

My Name is Andrew – A Client Story

My name is Andrew and I would like to share my story of recovery from mental illness and addictions, with the hope that it will help others with their recovery. I've accomplished a lot, but it wasn't an easy road.

In 2004 I moved to Peterborough to be closer to my mom and brother. I was in crisis a lot because of my mental health symptoms and I needed support. I struggled with an unstable mood, anxiety and stress; financial troubles, intellectual and learning disabilities as well as drug and alcohol abuse. I was in emotional pain and I was trying to hide my emotions instead of managing them. My journey began when I filled out an application at C.M.H.A. to help me find my own housing, help with budgeting and help to stabilize my mental health.

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I started work with a C.M.H.A. case manager and then I got my own apartment and help from a housing support worker. I also got a trustee worker to help me budget and pay my bills. Things went well for a time, but then my landlord sold my apartment and I started couch surfing; putting pressure on my friends. I also got back into drugs and alcohol to manage my stress and anxiety, which only made things worse. With the help of Four County Addictions Services Team (4CAST) I learned new skills to cope.

In 2011 I started the Georgianwood Concurrent Disorder Program in Penetanguishene to learn about my illness and my addictions. I was there for 2 ½ months and I learned a heck of a lot about how alcohol and drugs were harmful to me and how to stay clean and sober. I continue to work hard to strengthen my skills through C.M.H.A. groups including Mindfulness, Emotional Skills group and am now working on an Assertiveness Program.

Today, I have a heck of a lot to be proud of. I graduated from the Trustee Program and have been managing my own money for 5 years. I'm more independent, attending appointments on my own. I set better boundaries with friends and supports. Instead of calling an ambulance when I feel a crisis coming on I am more mindful and patient and let my anxiety pass away. I can't remember the last time I called the crisis line, but I know they are there if I need them. I attend NA and AA meetings and work the steps with my sponsor. I don't worry as much and have learned to stay in the moment, with my uncertainty.

I would like to thank all the professional and personal supports I have received, including P.R.H.C., Telehealth, The VON 360 Clinic, The Health Unit, 4Cast, Westmount Pharmacy, C.M.H.A. and their Four County Crisis Program, my psychiatrist, my friends and my family.



CMHA HKPR is proud to award Andrew the 2016 “Achievement through Adversity Award” for his courage and tenacity to reach his goals and his determination to be a role model to others.