

OASIS RECOVERY NEWS AND VIEWS (ORNV)

Content and Photographs by Oasis Service users.

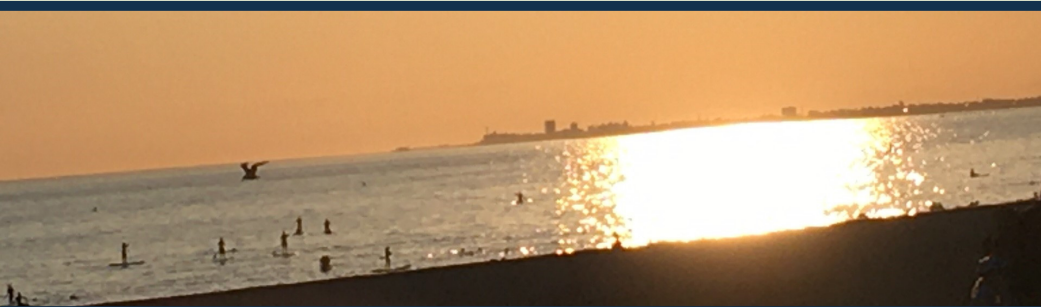


AN INTRODUCTION TO ORNV

So, you may be wondering what's all this about? So, I thought I'd take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about 'Oasis Recovery News and Views'.

I first came to Oasis around 15 years ago - back then we had a little Newsletter that was printed on a photocopier and folded in half! Not quite like this one, but we loved it, because it was ours.

So, I was chatting away with my key worker and just happened to mention this. I have to say if it hadn't been for her enthusiastic response and the invaluable contribution and support from my peers and Oasis we wouldn't have got this far. That's what this is all about, **all of us working together.**



I think as service users we should have a voice, and this is a means of that happening. Especially as there are still restrictions for some, in terms of Covid-19, but also in terms of life. This can be a great way of relating, empathising, and knowing you are not alone.

I would like to hear from all Service users, we all have something to say. We've all been in very similar situations, and we all have something to teach each other. In short, this is our magazine, for us, by us - Something we can all be proud of!

This Issue Focuses on Change

Coping Strategies

Breathing Techniques

10 Tips To Cope With Anxiety

TV and Film Suggestions

Structure and Routine

12 Daily Reminders

Brighton Green Spaces

Dealing with Change

Clear Glass Bottle

Change isn't Easy

My Addiction and Recovery





Coping Strategies

- Be honest to those around you about your feelings. If things feel a bit much take yourself away (outside or to another room) do some breathing exercises or just take some deep breaths.
- **Keep a gratitude list to help you appreciate each day**
- Keep an accomplishment list so you can acknowledge and be proud of what you complete.
- **Keep a journal to help you look back at each day what was good or bad, what you could do differently and what did you do well.(it can really help to get things out your head and stop thoughts bouncing around in your head when you write them down).**
- Meditation/mindfulness

Breathing technique: Circle breathing

Breathe in for 5 seconds

Hold breath in for 5 seconds

Blow breath out for 5 seconds

Hold that and wait 5 seconds before repeating the cycle.

Repeat between 5 to 10 times

TV and Film suggestions

BBC iPlayer

- **The Other One** - Funny, really good and light-hearted.
- **The Tourist** - Quite an intense series but very good and there are some funny moments in it too.

Netflix

- **Good Girls** and **The Good Place** 'I've really enjoyed both these I say they're definitely worth a watch if you're looking for something more intense'
- **Stay Close** and **The Stranger** are both great thrillers and really make you think!
- **Murder Mystery** - A great comedy movie with Adam Sandler and Jennifer Aniston.
- **The Secret** - This is all about positivity and changing your mind set. (also a book - see page 8.)

10 tips to cope with anxiety

(From betterhelp.com)

1. self care
2. Meditation
3. Taking a bath
4. Get creative
5. Get moving
6. Get enough sleep
7. Practice deep breathing
8. Recognise & control your thoughts (don't let them control you)
9. Make sure you have a support system
10. Knowing when to ask for help



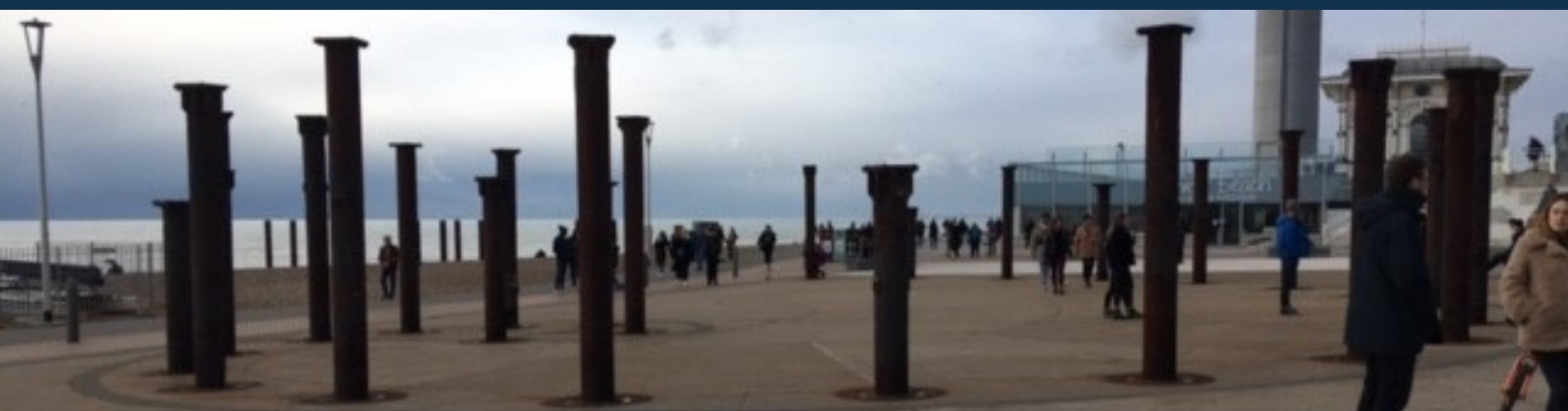


Structure and Routine

I have found structure and routine to help my recovery is so important. I always vowed hating routine and was proud to be impulsive and never planned but now I know that if that behaviours appear, I need to look at myself, as that thinking, and those behaviours are part of my addiction.

Having structure and routine particularly helps me stay safe and really helps me with self-care. Things like showering, eating properly, setting times to get up and to go to bed, time to eat and a deadline time to go outdoors. I set a time for myself to watch TV, meet a friend, exercise, or to cook. I find getting dressed and not staying in my PJs all day really helps to motivate me and helps me to do the things I need to do and in doing that helps me to love myself. Especially since during my using these were things I would and could not do for myself.

I had to relearn how to care for myself and that only came with routine, structure, and time. Now it's second nature and I've started to love myself and make time for myself not just for daily routine but to treat myself, like a bath or pamper night or getting my nails done and I work that into my routine too.



I found while I was struggling to love myself on the inside, I started by loving myself on the outside. I set myself one goal each day no matter how small or big it may have been and felt proud of myself once completing it. Whether it was having a shower, baking a cake, sorting my finances, making a GP appointment, and going to it, doing exercises, going for a walk, sorting out cupboards or clothes and having a clear-out, washing-up or gardening no matter what it is once I have done it. I tell myself I've done a good job and I feel better. Getting these things in order has helped me to have control of my life and to feel freer.

Making time to bake and cook I found therapeutic and obviously really enjoyed eating whatever I make but it mostly helps me to get out of my head and focus on that task and it's so nice to have a break from my head.

Most importantly I have found working the structure and routine around my recovery and having that at the front works the best, mapping out my groups whether online or in person knowing when they are and having at least a few a week, I know I must be somewhere and then I can map out time for everything else around that. Those groups even when they are hard always lift me and I feel really good after which gives me the best motivation and strength to get other things done.



12 Daily Reminders

1. The past cannot be changed
2. Opinions don't define your reality
3. Everyone's journey is different
4. Things always get better with time
5. Judgements are a confession of character
6. Overthinking will lead to sadness
7. Happiness is found within
8. Positive thoughts create positive things
9. Smiles are contagious
10. Kindness is free
11. You only fail if you quit
12. What goes around, comes around



Green Spaces within Brighton & Hove

Ecotherapy run by Mind charity (mindcharity.co.uk), includes:

- Health Walks
- Allotment Project
- The Grow Project

Gardening

Peaceful and therapeutic. If you don't have your own garden, there are at least 90 volunteer groups for local gardens in Brighton and Hove:

For details see bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk

Allotment

Thyme & Space is a women-only group, working on an allotment in Hove. The group is currently held on Fridays, with volunteers having the opportunity to have lunch with the group, using produce grown on site.

For details see plot22.org

Therapeutic activities across Sussex

Please see greenwellbeingalliance.org.uk



Dealing with Change

I have put a lot of thought into how I feel about change and why I don't always like it and I've realised it's not change itself I have the problem with, it's the power and control I have over the change or lack of it should I say. It comes down to acceptance, willingness, and accountability. Take a big change in the world like global warming, my head says 'what difference can I make, I'm just one person I have no control over the rest of the world and their actions', however I do have the power and possibly the willingness to change what I do but my acceptance tells me not to bother.



I can't be held accountable either way. When I look at it another way with my accountability when just considering me - I can change what I do and even those small changes can make a difference maybe a small one to the world but a large one to myself and how I feel.

Then I look at my recovery I feel like I have no power or control most of the time. I'm always willing but struggle with acceptance and accountability and it wasn't until I could take responsibility for my choices and actions and hold myself accountable and accept the past, that I have an addiction and truly own that, that is when I can take control back and my power, to make any change.

For me Change is just the result and not the challenge. Just like drink or drugs was a solution to my problems. What is stopping me is fear, power, control, acceptance, willingness, and accountability. It all starts with changing my thinking, my awareness of my behaviours around how I feel about the choices I have in my life and trying to see the positive and believe in myself.

Through writing this I have noticed when I think about change my mindset is focused on it negatively with it being hard and challenging. I realised how easily I can forget how change can be great. It can be easy and freeing and could be the simplest of things, but they bring such joy, such as making a new friend, starting a new relationship, unsupervised contact with your child, social services stepping back, a child sleeping through the night, giving you time to yourself in the evening, celebrating 1-week, 1-month, 3-months, 6 months, or a year clean time in recovery.

All these things to me don't seem like change because they are good and I've worked hard for them they feel like a natural progression, something I have earned and that are rewarding and a lot of the time they have been a goal of mine. It's only when change is negative or feels out of my control that it feels scary and hard but during positive, good change the thought of change doesn't cross my mind. I look forward to the benefits of it, sometimes there is some anxiety there - depending how new the situation is that's coming - but it's always a good feeling of hope and I'm ready for it.



Clear Glass Bottle

Tripping the clear fantastic
I can feel it through my veins .
The tears have shed themselves,
But emptiness remains.

Try put yourself in my place,
A place that isn't there.
Just when you think it's over
There's nothing but despair .

It all seems very tragic ,
and you may think -just stop.
You see ,I'm trying hard to play a part ,
but don't understand the plot .

I make my fight continue ,
but violence still remains .
Within this clear glass bottle,
which my sanity retains.

Don't ever think i'd tell you ,
It's the answer to my woes .
it's the Devil that I turn to
that fends off all my foes.

The Devil doesn't stay too long ,
to nurture or to care .
Just knocks you out ,and leaves you,
and in the morning isn't there.

So tripping the clear fantastic ,
there seems no point at all .
The only point I ever find ,
is the one that pierces -
when I fall.

Change isn't Easy.

Nobody ever said change is easy , yet as women in recovery from addiction , it's important that we face down the things that kept us in active addiction. We need to think differently , do differently , and act differently .

It is said that the two most stressful things in life are moving house and ending a relationship ,these just happen to be the biggest adjustments we can make in life. moving on is difficult ,its frightening and stressful , yet if we want to progress it has to happen .

During my life , I have often been resistant to change , staying in a painful and uncomfortable place. Fearful , because i don't know what might happen if i make the leap . Fear of the unknown is what can kept me in the cycle of addiction , unwilling to change .



Of course not all change is good , especially when its something we didn't choose to happen , when its beyond our control .

It can also be the most freeing option , and when we do change ,even through fear and we come out the other side ,we can be so proud of what we've achieved . Change.



My Addiction and Recovery.

Even though I am only 21, I've struggled with my addiction for quite a few years now. For the first few years, I managed to hide it pretty well - until it became obvious to the people around me. It effected my relationships along with a lot of other things in my life massively. I almost lost everything important to me several times, including myself.

I played it off as 'I'm young' and 'everyone takes drugs and drinks', but I knew it was a lot worse than that and so did everyone else. I didn't care at all about what I was doing to myself but didn't realise how much it was affecting the people I love. As I always used to say, 'I'm doing this to myself, it doesn't effect anyone else but me' and I believed that.

In spring 2020 I first reached out to oasis as my addiction had got so bad, I completely disconnected and isolated myself from the world - it's all such a blur now. With support from my key worker at the time I gradually started to cut down, but that wasn't enough and in sept 2020 I was put in an impatient detox to come off diazepam and alcohol at the age of 19.

After detox I managed to stay sober for a bit, but I had disconnected myself from oasis and any support as I thought I was fixed- this was a big mistake. Very quickly I spiralled and relapsed. I was back to heavily drinking daily also using different substances trying to just get through the day and trying to deal with my mental health- this made it a lot worse.

" I played it off as 'I'm young' and 'everyone takes drugs and drinks', but I knew it was a lot worse than that and so did everyone else"

It took me a long time to admit to myself I needed help again as I was in denial; I was functioning, going to work, socialising, managing to get through the day, but I was not sober. This time it wasn't just mentally I was fucking myself up! It was also physically. Every day I was in a lot of pain from what I was doing to myself.

In sept 2021 I finally - after months off putting it off - got back in contact with oasis and I remember even after that first call, I thought to myself 'why did I wait so long to call'. After them first calls with my key worker, I felt a massive weight off my shoulders just knowing I wasn't doing this on my own and knowing that my key worker or another one of the oasis staff was always at the end of the phone when I needed, was a massive relief.

At the start of this year, I ended up in hospital for a week- this was caused by my drinking. I had made myself very ill. Whilst in hospital they detoxed me medically for the 2nd time. At the time I was angry, and I felt I wasn't ready to and couldn't stop. I was so wrong. My key worker was there for me at the end of the phone, supporting me and reassuring me throughout. Without her, I wouldn't have stayed and completed the detox and wouldn't be where I am today. continued over page.....



...My Addiction and Recovery continued

I am now 2 months out of hospital and doing better than I - or anyone else that knows me - could imagine. I'm in constant contact with my key worker who's always at the end of the phone if I need her and going to groups at oasis and meeting the other oasis staff and women in recovery who have been through or going through similar things – they're all amazing. I'm also trying out new things; I'm spending more time with my friends and doing things that don't involve drink and drugs. I'm also exercising a lot and doing good at work and looking after myself.

I'm now looking to the future and taking control of my life. It's not been easy at all, and I have made some mistakes, but I'm learning from them. I'm still very early in my recovery and I've got a long, long way to go but I want to keep getting better and willing to do whatever it takes to get there. And I am slowly getting better I've just got to stick at it and trust the process. I have hope which oasis has given to me.

a massive thank you to my key worker, the oasis staff, and all the women at oasis. I wouldn't be where I am today without you.

The Secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old but on building the new

SOCRATES

Book suggestions

- **Can you keep a secret** by Sophie Kinsella - Very comical and girly but easy to get lost in.
- **The Shopaholic** by Sophie Kinsella – A real escape and feel good book.
- **Happy** - by Fearne Cotton - The book is written about the battle she has had with depression and the highs and lows of her life. It's very relatable and translates almost perfectly to recovery (not with substances) but to how we feel inside.
- **The Secret** - This is all about positivity and changing your mind set. Not just your thinking but to truly believe in your thoughts and wants and how that brings positivity and good things into your life.

THANKYOU

To Oasis Service users who contributed to this issue.

And thank you to you for reading! If you would like to contribute anonymously to the next issue, speak with your care coordinator or add you input into our suggestions box at no. 11.

If you would like support from Oasis Project with alcohol or drug use please call 01273 696970 or make a referral via the website

www.oasisproject.org.uk