



The 'Keep the heid' newsletter!

October 2020

What's been happening?

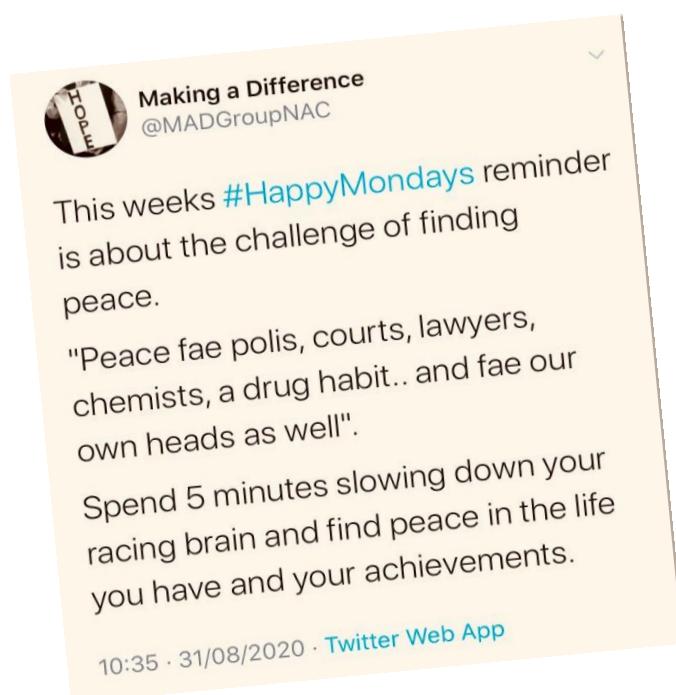
Given that the COVID-19 restrictions are continuing, our MAD activities have remained somewhat curtailed. Thankfully our cooking challenges haven't been impacted as we deliver these using all social distancing measures.

In addition, our members have been offered a wonderful opportunity to attend a virtual seminar on trauma responsive practice in November. This has prompted good discussions around trauma and moving forward from negative coping strategies and tackling the past head on. We also discussed the origins of the quote *"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results"* and how despite this making a great deal of sense, we all can be guilty of resorting to learned behaviours instead of being brave and trying something new. From a staff point of view, it made us think about the preconceptions that services can have and how maybe we all need to think about how our viewpoint impacts others and their future? Perhaps insanity is actually assuming that others have no potential for change because they've tried before and it didn't work out. Maybe we need to help people try something different?

#HappyMondays

Since our September newsletter one of our focuses has been on sharing some positivity on a Monday. A few months ago, Paul – our member whose story you read last month – told us about how he had been trying to focus on meditation and positive affirmations every day. One of the main reasons Paul had been doing this was because he recognised that we all have a tendency at points to focus on the negatives – what we should have done, what we have done wrong, what we have 'failed' at again. When we talked about it, we decided that at this weird time of facing uncertainties in the world it might be nice to share some positive thoughts to start the week on our Twitter ([@MADGroupNAC](https://twitter.com/MADGroupNAC)).

Some examples of this are:



This month's final affirmation is something that we think we all might struggle with. However, it certainly can help if it is put into practice:

"If we work on adoptin a positive mind-set n attitude & apply it in our daily lives no matter what the world chucks at us & just be our best selves everyday, things will, an in ma experience generally dae, turn out for the good or better. Try this one it's good.. no matter what the circumstances try n look at it like it's to your advantage an your world's takin care ay yae. It's a tough one sometimes n takes practice but it does work. Just look for the good gang cause it's always there somewhere.

Catherine's story

One of the best things about the MAD group is that we have family members of those in recovery join in our activities. This month Catherine is sharing her story to help people understand that addiction stretches beyond just the individual themselves.

"Hey all, my name is Catherine and I am the sister of a recovering addict. I wanted to tell my story with regards to how addiction has impacted my life and how eternally grateful I am for services like yourselves that are available to offer help and support to those in need.

I am 38 years old and it was when I was only 16 that I first discovered that my brother took heroin. To be honest, I didn't actually know much about that kind of stuff as although I was 16 I think at that point I lived a very sheltered life and it was something I was never around. Yeah, I knew of hash and speed but never actually personally knew of anyone that had taken heroin before, like I said I was pretty naive at the time. I can't actually remember exactly the age I was when we all discovered that my brother had a "habit" I just knew that he had a drug problem. I can remember him stealing and lying to my Mum and because our Dad worked away at the time it was always left to my Mum to try and deal with.

I honestly couldn't begin to come up with a figure as to how much money was stolen over the years or how much was spent between paying off dealers or trying to get him "clean" by sending him to rehab after rehab which always ended up the same - him still being addicted to, and continuously using, heroin. Lots of times I can remember my Mum sitting up through the night with him while he went through the withdrawals only to just get straight back on it again.

Fast forward to when I was 28 and living back in Scotland and he had 'apparently' got clean and was taking Naltrexone. However sadly this turned out to be another lie and it soon became apparent that he was still heavily involved with the use of heroin. More time passes and I am now 35 and he is now again drug free and back and forward at my Mum's for his dinner as he is now staying in a homeless shelter and things appeared to be okay. Unfortunately, this was not the case and it ended up with him taking something belonging to my son to pay his dealer and that was the final straw for me. It actually was at that point that there was absolutely no more contact with him and although I missed him so very much I knew that my brother was no longer in control of his life. In fact I don't think he was ever in control once he started down that path of taking heroin. I realised at that point that I no longer had my big brother, which even writing this it is making my eyes fill up with tears at the thought of it.

It had been way over a year at least without any contact at all from him until my Mum had received a Mother's Day card in 2019 with a message inside saying that he was completely off everything and was sorry about everything he had put us all through and if she wanted she could send him an email as he didn't have a phone. So I helped my Mum send an email and waited to see if he had written a reply. He did and we arranged to meet for coffee. I went along with Mum and Dad and we were all so nervous as to what he would be like as we had been down this road so many times before I was now 37 and this had been a constant story with him saying he was completely clean.

I can still remember the day as if it was yesterday when he turned up and he looked so clean and tidy his clothes smelling fresh out the washing machine. It was at that point I actually for once felt that this could actually be true, that all these years of being constantly let down because yet again it's all just been a lie because of the addiction, it really was the best feeling in the whole world.

Anyway over the next few weeks he was able to inform us that he had been in and out of jail for shoplifting and other drug offences but was now signed up to a Drug Treatment and Testing Order

(DTTO) where he got tested regularly to make sure he wasn't back on drugs. He was also on a Methadone prescription which he went to the chemist to take daily. He would often come to Mum and Dad's for dinner or even to stay the odd night too.

Christmas 2019 was the first time we were all together again and I remember feeling so happy and very emotional as both our parents are in their mid 70's and I kept thinking how Mum must have thought she would never live to see the day that he was finally free from heroin and she had her boy back again.

I am extremely proud of Andrew for working so hard to get to where he is although I do know had it not been for the sheer support of all involved in his recovery I may not have been able to have my big brother back again and for that I will be eternally grateful and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for always being there not only for Andrew but for me too."

Last but not least...

We wanted to share one of our cooking challenge recipes with you in each of our newsletters. This month we've chosen our 'MAD Lockdown' small batch muffins.

Ingredients for the strudel

- 1½ tbsp of butter room temperature
- 1½ tbsp of light or dark brown sugar
- 14 grams of cornflakes

Ingredients for the muffins

- 160 grams of plain flour
- 1 tsp of baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 57 grams of room temperature whole milk
- ¼ tsp of vanilla extract
- 99 grams of granulated sugar
- 4 tbsp of room temperature unsalted butter
- 1 large egg at room temperature
- 184 grams of fresh blueberries at room temperature



Method

1. To make the cornflake strudel, mix the butter and the brown sugar together until combined and stir in the cornflakes
2. Put the cornflake strudel in the fridge until ready to use
3. In a small bowl or jug, whisk together the milk and vanilla extract and set aside
4. With a wooden spoon, or electric mixer, combine the sugar and butter in a bowl until its light, fluffy and creamy – then add the egg and mix together
5. Then add the dry ingredients in the bag (flour, baking powder & salt) into the butter and sugar mixture in 3 stages, alternating with the milk and vanilla that you whisked together beforehand – i.e. put in a third of the dry ingredients and then add a third of the milk and vanilla and repeat another two times in this sequence
6. Take half of the blueberries and crush them with your hands and add to the mixture and combine
7. Then add the remaining whole blueberries and stir to combine
8. Cover the mixture with clingfilm and set aside and let the batter rest for one hour
9. Put 6 muffin cases in the tin and set a timer on your phone for 50 minutes
10. When the timer goes off, preheat the oven to 200 degrees c or gas mark 6
11. When the batter has rested for an hour, divide into the 6 muffin cases and top with the cornflake strudel
12. Bake for about 22-24 minutes, keeping an eye on them – they should be domed and golden brown at the edges and a skewer should come out clean with only a few crumbs attached