

FREE

Issue #8

RECOVERZINE

June • 2024

DUNDEE



Inside this issue

- Poetry corner
- Recovery stories
- The value of peer support
- Painting for recovery
- Life after prison

And more



Welcome to Issue 8.

When our editorial team sit down to plan a new issue of Recoverzine we always start with a discussion about where we're at and what matters most to us at that particular point in our lives.

Some common themes soon emerge and by the end of the session we've usually begun to focus on one in particular which we then use as the inspiration for the next issue.

This time we chose to focus on care and support, and we've had some really moving discussions about the people around us who support us throughout our recovery.

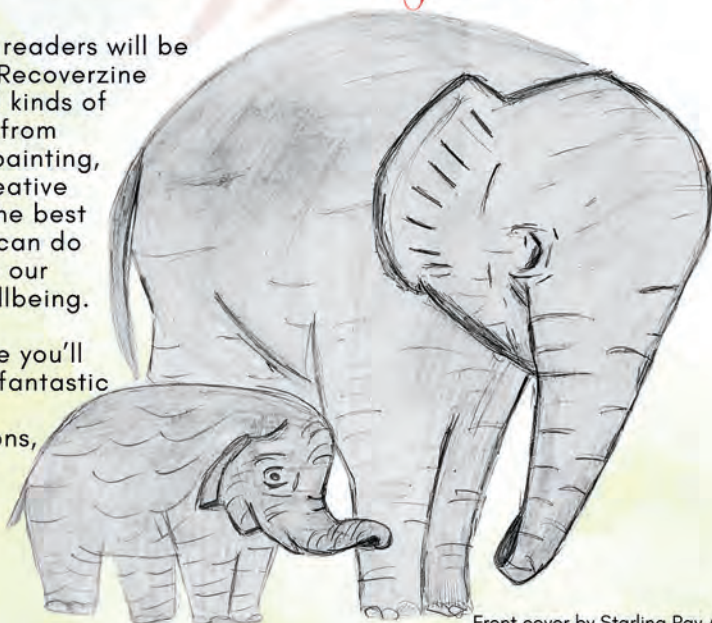
As regular readers will be aware, at Recoverzine we love all kinds of creativity; from poetry to painting, getting creative is one of the best things we can do to improve our mental wellbeing.

In this issue you'll find some fantastic creative contributions, all on the theme of care and support.

We want you to make use of the magazine beyond just reading it - so please cut out the pictures and stick them to your wall as a reminder that there's always someone out there who cares.



Scan me for
digital version



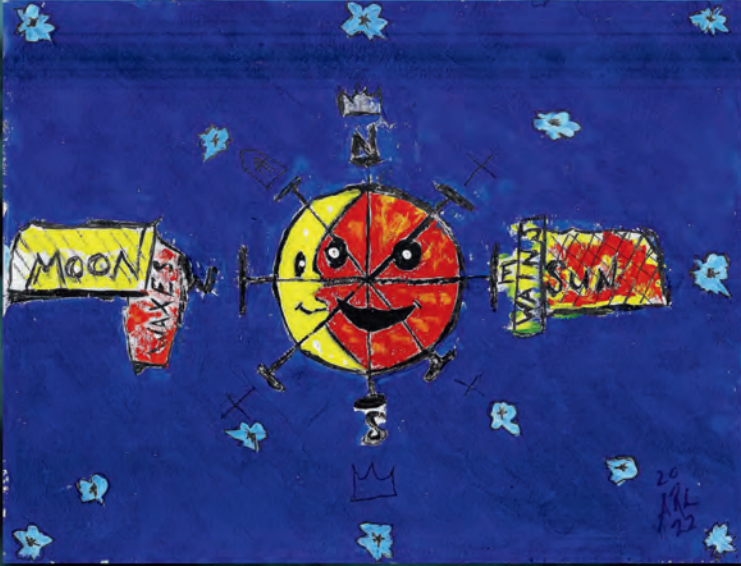
Front cover by Starling Pav Art
Elephants by Wendy MacDougall

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LETTING



IT FLOW

As told to Recoverzine by Alexander Lafferty

I've been through a lot of trauma and have a lot of triggers but painting quietens my mind. I paint when I need to escape, when my head's overworking or I'm thinking too deeply.



It's good to have painting as a tool in my toolbox for when I need to escape my triggers.

I can just enter my imagination and let it flow. That's escapism for me, it's distraction and it's therapeutic.

When I first started coming off things, I was going to about 12 different groups and was never getting anything done. I was spread too thin.

At home I was always reacting, never going within and looking at the root of the problem.

I knew I wanted to go to the source and own it. That means just being honest with yourself and going through your emotions as well as your thoughts and your physical reality and not just kid yourself.

I wanted to give myself a kick up the arse, in the best possible way! I don't want to just run out the door and bury my nut, I wanted to own it.

I think because the part of your brain you're using when you're painting isn't the analytical part, it's the creative part it means you're not overthinking. You can step away from that side of it.

We get stuck in our thought processes and it frazzles our brain a wee bit. By leaving the critical side of your brain that does all that overthinking it can really help.

Getting started with a painting can be hard. You're trying to think what to paint and you don't really know where to begin.

“It's important to remember it's not about being good, it's about expressing yourself.”

It's important to remember that it's not about being good it's just about expressing yourself.

The two paintings I've shared for this article were probably the first ones I ever done.

I use anything that I think's bonny. If it's affecting me I'll write about it or paint it.

You just pick something, don't overthink it cause that'll stop it. Just pick something you like and take a wee bit of inspiration and then go with the flow.

If it's coming from the heart then obviously you're caring about it. And that will always come off well.

“It's not about what you draw, it's about how it makes you feel.”

Depending on what mood I'm in or where I am at I've got something I can use.

There's a lot of symbolism in these paintings. A lot of it is

about my perception of energy and the universe we live in.

That symbolism helps me come up with ideas as well. I look at it like a clock and I need a tool for every angle.

Depending on what mood I'm in or where I'm at I've got something I can use.

Whether its walking, painting, looking at my fire and so on, I can just spread these tools out on a wheel and just feed into it.

If anyone's thinking about taking up painting I'd say just put all your thoughts to the side and get yourself a colouring in book or a painting set and just draw and take it from there.

It's not about what you draw it's about how it makes you feel. It's about keeping yourself engaged and keeping yourself in that space.

Positive reinforcement, you're setting your mindset which could take you away from that feeling.

If you're just sitting worrying you're never escaping just in a constant state of fight or flight which we often are when we've got so many triggers.

It takes your feet off the accelerator and lets you disengage from reality in a positive way.

FINDING THE SPARK

by Shannon Catterall

It all started 13 years ago.

I was a typical 15 year old lass, hanging out with my friends, we were all just enjoying ourselves, but where I grew up heroin was rife.

It got drummed into me by parents and teachers to stay well away from the stuff because it ruined families.

The police were coming into our school and showing us needles, just trying to shock us into staying away from it.

Other drugs were maybe tolerated around where I lived but heroin was always a big no-no.

He was also selling heroin and making good money, so seeing that come in was also having an influence on me.

I stuck to my guns for a good while but eventually curiosity killed the cat and before I knew where I was we were taking heroin daily.

Over time this boyfriend became controlling and abusive in every way.

The police were just trying to shock us into staying away

At 15 I met my first proper boyfriend and although he was taking heroin, the drug I'd be told was so awful, I quickly fell in love.

Very soon he started pressuring me to try it. He told me it was a really good feeling you got, and compared to the horror stories the police were telling us at school seeing someone taking it first hand didn't seem that bad.

He made me believe I was worthless. He isolated me so it was just me, him, and heroin.

I started to lie, steal, cheat. I couldn't stand myself. I'd become a full blown user.

Eventually my relationship with him ended but my relationship with heroin was still there.

I was doing lots of shoplifting to feed my habit and managed to get away with it for a while, so it was quite a shock when I got the jail in 2023 for assault and robbery.

I wasn't a stranger to the police before then but, perhaps because I was a woman, I'd never expected to get a prison sentence.

been through it and that resonated with me. Levi was the first person who tried to help me who had been through her own recovery. It's so helpful to have someone who's on the same page.

She sparked something in me that made me want to be clean.

I'd lost what I stood for, lost my morals, lost my values. I thought my loyalties were with my dealer.

It's so helpful to have someone who's on the same page

In prison there was support on offer but none of it really worked.

It took a while before I met CGL worker Levi. CGL stands for Change Grow Live, a charity who help people change direction in their lives particularly with substance use and recovery.

Levi was similar to me; she had

Food was something that just kept me alive until my next high.

I never did anything for myself, it was always for a guy, always for a dealer, or to get someone off my back.

But with Levi's help I got to a point where for the first time in

13 years I was completely sober from drugs.

I slowly started to learn who I was, what I liked, what food I enjoyed, hobbies, and even my favourite colour.

It was so alien to me but the more support I got from someone who knew what it was like, the more hungry I got to be and stay clean.

kind of enjoyment.

I used to think I was stupid because all I could talk about was drugs.

Now I can hold a proper conversation and people are noticing how I've begun to grow into myself and who I'm meant to be.

I'm in a loving relationship with someone who is also going

**The more support I
got, the more hungry
I got to stay clean**

I started to realise I preferred myself sober.

Waking up and going to find drugs and taking drugs was in a way fun. But it was a tiny bit of enjoyment from being high compared to so much more enjoyment being sober.

It's weird trying to put it into words, but it's a much deeper

through recovery, I'm growing in confidence and I've got my family back.

But most importantly, I've got myself back.

See**by Laura**

See

The vacuum of life sucked the spirit from me

Daily beat-downs

Take their toll

No family to speak of

No-one to call my own

See

Skeletal remains walk city streets

An empty crisp poke

Crumpled, adrift

Lost in concrete

See

Night creeps in

Streets turn black

A lonely flickering light

Tries to pierce the darkness

See

The quicksand of addiction sucked me down

So low I have to look up

To see the fiery furnace of hell

Dealing with demons

I duck 'n dive

See

I cling to a dream

A tiny see of hope

Kept hidden

A dirty secret

There's got to be more than this

A different path

See



Life is not a stro



It has always



aight line



ups and downs

The Place To Be **by Alexander Lafferty**

There is a space in some place
That has good people
And a nice big steeple

In bonnie Scotland oh what a place
A toon called Dundee
Is the place to be

And on a summer's day
What can I say?
While sitting on the River Tay
Sunbathing beside the V&A
On a beautiful sunny day
While watching the most beautiful
Silvery Tay

It's just as pretty when the sun's away
We see it in a different way
So use your space and use your day
And let's brighten up the streets
For the free people and the strays

Oor Toon **by Alexander Lafferty**

Me and this time are doing just fine
Sipping cocktails and drinking wine
And I sit here writing lyrics
Trying to make it rhyme
Wanting this tune to be just fine

I live in Dundee, this city is mine
Together we shall make it fine

Moving forward the future's bright
Even during the winter's night
Giving the people some good insight
Showing the contrast of dark and light

I love my music, it's plain to see
It helps focus on life around me
I wish it was so easy for all to see
The only thing stopping us from having a
Bonnie Dundee

Is the lack of colour and the lack of money
To change the people
I'll start with me

MAKE BETTER CHOICES

STAYING FOCUSED

by Leanne

"The more people know you're off the stuff and trying to better yourself, the more they try to drag you back."

I got remanded on February 18th 2021 on four separate drugs charges and that's when I got sent to Saughton Prison.

But I don't remember much about that.

Two days later I woke up in hospital with doctors asking if I knew where I was and what year it was.

They told me I'd been found in my cell unconscious so they'd called an ambulance and rushed me straight to the hospital.

I was there for 7-8 weeks, with 5 weeks in ICU. I remember hearing someone say, if she doesn't make any sort of recovery she'll find herself back in here.

I just remember hearing those words and thinking there's no way I'm getting hooked back up to one of those machines.

I was eventually well enough to be sent back to prison which happened two days before my birthday.

As soon as I arrived I got handed a canteen sheet. I didn't even know what a canteen sheet was because I'd never been in jail before so I didn't know the system.

My daughter was only 8 at the time. I had to sign a kinship order so her gran could make legal decisions if anything where to happen while I was in prison or after I got released.

That gave me a major wake up

call. I was signing my rights away to her dad's mum but me and her never got on so it's now kind of worrying thinking about what she's heard about me and my time in prison.

But as hard as it was for me to do I know it was the best decision at that point for her wellbeing.

On the walls in Saughton there was all this information about this project and that project and how they can help you.

There's always information but I found it hard to find someone who was able to really listen. So it was really difficult at first.

It's really hard to stay positive in prison because your liberty's been taken away from you.



HMP Edinburgh, AKA Saughton Prison
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Anyway I made a phone call to the Shine Project and a couple of people came up and started working with me.

Shine is a women's mentoring service which supports women in prison both pre-release and in the community to identify and achieve their goals.

Seeing someone in person is

vital because otherwise you can just feel lost in limbo with all these worries about stepping out the door and back into the community.

The service is available to adult female prisoners in Scotland who are serving a custodial sentence of less than four years and not subject to a statutory order, or are on remand, or serving a Community Payback Order.

But working with the Shine Project was so helpful. More things like that are needed. There definitely needs to be a lot more of that kind of pre-release support.

On my day of release my gran and grandad met me which I knew would be better than me just going out in Edinburgh.

Knowing people in the city I probably would have veered off to someone else's house which wouldn't have been good.

So my gran and grandad brought me back to Dundee, we got something to eat and they made sure I got to the criminal justice office for my appointment at 12.

It wasn't all easy though. Within 3 hours of my release I had a guy I knew walk up to me and try to sell me stuff.

I just told him to go away. It was the last thing I wanted to hear. It's crazy, the more people know you're off the stuff and trying to better yourself the more they want to drag you back. But you've just



got to do what you can do.

Luckily my house was still available because I hadn't quite done the 52 weeks. If I'd done any longer in prison then I wouldn't have had my house.

That's the big problem for a lot of women who do get prison. If they've got previous they'll get a longer sentence then they've lost their house, they've lost their lives, they've lost everything basically.

Without my house my recovery journey could have been a very different story. For anyone in that situation it could be a trigger for them just to give up on life altogether. So still having that house was a very big thing for me and still having access to my daughter was a big thing as well.

Then staying clean and sticking to my meds are also very important. Then the next most important thing is finding a structure that suits you and

also not stretching yourself too far or setting your goals too high.

It's been like 3 years I've been out now and I'm still going to groups because I know that's what I need and that's what will keep me away from it all.

You can't contact a worker after half five or at the weekend, which is understandable. So finding those peers that have got the same focus to stay clean and better themselves and have a better life and be the person you were supposed to be is really important. Then your life becomes an example for others that change is possible.

Coming back to Dundee was a lot to face. Since the new year two people I know have died.



The Connect Cafe at Menzieshill Parish Church is run by volunteers and offers free food and a friendly social space.

I just had a friend staying at mine's last week because her man had died. I was shocked because there was no-one there for her really.

But I was only able to be there for her because I was in the place that I'm in.

If I'd been getting out my nut I wouldn't have been able to be there for her. So it's a good way to help others by just explaining what you've been through.

I volunteer at the Connect Cafe at Menzieshill Parish Church. I know a lot of the people who come here because I know the area, this is where I used to go about.

The people who come in can see the change. They can see I'm not dealing them vullies. I'm dealing them soup and bread.

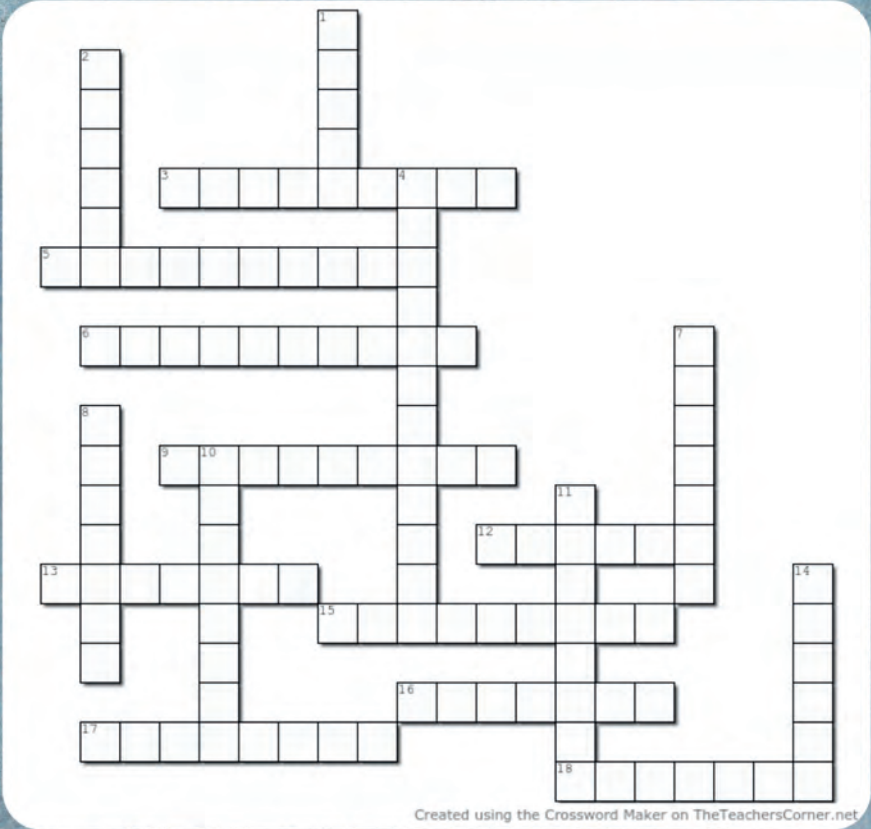
It is quite a turnaround.

Sometimes I don't see it in myself but that's what I'm supposed to be doing at this moment and time. The more people you can reach and get through that door at first, that's the hardest part.

Once you get them here and they start to see others who've got better lives now you can see the questions they ask start to change.

It's now what help can I get and where can I get it. That's the questions I want to hear now. I don't want to hear anything else but that.

Crossword



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Answers on the back page

Clues

Across

3. To help each other achieve a common goal
5. Mutual support and friendship
6. To build up
9. A place of safety
12. Hold securely for protection
13. Ease someone's mind
15. Speaking honestly
16. Provide ongoing support
17. Enclose for safety
18. To give strength

Down

1. Someone who shows the way
2. Save from danger or harm
4. Showing gratitude
7. Provide extra support
8. Help someone during difficult times
10. To make a case on someone's behalf
11. Confirm the accuracy of something
14. To hold steady



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 or the journey of someone you know.

Please send any submissions for the next issue of Recoverzine Dundee to rossbull@dvva.scot before 23rd August 2024.

Please also get in touch if you would like support with your submission or just want to discuss your ideas over a cuppa.

If you would like to see your work featured in the next issue of Recoverzine please send it in no later than **23rd August 2024**.



**DON'T
MISS OUT!**

If you would like some support before submitting please let us know. Some of the articles featured in Recoverzine are entirely written by the author. For those less confident with writing one of our Engagement Workers can have a chat with you and turn the recording of the conversation into an article that you're happy with.



Poetry
Recovery Stories
Features
Reports
Visual Art

To submit your work or to discuss support please contact
rossbull@dva.scot

Across: 3 cooperate, 5 fellowship, 6 strengthen, 9 sanctuary, 12 cradle, 13 comfort, 15 sincerity, 16 sustain, 17 envelope, 18 empower
Down: 1 guide, 2 rescue, 4 appreciation, 7 bolster, 8 support, 10 advocate, 11 validate, 14 anchor



artwork by Wendy M.