

End of the line or new beginning update - By Lyn, December 2005

Lyn wrote this piece based on her experiences of having attended the ANA Family and Carers Group.

This is an update from when I first joined ANA in March 2004. I was so nervous; not knowing what help I could get. Was this just another door I was to knock on and get no answer? as I had done many times before.

I was at the point where I felt I could not live a life of turmoil caught up in my son's Addiction to Drink and Drugs and found myself unable to help him. I had tried everything a mother could do to help her child for years but nothing worked for him or me. It was always the same merry go round we were on. It was a continual repetitive cycle of crisis after crisis he could not see he was slowly killing himself, and I just stood there watching all this torment he suffered, while my heart was breaking because I could not find an answer for him.

At nights I prayed for help, in a strange way I guess my prayers were answered as I saw the advert in the paper and followed it up on that day in March when I walked through the doors of ANA. If you read my first letter, it explained how both my son and I were helped. I was taught how Addiction worked and how destructive it can be for the whole family. I found this extremely useful. Soon I began to realise that no matter how hard I had tried in the past nothing could have worked because at the end of the day if you continue to do the same things in the same way nothing can possibly change.

I quickly learned if I made small changes to the way I reacted to my son's crisis it had a knock on effect to my son. I took just small steps like making boundaries for me and my son, i.e. what I found acceptable behaviour from him and what my reaction would be if he broke those boundaries. I discussed all this with him and asked if he would like to set up his own boundaries, which he did and I accepted. This was just the start for us both.

Before, I had been powerless over his behaviour, but that did not mean I had to be pulled down the same road as him and feel the consequences of his actions. This was about him being responsible for his actions, not me being responsible, after all it was his life, to make his own choices and be responsible for his actions. ANA taught me all this and showed me that I HAVE A LIFE TOO.

I watched the change in my son and myself with the small changes we both made we have both grown and become better people. We are closer now than ever before. He has moved from being in prisons to sleeping on the streets, mental health issues, overdoses, and broken relationships to a calmer life.

He has a good relationship with his daughter. He sees her on a regular basis and also has just starting working again. He has accommodation and opened up a bank account.

These are things that, in the past, were just dreams for me, but are now reality. He has found it hard dealing with the addiction but he takes each day as it comes and if he has a slip he picks himself up and starts again.

As for me, I can now sleep at night not worrying about phone calls day and night from police or hospitals. I love my son, that will never change, but it is a pleasure to go about my daily business not worrying what is going to happen next. I have a life now that my husband and I enjoy and at this time in our life we have earned it. I have now completed a Life Coaching Course. So you see I have reclaimed my life back and my son is living a more fulfilling life; one that is peaceful not soul destroying.

My family owe so much to ANA for guiding us in the right direction. Without the support of the counsellors we would still be sitting on that old-merry-go-round and nothing would have changed for us.

I just wanted to write and let people know that LIFE CAN CHANGE IF YOU ARE PREPARED TO MAKE LITTLE CHANGES.

A MESSAGE FOR ALL THOSE OF YOU OUT THERE WHO MAYBE IN THAT PAINFUL WORLD THAT YOUR LOVED ONE IS TRAPPED IN. BE BRAVE AND KNOCK ON THE DOORS OF ANA AND LET THEM HELP YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS. IT WORKED FOR ME.

Lyn.