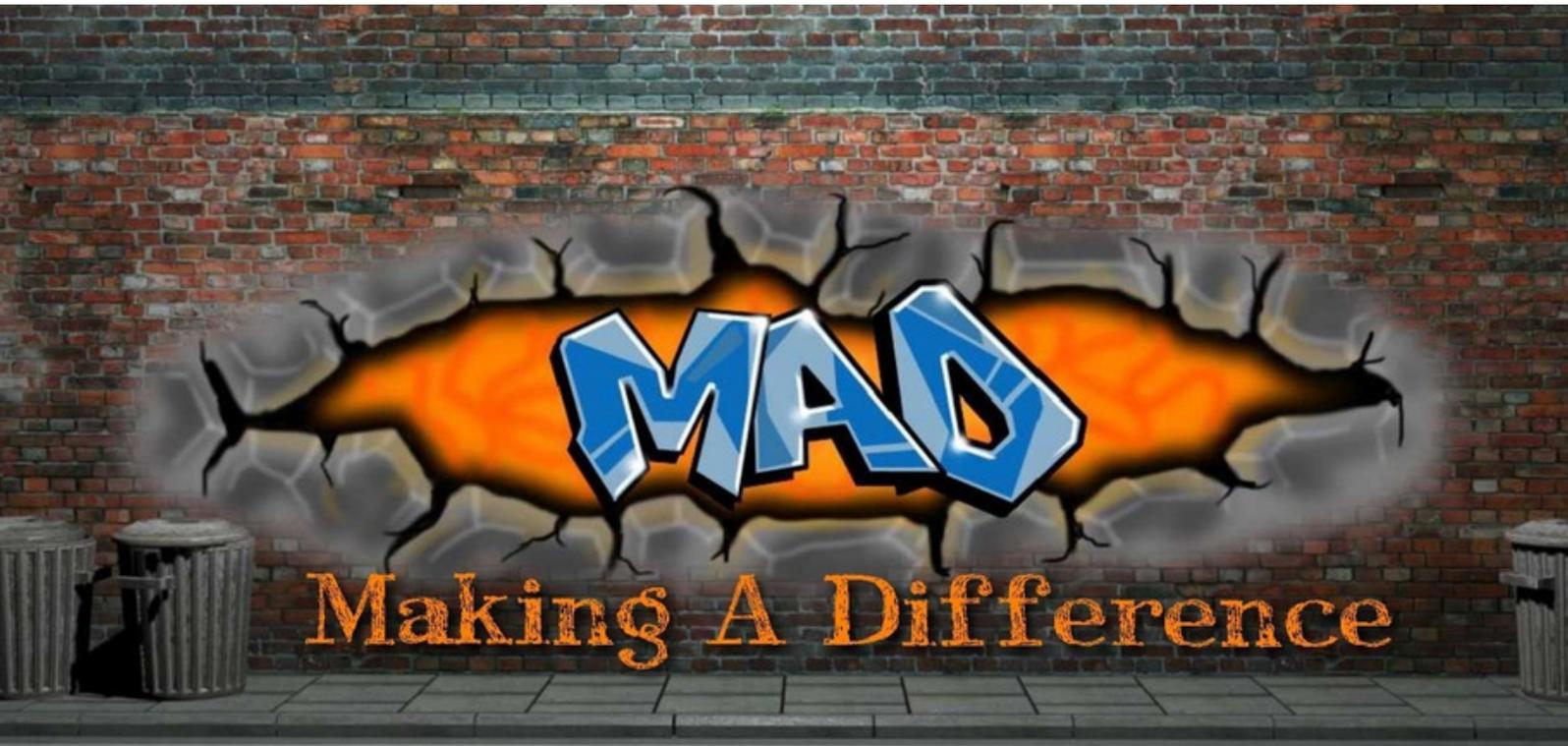


DECEMBER 2021

# THE 'KEEP THE HEID' NEWSLETTER!

From North Ayrshire Justice Services Service User Involvement group



## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

This month some of our service users have been sharing their stories about the festive period and the challenges that can bring. One of our members had mentioned that they still enjoy seeing Christmas trees and all the Christmas music playing everywhere but that on years when he felt more alone it could also be very challenging. Whereas another one of our members spoke of feeling quite overwhelmed by festivities everywhere because she had lost her mother around this time and always struggles. What is safe to say is that this can be a stressful time for everyone regardless of your life experiences. Our service users consistently told us that they think the best thing people can do is be kind. So that's what we're asking everyone to do.. enjoy the festive period in whatever way you usually do.. but sprinkle a wee extra bit of kindness wherever you go. Make a difference to everyone you come into contact with (see what we did there?).



# SUPERVISION VS PRISON



One of our MAD group members Billy often shares his poems with us. He has recently written this piece comparing prison sentences to community-based disposals and we think it really gives us all something to think about.

*"The Supervision Payback Order,  
Has helped me to realise,  
That it is better to talk,  
Than to do something unwise.  
I've been able to open up,  
About problems from my past,  
And actually been listened to,  
And never felt harassed.*

*There are many poor souls,  
In our prisons today.  
Many with mental health issues,  
Just locked up away.  
Our nation is one of the worst,  
For throwing people inside.  
Neglecting their health,  
And destroying their pride.*

*So sentencing anyone,  
For less than two years,  
Doesn't do any good,  
Because of their fears,  
Of losing their homes,  
With nowhere to stay.  
So they will just be back...  
... some the next day.*

Billy (14th October 2021)

This prompted some discussion around the value of community-based disposals and about understanding that sometimes people just need to feel listened to and the support to get them back on their feet.

The MAD group has been a way to bring people together and to get them seeing a life beyond the justice system and we hope that this will continue to help people.

Let us know your thoughts and whether Billy's poem helped you see things from a different point of view.

"ORDERS  
(COMMUNITY BASED  
DISPOSALS) CAN BE  
A WAY FOR  
SOMEONE TO GET  
THE HELP THEY  
NEED AND START TO  
BUILD THE SKILLS  
THAT HELP THEM  
LIVE A MORE  
POSITIVE LIFESTYLE.  
WHICH IN TURN  
REDUCES  
REOFFENDING..  
WHICH SURELY IS  
THE OVERALL  
GOAL?"

MAD GROUP  
MEMBER

# CHANGING YOUR LIFE, TO HELP OTHERS...



Now we have part two of Hugh's story about recovery and turning his life around:

*"Only when a friend, another addict in recovery, explained what he was doing and achieving did I find hope. At 43 I started attending 12 step mutual aid meetings in the community. The power of example had actually overtaken the power of my addiction, and after regular attendance for over a year, and reducing methadone and Valium I was set to try my first day clean and sober and it wasn't what I expected. It was much better than that.*

*I attended a college course, and through being involved in the recovery community I was offered sessional work, supporting people with BBVs, promoting testing and treatment. This grew into more work, facilitating groups, working with criminal justice and eventually helping facilitate a recovery group in the prison.*

*This showed me that attitudes were changing. For an ex-con to even be allowed in the prison was alien to me. My hours were extended to full time and I also gained an SVQ 3 in health and social care to add to my other qualifications.*

*I was finally trusted and respected in my community, with other people with the same issues constantly reaching out. It felt better than any combination of drug ( which were many) had ever felt.*

*Presently I am employed permanently with addiction services. I am being the father I was also supposed to be, a role model for my two kids, with my future secure. I work in a team I love with 4 other addicts in recovery and my meeting attendance is still regular. I never thought that this was possible. And it is available for anyone with a desire to do things differently, regardless of circumstance."*

We hope you have enjoyed learning more about Hugh.. we think he's pretty inspirational!

**"WITH GROUP ATTENDANCE AND VOLUNTARY WORK I FINALLY HAD A PURPOSE. TO LET OTHERS KNOW THAT THERE WAS A WAY OUT, AND I HAD FOUND IT."**

# LAST BUT NOT LEAST...



It's lentil soup this month - a nice wee winter warmer but also a very affordable way to make up several lunches/dinners for a week.

## Ingredients

(makes 6 portions)

150g of red lentils  
6 carrots peeled and chopped into circles  
1 large or 2 small onions diced  
2 ham or veg stock cubes  
Extra water  
Salt and pepper to taste

## Method

Add stock cubes to boiling water and wait until they dissolve.

Add stock and lentils to a pan. Leave lentils to soften in the heat.

Prepare your carrots and onions. Add the vegetables and salt and pepper to taste.

Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and cover with a lid and leave to simmer for 45-60 mins.

Add water if required if the soup gets too thick.

This is one of the recipes we tried when one of our members asked us to help them eat well whilst on a reduced budget. Each portion only costs 25p!

You can also experiment and add in other vegetables such as celery or peppers if you want to add different flavours.

*"ABSOLUTELY  
DELICIOUS AND  
HEART-WARMING!!"*

(MAD GROUP  
MEMBER)



2022

*Happy New Year*

Everyone at the Making a Difference group would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Here's hoping 2022 brings some joy for everyone!