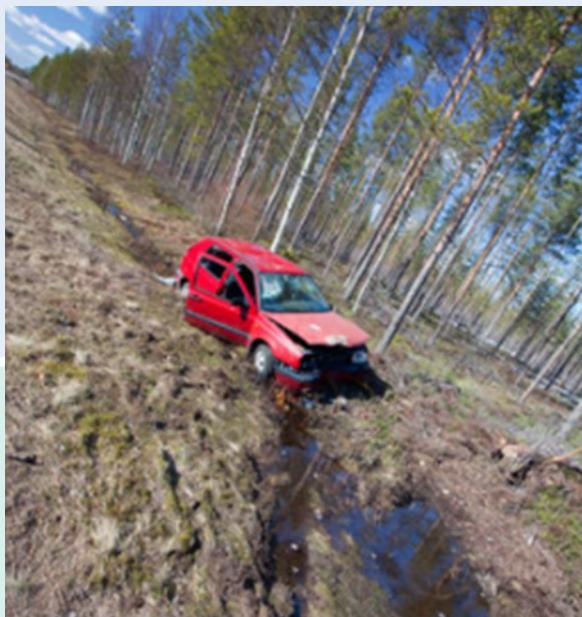


My Road To Recovery



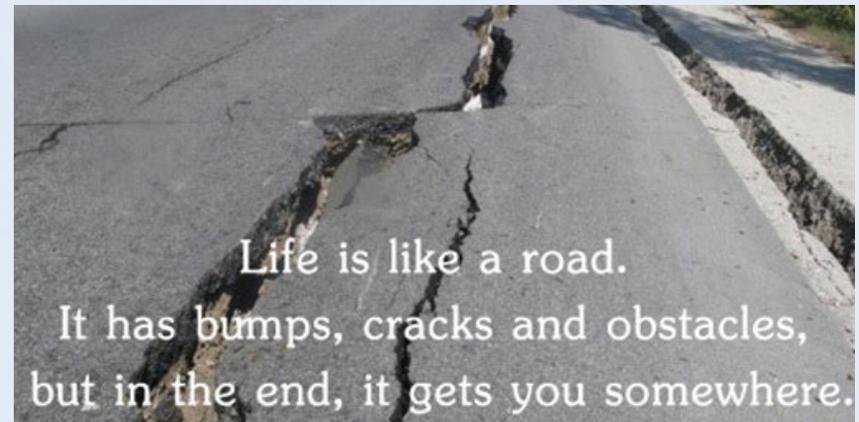
In the beginning, things were hard like. I was trying to move forward but the past was holding me back. I had experienced domestic abuse and was getting threats from people in my street. I was rushed into homeless accommodation with my three boys where we lived for over two years. With everything that was going on, I struggled in my recovery and started to use again. This is when a social worker got involved but it was because of my son's school attendance. I was already being supported by a drugs worker. Then a family support became involved to help.



I felt like I'd crashed into a massive ditch. I was just struggling. I just wanted the best for my kids but I felt a lot of guilt about everything. I felt judged by some workers, it's no surprise I put a frosty front on with them. The way professionals approach us decides whether we can work with them. I felt judged by my drugs worker who wouldn't listen to me. We never spoke on the same level; she didn't understand me but I don't think she even tried. I asked for a new worker but nothing happened. Eventually, I asked my family support worker to come with me to an appointment to ask for a new worker. I felt judged a bit by the GP as well who wasn't taking my son's health issues seriously. Again, it wasn't until my family support worker came to an appointment with me that things started moving and they made a referral to a paediatrician.

It shouldn't be like this.

The bumps and cracks seemed to deepen and get worse. I was trying to look forward but it was hard to see clearly when nothing seemed to be going right. I continued to use on and off and hated myself for it, it was eating away at me. I didn't want to use but then that's how an addiction works isn't it? I found it hard to work with workers, not through choice though – I maybe just wasn't ready and some of them I couldn't take to.



I then crashed and burned. I agreed with social work for my youngest son to be looked after by his Gran but was totally devastated. My hands were tied though, I didn't really have another choice.

I was at a crossroads now but there was only one road I was going to take and that was the road to get my son back home.



I worked so hard to change things. I finally got a new drugs worker and there was another drugs worker who came to see me in the house every week. She was amazing and really down-to-earth and I was able to open up and talk to her. She spoke to me on a human level and was just herself. She also got me involved in mindfulness as well. It was brilliant!

I became part of a mindfulness group and I used mindfulness every day. I even used it when I was washing the dishes! My family support worker came out every week and we came up with goals and that helped me to focus and show social work that I had structure to my day. He supported my youngest in school as well. I wanted a new house but workers said I wasn't ready and were worried about another big change. We had now been in homeless accommodation for 18 months. It was like fighting a losing battle and my words didn't matter because the decision was made for me. Housing weren't much help at all.

For the first time in ages I was able to stop and think about everything. I was able to reflect more and felt more in control. It was hard as well though because guilt still totally eats at you but my drugs worker and family support worker were there to listen. I was having contact with my son which was supervised to begin with. I didn't show him how much I was hurting and made sure our time together was fun and exciting.



Contact moved to overnights and I was able to take him to school and pick him up again. I could see a bit of light coming through and things were a wee bit brighter. I kept producing negative samples. There were issues at his Gran's and he wasn't happy but these weren't acted on as seriously by social work. I felt like there was underhand tactics going on at times and didn't trust my social worker. She came across as stuck up and all that does is rub you up the wrong way and it made me not want to engage with them. But I stopped kicking and started to work even though it was hard.

RECOVERY

Things started to change more and I could see a way forward. The clouds were still there but they weren't carrying as much rain. My contact was still going really well and my middle son was accepted for college, was totally buzzing for him. My oldest son was out looking for jobs as well and was helped by an employment person. I've always worked as well and I wanted to find work again.



Then the day came when my boy came home, aww it was just amazing, one of the brightest days of my life.

The final piece of the jigsaw was a new house. Housing were useless and it took me to speak to an MSP with my family support worker to get an offer. That was three years ago and we're still in the same house. We've got our dog back as well because we weren't allowed it in homeless accommodation.



ROAD TO
RECOVERY ↗

This Is Your Journey

I also wanted to share this letter to send a message to those that are struggling and to workers to know how they can help us better.

“Life is never easy for an addict or ex-addict. Even to this day near 4 years clean, I still see people or even professionals class me as a 2nd class citizen... but so what, as long as the people who care about you don't. It's the toxic people you need to move yourself from.

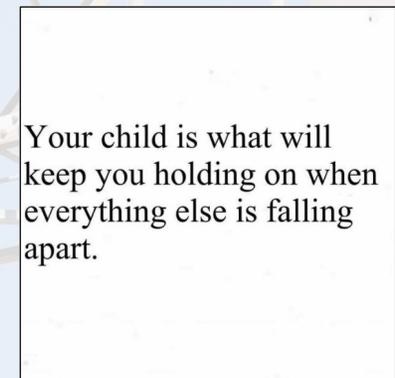
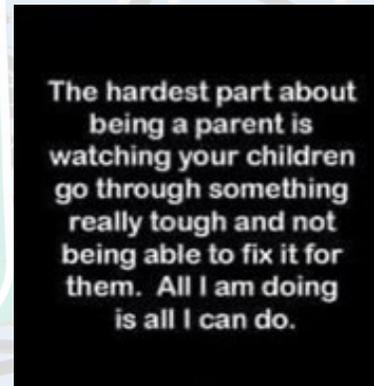
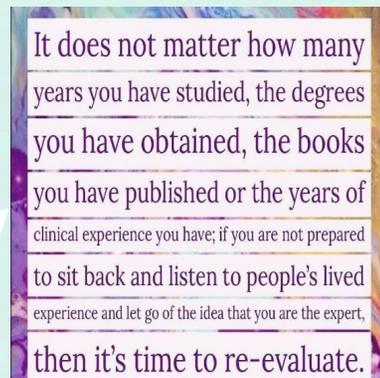
We've all got a story to tell, not for sympathy. Not for anything other than a story needs to be told but with us it's how we'll overcome, it's how we'll move on 'n' all we really need is a pair of ears... once you've got that you're sorted... you won't just tell it to anyone, it must be someone with a pure heart who'll not judge, will not be condescending, who'll empathise with you.

Surround yourself with good people, no drama, and at the beginning you will need to distance yourself with your drug pals (acquaintances) and get rid of them all... you're not trying to be better than them, it's because you are trying to be better than the person you were yesterday and the person you were last year, and believe me when I say it – if I can do it then so can you!

When my son was took off me for the 6 months it broke me but I've got to say it made me too... 'cos if I'm honest I would probably be still using. But at first I didn't see that, I hated social work for it but once I stopped kicking, I could see it made me. It was the worst I'd ever felt (and my God I've been through some shite) but my kids mean more to me than any drug ever did and all I kept thinking was if I'm feeling like this, then what's my son feeling and that's when I knew I would never go back to that. My son never asked to be here so it's down to me to do my best for him.

I mean, I'm still riddled with guilt, think I always will be but I've got my son back. I'm close to all my kids now and they're all doing great. I'm a Granny now as well and an active Granny 'cos see this, I wouldn't have been allowed in my Granddaughter's life and I thank my lucky stars every day for what I've got. I'm working full time, life is good again. The start is scary but the middle is fantastic so start by getting a worker that you gel with as this is your journey.”

And finally, here are some quotes I wanted to share:



Thank you to the parent supported by Action for Children who wrote their journey as part of our national Ask the Family project in February 2021

