how they do it.

KS: How does the R&R Café support people in addiction and in recovery?



Lucie: The R&R is a recovery café and provides a 'safe place' for people in recovery from addictions and a community cafe ran by people in recovery or by people who have been affected by a loved one's addiction.

To keep it a safe place we cannot allow anyone in who looks to be under the influence of substances, however if someone isn't yet in recovery and is not under the influence and wants to attend they would be made very welcome.

We provide a warm welcome and friendly atmosphere where you can meet others in recovery. We offer a safe place to spend a couple of hours where you can join some of the activities provided, get 1-1 support if required, and a chance to do some volunteering when positions are available.

We also have VoiceAbility in the cafe each week. VoiceAbility is an advocacy service who help people who identify as disabled to get support and access benefits.



Lawrence from VoiceAbility is available at the cafe every week

KS: Do you feel the R&R Café get supported?

Lucie: To be honest, sometimes I feel that we are a very small fish in a very big pond, and we get forgotten about by other services.



KS: What do you think makes the R&R Café different from other cafes?

Lucie: The R&R Café was established in 2014. It's not just a recovery cafe, it's also a community café which helps stop stigma. In here you can just be you. It's not just a 'come and eat and leave', there are activities which allow you to spend some time there if you wish and we try to have something there for everyone. You become part of a group.

There is also support for loved ones who have been affected by addiction which is something I would have liked in the early days of recovery for my son. It is as much or as little as you want it to be. Plus we make a mean bacon roll!

KS: Do you think the R&R empowers people to help them in their recovery?

Lucie: I really hope so. My son once told me he was a "waste of space". It broke my heart so we aim to build confidence and self-worth in everyone to show people that they can do whatever they want to do and we will help wherever we can.

Thank you so much for answering these questions Lucie it is very much appreciated.

The R&R Café was and still is a place of emotional support for me, along with having the sense of belonging to somewhere positive. With a combination of many other things the R&R Café has helped empower me to be the person I am today.

KS: Thanks for speaking to Recoverzine Lucie



There is also a big stage with live music which is always good and truly makes it a family day out which I'd recommend to all.

The energy and passion made us realise how lucky we are and feel positive about recovery which makes a big difference and impact.

I think we're all running from trauma and self medicating in one way or another but we never find the answers in that way as we are always chasing the effect rather than looking within for the root or the cause.

I know this was my truth once upon a time, but the Recovery Walk Scotland is one of the most infectious natural highs you'll get.

Recovery Walk Scotland has helped me turn negatives into positives and go from victim to survivor.



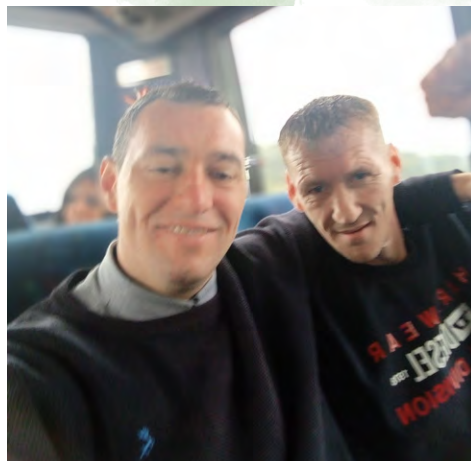
www.scottishrecoveryconsortium.org/src-activity/recovery-walk-scotland-2023/



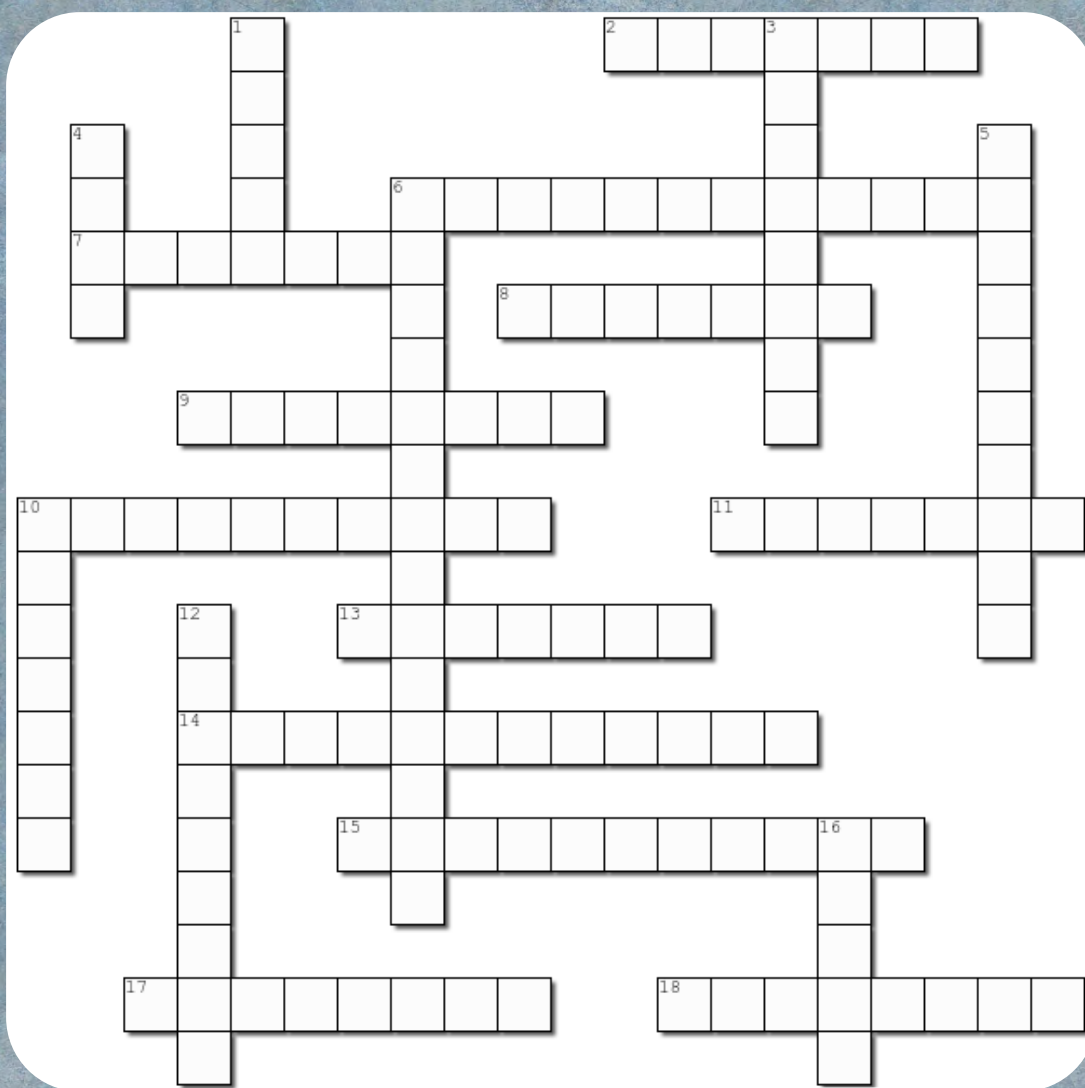
www.facebook.com/ScottishRecoveryConsortium



www.youtube.com/user/ScottishRecovery0



Crossword



Answers on the back page

Clues

Across

2. Help someone achieve their goals
6. Restore to a former or better condition
7. Nourish, protect, and educate
8. Becoming healthy and whole again
9. The power to overcome difficulties
10. Feeling for those in need
11. A form of physical activity
13. Being in the present moment
14. Being able to change and adjust
15. Letting go of any ill-will
17. Taking time to unwind
18. Stillness of mind

Down

1. Something that is hard to break
3. Waiting for the right time
4. Connection between two or more people
5. The ability to bounce back
6. Process of making two parties become friendly again after an argument
10. Finding solace in difficult times
12. Feeling comfort and stability
16. What we do to rest and rejuvenate



Stuffed Paratha Bread



Ingredients

For filling:

400g plain flour
 1 teaspoon baking power
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon sugar
 1 egg
 200ml milk

For dough:

Vegetable oil
 2cm root ginger
 2 cloves finely chopped garlic
 2 chilies finely chopped
 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
 1 teaspoon chili powder
 1 tea spoon ground coriander
 1 tea spoon garam masala
 4 medium size potatoes, boiled and
 mashed
 2 tablespoons chopped coriander
 1 onion

Stuffed Paratha Bread



MAKE THE DOUGH

Mix the flour, baking powder, sugar, salt, egg and milk in a large bowl. Knead for 10 mins until smooth then cover with cling film and leave for 15 minutes.



MAKE THE FILLING

Heat some oil in a frying pan, add the ginger, onion, garlic, and chopped chili then fry until soft. Add the turmeric, chili powder, ground coriander and garam masala. Cook for a further 2 minutes. Stir in the mashed potatoes and fresh coriander. Add salt to taste.



ASSEMBLE YOUR PARATHAS

Roll your filling into 6 equal balls and set aside. Divide your dough into 6 equal balls then roll into disc shapes on a floured surface. Place fillings on your dough, fold in the edges and twist the top to seal. Turn over, sprinkle with flour and roll very gently into a disc.



FRY YOUR PARATHAS

Heat frying pan with oil until very hot. Place parathas into pan, twisted side down and leave for 2 minutes to cook. Brush top with oil, flip over, cook for a further couple of minutes. Fry until golden brown on both sides then serve and enjoy.

Macaroni Cheese

Serves 4-6 approx



Ingredients

Pasta (any type)
50g butter
50g plain flour
400-500ml milk
160g grated cheese
Salt and pepper

Macaroni Cheese



BOIL THE PASTA

Make the pasta according to the packet instructions. Once cooked, drain and leave to the side.



MAKE THE SAUCE

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Stir in the flour and cook for 1-2 minutes. Take the pan off the heat and gradually stir in the milk until you get a smooth sauce. Return to the heat and bring to the boil, stirring all the time.



ADD THE CHEESE

Simmer gently for 8-10 minutes, seasoning with salt and pepper. Add the cheese and allow to melt, but don't reboil or the cheese will become stringy. Mix the sauce into your pasta and serve.



STORAGE AND BONUS TIPS

Once made transfer to suitable containers and freeze. For an even easier version use cheese sauce packets or cheese granules.

General Disclosure:

The views expressed in Recoverzine Dundee are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of DVVA, its staff, or partners.

The articles in this magazine do not constitute advice and are offered as suggestions and personal experiences only.

If you require specific advice on any topic, you should contact an expert or an appropriate professional in the relevant field.

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We are keen to hear from anyone with lived experience of recovery. This could relate to your own journey with alcohol, drugs, or mental health or the journey of someone you know.

Please send any submissions for the next issue of Recoverzine Dundee to recoverzine22@gmail.com before 1st March 2024.

If you would like support with your submission or just want to discuss your ideas over a cuppa, staff from DVVA are on hand at Lochee Library every Monday 10am-12pm

Lilywalker Centre

Homeless Services Unit
East District Housing Office
01382 432001 (24hrs)

Dundee Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (DDARS)

01382 632542

Shelter Scotland

0808 800 444

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

08080 101011

Dundee Foodbank

01382 698020

Dundee Citizens Advice

01382 214 633

Dundee Law Centre

Free legal advice service—
benefits, debt, eviction and
homelessness
01382 918230

Hillcrest Futures

Mental health and wellbeing support,
homelessness and drug, alcohol
and recovery services
0300 123 2644

Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project (DEEAP)

Advice on all energy related issues
01382 434840

Rape Crisis Scotland

08088 01 03 02
Text: 07537 410 027

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

08080 101011

Breathing Space

A confidential phone line for anyone
who is feeling low, anxious or depressed
0800 83 85 87

NHS Mental Health Hub

111

Breathing Space

A confidential phone line for anyone
who is feeling low, anxious or depressed
0800 83 85 87

Samaritans

Support for people and
communities in times of need
0330 094 5717

Community Wellbeing Centre

Mental Health Support and harm
reduction / Day and Night
0800 955 0008



Crossword answers:

Down

1. Habit 3. Patience 4. Bond 5. Resilience 6. Reconciliation
10. Comfort 12. Reassured 16. Sleep

Across

2. Support 6. Rehabilitate 7. Nurture 8. Healing 9. Strength 10. Compassion 11. Walking
13. Mindful 14. Adaptability 15. Forgiveness 17. Relaxing 18. Serenity