



Bromley Recovery Service – Case Study

17th December 2014

Background

Bromley Mindfulness

Bromley Mindfulness is Robert Mitchell and his associates. Bromley Mindfulness's vision is to help people come to the realisation that peace of mind and happiness is achievable through mindfulness and to help create a world where mindfulness is an accessible state of mind for everyone.

Bromley Mindfulness works to achieve these goals by building a sustainable combination of paid and discounted services to ensure that mindfulness training is accessible to those who need it irrespective of their means.

CRI

Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI) is a voluntary sector organisation specialising in drug and criminal justice intervention projects in England & Wales. CRI is a national provider of support, treatment and rehabilitation programmes for those whose lives are blighted by substance misuse, crime and lack of opportunity.

CRI works with 53,500 people across England and Wales through 3 million client contacts a year.

CRI has provided drug services in Bromley since 2006, alcohol treatment since 2012 and prescribed drugs addiction treatments since mid-2014 through the Bromley Drug and Alcohol Service.

Bromley Drug and Alcohol Service

Bromley Drug and Alcohol Service is run by CRI and provides an integrated treatment system for adults who have a problem with drug and alcohol use. The service works with people at all points of their treatment journey from engagement into services to recovery. They also provide support services to family and carers whose lives are affected by another's drug and alcohol use.



Bromley Recovery Service

Bromley Recovery Service is the section of Bromley Drug and Alcohol Service dedicated to supporting clients in their progress towards recovery.

The Problem

Addiction

“Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.

Addiction is characterized by inability to consistently abstain, impairment in behavioral control, craving, diminished recognition of significant problems with one’s behaviors and interpersonal relationships, and a dysfunctional emotional response. Like other chronic diseases, addiction often involves cycles of relapse and remission. Without treatment or engagement in recovery activities, addiction is progressive and can result in disability or premature death.”

~ American Society of Addiction Medicine

Addiction Recovery

The concept of addiction recovery, although the term is widely used, is the subject of often conflicting definitions but it can be said that, at a high level, recovery is a personal process of transition for addicts that characterises their rehabilitation into a less self-destructive lifestyle free of the dysfunction of addiction.

Any failure of the recovery process leading to recurrence of addictive behaviour is known as a relapse.



Addiction Recovery and Stress

The seminal study of addiction recovery in the UK is the National Treatment Outcomes Research Study ([NTORS – see references](#)).

Emotional stability is a key issue in addiction. According to NTORS:

“More than a quarter of the cohort (29% [of the 1,000 study participants]) reported having thoughts of suicide in the three months before treatment. Ten percent had received inpatient hospital psychiatric treatment (for a problem other than drug dependence) in the 2 years before intake, and 14% had received community psychiatric treatment.”

According to [Dr. R Sinha of the Department of Psychiatry, Yale University School of Medicine](#) there is:

“Accumulating evidence from preclinical, clinical, and population studies that highly stressful situations and chronic stress increase addiction vulnerability, that is, both risk of developing addiction and risk of relapse.”

From this and other work we can conclude that stress, anxiety and depression play a pivotal role in addiction and relapse.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a state of mind characterised by an absence of conditioned responses and perception. Mindfulness has been defined by the person that introduced it into western healthcare services Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn as:

“Paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally.”

The non-judgmental element of what is effectively an equation for peace of mind is critical as it leads to a reduction in the perceived impact and significance of life experiences. This includes stressful and anxiety inducing experiences.

The benefits of mindfulness for health and wellbeing are well documented and are well studied. [The United States National Center for Biotechnology Information](#) database has records of over 3,000 scientific journal articles and studies relating to mindfulness.



Work and study is ongoing into the benefits of mindfulness. The [American Mindfulness Research Organisation](#) publishes new mindfulness research papers at the rate of about 30 each month.

Mindfulness is learned through a number of meditations and daily practices that can be incorporated into daily life.

Mindfulness and Stress

Mindfulness has been used in the West as a stress reduction clinical intervention since its introduction by Dr. Kabat-Zinn in 1979 at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre. Dr Kabat-Zinn works specifically with patients suffering from chronic pain and terminal illness.

Mindfulness practices help to reduce the levels of anxiety and stress to the point where the effects can diminish to manageable levels.

Mindfulness and addiction

Meditation based interventions for addiction relapse have been studied since the 70s and encouraging research continues. [See mindfulness addiction studies in the references](#). Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP) is emerging as an accepted practice in the USA but has yet to become regularly recommended by practitioners and healthcare professionals in the UK.

Rationale

Led by Jonathan Williams with many years of experience working in the domain of drug rehabilitation services, Bromley Drug and Alcohol service has a successful history of exploiting the benefits of holistic therapies including acupuncture which has greatly benefitted the service users. Patricia Madhok, chair of the service user group at Bromley Recovery Service, discovered how meditation reduced her stress. Realising that this could assist her users, she gained the consent of the forward-thinking management team to investigate the possibility of initiating a mindfulness practice and engaged Bromley Mindfulness to provide a course of mindfulness teaching sessions.



This service has been running since September 2014 and has attracted a regular group of service users that have discovered the real world benefits of mindfulness.

Process

The mindfulness meditation course is not an MBRP or MBSR course. The methodology has been to engage with the users, introduce mindfulness and mindfulness practices, obtain feedback to help to structure a course that directly meets the needs of the users in as effective a way as possible.

The goal currently is to provide an ongoing mindfulness meditation drop-in course that can be accessed by any users of the BRS services. The team are also committed to reach out to users that have yet to attend and extend the benefits of mindfulness to as many of the user base as possible.

Resources Required

The course has been facilitated by Bromley Recovery Service led by Patricia Madhok and assisted by the support team at Norton House. They have liaised with Bromley Mindfulness to produce and update promotional information, juggle with calendars to find appropriate times to enable service users to attend, provide facilities and meeting space, update and inform service users of schedules and training sessions; provide additional services such as videos and taped guided meditations, and liaise with the CRI management team.

Challenges overcome

The initial attendance was disappointing although the original small group of attendees still attend. The decision was made to reschedule the sessions to enable service users to attend the mindfulness sessions after a popular weekly support meeting. Since then attendance has grown as the benefits of learning mindfulness have become disseminated within the user community. As things stand, the team believe that mindfulness meditation is here to stay as a valuable addition to the range of support services provided by the Bromley Drug and Alcohol Service.



Lessons Learned

What worked well

Engagement has been good. Flyers were produced for both men and women as there is a perception that things like meditation are not viewed as a man's game. This flyer included news snippets on the mindfulness practices of the US Marines and the Seattle Seahawks American football team.

The talks that accompany the mindfulness meditation and training sessions have been varied with a focus on elements of our experience that are relevant to addiction and its correlates.

What we would do differently next time

We would choose a time when we knew service users are at the centre at the start of the sessions. When service users attend their first class it is usually out of curiosity so it should be made as convenient as possible for them.

Feedback/Results

After three months of regular sessions we have a number of service users that have attended regularly. We provided feedback forms and we have analysed the results which are available in the following table and the accompanying comments:

Bromley Recovery Service feedback analysis	Expressed as % of attendees	
	Regular	Occasional
How regularly do you attend?	75	25
Do you find there are real benefits from mindfulness?	Yes 100	No 0
Do you think these practices have benefitted your recovery?	Yes 87.5	Don't know 12.5

Some comments on *"how mindfulness has helped my life"*:

- *"Generally I'm more present every day. I've experienced peace within myself and have felt content. I'm able to identify my feelings and although I still feel anxiety, I can see why."*
- *"It is making me calmer and more balanced in my life."*
- *"I give a bit more thought. I think more, I'm a bit more at peace."*
- *"I'm not so stressed and feel more relaxed mentally and physically."*
- *"There is a reduction of anxiety and I'm understanding how the mind works in relation to addiction."*
- *"I'm learning to sit back, relax, not get so wound up about things that you can do nothing about and to keep calm."*
- *"I am much calmer on Fridays and sleep better. Saturday is a very stressful day so it definitely helps."*
- *"It has helped me with the way I deal with stressful situations."*



Additional Information and references

American Society of Addiction Medicine

<http://www.asam.org/for-the-public/definition-of-addiction>

Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI)

<http://www.cri.org.uk/>

National Treatment Outcome Research Study

<http://www.ntors.org.uk/>

NTORS was the first large-scale, multi-site, prospective follow up study of drug misuse conducted in the United Kingdom. Over 1000 people were recruited to the scheme who entered drug rehabilitation treatment services, both residential and community based to see what the most effective methods are. The study began in 1995 in England and 54 drug treatment programmes took part. The study observed patient behaviour and substance misuse patterns over 5 years.

Dr. R Sinha 2001

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2732004/>

The National Center for Biotechnology Information mindfulness studies

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/gquery/?term=mindfulness>

Mindfulness addiction studies

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?cmd=link&linkname=pubmed_pubmed&uid=20204916&log\\$=relatedarticles&logdbfrom=pmc](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?cmd=link&linkname=pubmed_pubmed&uid=20204916&log$=relatedarticles&logdbfrom=pmc)

Mindfulness practices of the Seattle Seahawks

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/05/140516092519.htm>



U.S. Marine Corps mindfulness studies

Science Daily Article - War and Peace (of Mind)

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/05/140516092519.htm>

Marine Corps Times

<http://archive.marinecorpstimes.com/article/20140325/NEWS/303250058/P-TSD-Battling-shock-war>

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