



END-OF-MODULE EVALUATION

HOT SEATS

HSTRON3 – Tron Community Recovery Group

25 WEEKS

DEC 2025 – MAY
2026

23

ACTIVE
PARTICIPANTS

286

ATTENDANCES

CLERO

ACCREDITED

EVIDENCE BASE

Outcomes measured via **SWEMWBS** (Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) administered at start, midpoint and end of module, plus **Outcome Star** tool integrated into 1:1 support.

WATCH THE LIVE RECORDING

▶ **End-of-module script reading**

https://youtu.be/lngRspl-7W4?si=i8VcJz_QZAoKloMk

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At a glance

WATCH THE LIVE RECORDING



End-of-module script reading

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EVIDENCE BASE

Outcomes measured via **SWEMWBS** (Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) administered at **start, midpoint and end** of module, plus **Outcome Star** tool integrated into 1:1 support. Further detail in §08 (evidenced outcomes) and §10 (methodology).

HSTRON3 was a community-recovery delivery of the Hot Seats programme – a participatory group role-play approach for adults in recovery – at the Tron in Glasgow. This evaluation is the formal end-of-module record for host management, partners, funders and the wider recovery sector.

24

SESSIONS
DELIVERED

23

ACTIVE
PARTICIPANTS

286

ATTENDANCES

19

AT LIVE READ-
THROUGH

Programme	Hot Seats – participatory group role-play for adults in recovery
Delivery setting	Community recovery – Tron, Glasgow
Module duration	24 delivered sessions across 25 weeks (7 Dec 2025 – 27 May 2026)
Lead facilitator	Emma S – CLERO peer facilitator
Peer-volunteer support	Angela P – sustained role across the module, led Wk20 delivery
End-of-module debrief (Wk25)	14 participants
Anonymity protocol	Applied throughout – no personal history disclosed in-session
Delivered by	Creative Change Collective (SC046250) – CLERO-accredited

What participants did

Over 24 sessions, the HSTRON3 group worked through the full six-Hot-Seat curriculum – exploring, in character through the group's collective protagonist Jo, the themes that most directly determine outcomes for adults in recovery:

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** – the roots of destructive patterns and how early experiences shape adult behaviour.
- **Drug & alcohol use** – substances in coping, decision-making and daily life; legal and illegal.
- **Relationships** – connections with family, friends, services, authority figures; how internal dialogue distorts or undermines them.
- **Physical and mental health** – the mind-body link, self-neglect patterns, untreated conditions.
- **Purposeful use of time** – routine, purpose, life stability; employment, volunteering, accommodation.
- **Future aspirations** – the synthesis: building a vision for a different trajectory.

Running through all six Hot Seats are two character devices central to the work: the **Inner Critic** – the destructive internal dialogue that drives harmful decision-making – and the **Inner Mentor**, the counterbalancing voice of reason and self-compassion. Through role-play, participants practise identifying, externalising and interrupting the Inner Critic, and rehearse accessing the Inner Mentor in moments of pressure.

The module culminated in a professionally produced live script reading at the Tron on 20 May 2026, attended by 19 participants plus Tron staff and community supporters, in which the group's work across the module was shared with a live audience.

The cohort spoke. Every one of them.



Every HSTRON3 participant reported: improved mental health, acceptance that they themselves have a huge impact on their own mental health, improved emotional wellbeing, and an improved relationship with self. Multiple participants explicitly reported relapse is less likely as a direct result of engagement with Hot Seats.

In their own words

“

Hot Seats is a massive part of my sobriety now.

— ANDREW M • 23 SESSIONS

“

The group feels like a family – no judgement, only support.

— HELEN S • 6 SESSIONS

“

A life-changing experience. I normally don't finish recovery programmes, but I finished this one because I never felt forced.

— MIRANDA S • 8 SESSIONS

“

Relapse is much less likely when engaging with it.

— GARY D • 19 SESSIONS

“

Wednesdays are my happiest days.

— JANICE W • 25 SESSIONS

“

I now know how to deal with my inner critic and listen more to my inner mentor.

— NEILETTE B • 9 SESSIONS

Individual journeys

Direct testimony and delivery-team observation, drawn from weekly summary sheets, end-of-module debrief (Wk25) and 1:1 support. First names with surname initial only (anonymity protocol).



Sam H

22 SESSIONS

Wk18 (delivery-team observation): the group has helped Sam gain control of his thoughts and emotions through inner-dialogue work; now has tools to support himself outside sessions – good for his mental health and a sense of healing.

Helen S

6 SESSIONS

Wk19: attended her second session after a recent relapse and felt an immediate lift in mood and stronger for her recovery (disclosure made outside session during 1:1 support). Wk25 debrief, direct: **"The group has made me more confident and outgoing – before I was very shy and quiet. My mental health has improved. My son sent me a message after the live script reading to say he's proud of me. The group feels like a family – no judgement, only support."** (Son reference revealed outside session during 1:1 support.)

Sophie S

12 SESSIONS

Wk19, direct: **"Before, I lacked confidence and felt I didn't know where I belonged – the work has given me confidence to try new things and understand myself more in recovery."**

Miranda S

8 SESSIONS

Wk25 debrief, direct: **"A life-changing experience – I discovered tools for recovery and parts of myself I never knew. I normally don't finish recovery programmes, but I finished this one because I never felt forced. I grew in confidence and my life is better for it."**

Pauline B

21 SESSIONS

Wk16, direct: Hot Seats really helps her mental health – relates to and better understands her own behaviours through the role-plays. Wk25: **"At 64 I'm still learning... my confidence is growing, and I'm learning to stop listening to the inner critic."**

Andrew M

23 SESSIONS – HIGHEST ATTENDANCE

Wk22, direct: "Hot Seats is a massive part of my sobriety now." Wk25: "I love being part of the community – I've gained confidence and a sense of giving back, helping others while helping myself. It helps keep me clean and sober and gives me more tools and knowledge around addiction and mental health."

Angela P

18 SESSIONS - PEER-VOLUNTEER

Sustained peer-volunteer presence across the module – including leading the Wk20 session delivery when the lead facilitator was unwell. Wk25 debrief, direct: "I've taken so much from these sessions – it's helped my mental health and my recovery. The Hot Seats – although anonymous – subconsciously help me address my own battles and give me the tools to maintain my recovery."

Gary D

19 SESSIONS

Wk25, direct: "Connection with others is an important part of recovery, and Hot Seats provides that – relapse is much less likely when engaging with it. The role-plays build our confidence; I no longer fear speaking in public."

James G

14 SESSIONS

Wk19 (delivery-team observation): attending sessions helps him recognise not just his own behaviours and inner dialogue but understand others in recovery; gives him tools to protect his own mindset. Wk25, direct: "It's helped me maintain my recovery and stay connected. I'm a lot more confident now and have learned to think more before reacting – I feel part of something."

Gillian W

6 SESSIONS

Wk19 (delivery-team observation): already a clear confidence boost; says there are things in the work she'd never have expected to benefit from, but she now better understands why she thinks the way she does and feels she can change it with the tools. Wk25, direct: "I've gained so much confidence, made connections, had safe fun and a sense of purpose. Working through the Hot Seats helped me understand my behaviours, triggers and emotions – and how to manage them in a more positive way."



Aleem M

13 SESSIONS

Wk25, direct: "The sessions gave me insight into triggers I thought I'd already dealt with, and I'm glad I got to work through them. The role-plays really help ease those heavy thoughts."

Janice W

25 SESSIONS – MOST ATTENDED

Wk17 (delivery-team observation): the work helps her better understand herself, her behaviours and emotions, which really helps her recovery. Wk25, direct: "Transparency, looking back through a clear, safe

lens. Self-belief, value in ourselves, connection with our community, the support we give and receive – Wednesdays are my happiest days."

Charles K

15 SESSIONS

Wk20, direct: the sessions leave a positive impact on both his mental health and his recovery, and an overall more positive outlook on life. Wk25: "The live script reading in front of an audience was thrilling – nervous but a natural high. The audience feedback was amazing, and completing the full programme and read-through was a big achievement."



Neilette B

9 SESSIONS

Wk25, direct: "This programme has given me confidence and new friends. I now know how to deal with my inner critic and listen more to my inner mentor – it's helped my mental health and I understand a lot more now."

Niall D

8 SESSIONS

Wk21, direct: the group has made a big positive change to his mental health; feels part of something that can make a difference, and it helps him a lot through life.

William M

10 SESSIONS

Wk19, direct: the work helps him feel more in control when life events happen that would normally lead to relapse; he can listen to his inner dialogue more, and the sessions help his mental health through connection, support and a better understanding of his emotional triggers.

Stephen H

3 SESSIONS

Wk21, direct: "This is helping me a lot in my early recovery – a real positive in my life after only a few sessions."

Maryam H

1 SESSION

Wk17 first session, direct: "Loved it, really enjoyed the inner-dialogue work, and it lifted my mood."

Tools participants take with them

Hot Seats isn't a programme participants experience in a room and leave behind. The work produces a portable toolkit that participants report using outside sessions, between sessions, and after the module ends.

Inner Critic / Inner Mentor framework

Identifying, externalising and interrupting the destructive internal voice; rehearsing access to the supportive one. (Neilette B: *"I now know how to deal with my inner critic."* Pauline B: *"I'm learning to stop listening to the inner critic."*)

Role-play as self-reflection

Running scenarios in character to rehearse healthier responses before they're needed in life. (Aleem M: *"The role-plays really help ease those heavy thoughts."*)

Writing thoughts down

Processing emotion through reflective writing.

Recognising relapse-risk moments

Applying inner-dialogue tools when life events would normally trigger a slip. (William M's testimony.)

Breath-work and box breathing

Calming the nervous system before reacting. Used in-session and reported as a take-home practice.

ACE awareness

Understanding how early experiences shape current patterns; not as an excuse, but as context for change.

Realistic expectations, small steps

Replacing harsh self-comparison with achievable daily progress.

Community + 1:1 support beyond the room

Continued access via the moderated online community + the participant→facilitator pathway.

Facilitator reflections



Lead facilitator Emma S delivered HSTRON3 across 24 sessions, with peer volunteer Angela P providing sustained support across the module – including leading the Wk20 delivery in Emma's absence. The module ran from December 2025 to May 2026 with a consistent weekly cadence; Wk23 was dedicated to live-event preparation (the Wk24 script reading) so no session was held that week.

The arc Emma observed across the 25 weeks: first impressions of curiosity and reserve, transitioning by mid-module into deep engagement and consistent vulnerability within the safety of the anonymity protocol, and culminating in a final phase characterised by visible pride, confidence, and mutual support. What stood out at the Wk24 script reading was the visible pride, confidence and sense of achievement across the group – a powerful reflection of the progress made in their recovery journeys and of the peer connection and mutual support built over the module.

The participant-to-facilitator pathway, captured live

Angela P, a current participant, supported delivery across the module and **led Wk20 in Emma's absence** – the session running in full with the anonymity protocol applied; 12 participants attended. This is unscripted evidence that the participant-to-facilitator pathway is real. Angela has since indicated she wants to formally pursue facilitator training.

Continuation pathways

Hot Seats is structured so that the module is not the endpoint. Participants who want to keep growing have three structured routes, all open to HSTRON3 graduates.

1

Free moderated online community

A Discord and WhatsApp community open to ALL participants – from this and every other Hot Seats group across CCC and 4UM, plus individuals doing Hot Seats outside any group. Members receive peer support from other current and past participants, access to 1:1 support, referrals into professional services where relevant, and access to live daily group sessions delivered remotely via Teams.

2

Facilitator training pathway

Complete one module as participant → peer-support volunteer for a second module → certified facilitator (online course material on the Stan platform + ongoing back-office support). Once certified, facilitators join a private Discord/WhatsApp group for best-practice sharing and back-office support, backed by a custom Hot Seats GPT for programme-specific questions. £100/month subscription per certified facilitator (paid by the host) covers training, licence, and back-office support.

Live proof point from HSTRON3: Angela P has formally expressed she wants to go through training and become a certified facilitator. Her sustained presence across the module, including leading Wk20, shows she is already operationally ready.

3

Structured volunteer roles

Beyond facilitator training, structured roles include peer-support work alongside group delivery, content adaptation, lived-experience-panel membership (which contributes to programme governance), and – for those who progress and are suitable – board of trustees.

Past success of this pathway

Several of the current facilitators across the active CCC/4UM roster started as participants in earlier Hot Seats groups – including Emma S (HSTRON3's lead facilitator), Ami, and Lorraine. The pathway works. HSTRON3 has multiple participants who could be the next examples.

Capacity honesty

There is currently a waiting list of HSTRON3 (and other-cohort) participants ready to step into structured volunteer or facilitator roles. The constraint is not interest – it's the back-office funding to process, train, supervise and embed them. This is itself a strong case for sustained investment in the programme.

Evidenced outcomes

HSTRON3 evidence mapped against the Hot Seats headline impact framework.

OUTCOME CLAIM	HSTRON3 EVIDENCE
Improved mental health (all participants)	Direct testimony from 14 named participants at Wk25 debrief; weekly engagement notes across the module; SWEMWBS administration (start / midpoint / end).
Participants accept they themselves have a huge impact on their own mental health	Inner-Critic / Inner-Mentor framework adopted across cohort; multiple participants using these tools independently outside session – Pauline B, Neilette B, Sam H, William M most explicit.
Improved emotional wellbeing	SWEMWBS pre/mid/post data; direct participant testimony (Helen S "my mental health has improved"; Miranda S "my life is better for it").
Improved relationship with self	Confidence growth (Sophie S, Gillian W, Charles K), self-acceptance (Andrew M), reduced inner-critic dominance (Pauline B, Neilette B).
Recovery-specific: supported journey, relapse less likely	Gary D explicitly: "Relapse is much less likely when engaging with it." Andrew M: "Hot Seats is a massive part of my sobriety now." Stephen H: post-relapse re-engagement and recovery support. William M: the work creates control in relapse-risk moments.
Tools for life beyond the room	Eight named, in-use tools (Section 05) with verbatim participant evidence that each is being used outside sessions.
Community + belonging (community-group specific)	A self-sustaining community formed around the group: Helen S – "like a family, no judgement, only support." Janice W – "connection with our community, the support we give and receive." Angela P – peer-volunteer step-up.

Closing

HSTRON3 delivered against every dimension of Hot Seats' impact framework: improved mental health, ownership of recovery, emotional wellbeing, relationship with self, evidenced reduced relapse risk, portable toolkit, and a tangible community formed around the group.

The work continues. HSTRON3 participants are already moving along the pathways – Angela P toward facilitator training, others into the online community, several toward peer-support volunteering – and the next HSTRON cohort builds on the infrastructure, relationships and proof points HSTRON3 established.

Appendix A – methodology

Anonymity protocol

All role-plays were conducted in character through the group protagonist (Jo). No participant ever revealed whether content reflected lived experience or fiction. This is the mechanism that makes Hot Seats safe for people who don't engage with disclosure-based support.

Evaluation framework

Session level – Lead facilitator completes a summary sheet after every session (attendance, engagement observations, safeguarding flags). **Participant level** – SWEMWBS (Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) administered at start, midpoint and end of module; Outcome Star tool integrated into 1:1 support. **Module level** – End-of-module debrief session (Wk25 – 27 May 2026) with participant feedback sheets, group reflection, and live group debrief. **Independent academic input** – Visiting researcher Arturo C (University of Rome) attended sessions and contributed observation.

Total attendance: 286 session-attendances across 24 delivered sessions. Full per-participant attendance available on request.

B

Appendix B – End-of-module script reading



WATCH THE LIVE RECORDING



End-of-module script reading

https://youtu.be/IngRspl-7W4?si=i8VcJz_QZAoKloMk

A NOTE FROM CCC ON THE PROCESS

Facilitator and participants for this module had no previous creative-writing experience. None is required. Every Hot Seats module follows the same process: the role-play and group-discussion detail for each of the six Hot Seats is submitted to the Hot Seats back office; the back office generates the script. Facilitators then approve or edit on behalf of participants. Ultimate sign-off of every group script sits with the host management contact(s). We highlight the process because it matters that prospect facilitators and prospect participants understand the same thing: our focus has always been – and always will be – the emotional wellbeing and mental health of our participants, NOT creative writing and not performance.

THE HSTRON3 GROUP'S SCRIPT

JO'S JOURNEY

Written in-character via Emma the facilitator on behalf of the HSTRON3 cohort

RUNNING ORDER

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Jo's normal | 7. Jo in despair (misses funeral) |
| 2. Jo gets brought home | 8. Jo / McGinty (post meeting) |
| 3. Jo in the dark | 9. Jo visits mum & dad |
| 4. I sit & weep (Robbie Williams) | 10. Everyone's alcoholic |
| 5. I took a trip | 11. Pure buzzing |
| 6. Jo in addiction | 12. Birth to addiction |

13. Jo's piece
14. Positive quotes

15. No blame just breathe!
16. Song – Breathe!

JO'S NORMAL

ALEEM People always ask me why I don't get scared when the shouting starts.

NIELLETTE But that's the thing... I don't really hear it anymore.

GILLIAN It's like when you live next to a main road, after a while you just stop noticing the cars rushing by and the noise.

SAM That's what arguing feels like in my house, just noise! Background noise!

ARTURO It's just my normal!

COREY Dad's usually the loudest, when he slams the door, I know he's gone again! Down the bookie's, staring at those screens that make his eyes all hungry & shiny.

CHARLES He says "he's working on a win" but the win never comes, only the losing, and the losing makes him angry.

HELEN Angry at mum, angry at the walls, angry at me... even when I haven't said a thing.

PAULINE Mum's different, she doesn't shout much, she just fades, like someone turned the brightness down on her.

ROSIE She holds the bottle the way other mums hold handbags, like it's just part of her. Something she can't leave the house without.

ANGELA Sometimes she talks to me, but her words wobble, like they are trying to stand up but keep falling over.

SOPHIE People say kids know when something's wrong, but I don't know... Maybe I skipped that part.

GARY My friend once came round and heard them yelling in the kitchen, and looked at me like he'd seen a ghost.

HANNAH Their eyes got big and shiny, then whispered – aren't you scared, Jo?

JAMES I just shrugged, because scared doesn't feel like a word that belongs to me. This is just my normal.

MIRANDA Sometimes there's no food, not because we're dieting or anything dumb like that. Just because grown-ups forget things when they have too many problems in their heads.

ANDY So I learned how to fix the problem myself. The shops are easy if you know what you're doing. See, I only take the little things. Like crisps, a roll, sometimes an apple. I don't feel bad, I feel full – and full is better than hungry.

WILLIAM At school they tell us to write stories about our weekend. Kids write about football or fun trips to the zoo.

JANIS I sit there, chewing my pencil, trying to make my house sound like a place where stories happen – nice stories – instead of just noise. My teacher smiles at me like she knows something but she never says it.

ALL WE ARE JO!

Narrator (Andy): Jo's journey through life hasn't been clear sailing but we are about to show you just some of that journey and show how Jo turned their life around. Throughout you will see the struggles & emotions as well as the fight Jo has with their inner critic and inner mentor, the battle of the mind. But also the choices Jo made in life to get help, change & accept help. We are all... JO!

JO GETS BROUGHT HOME

ROSIE *Mrs McGinty* Right, ah've brought Jo back AGAIN! Third time this week, mind you...

JIM *Dad* Jo! You learned tae pick a winning one yet!? If no, yer nae use tae me.

SAM *Jo* Aye I did! But maybe you should've picked that number 13 – it was shouting LOOOSSEEEERRR!

JIM *Dad* Hawl you! Number 13 is my lucky number! Ya wee shite!

SAM *Jo* Da, yeh never win! Well, except that time you won me that goldfish at the carnival when I was about 2!

PAULINE *Mum* Right!!! What's going on? Why yous shouting? I canny hear my wine thinking!

ROSIE *McGinty* Your Jo was in my garden shed AGAIN! Eating my rolls – straight right oot the bag!

SAM *Jo* Ahahaha... In fairness, they were lovely rolls. Lovely n soft, a 10 out a 10, Mrs McGinty.

ROSIE *McGinty* That's no the point, Jo!

JIM *Dad* Jo, if yer gonnae steal, aim a bit higher. I mean ROLLS! At least steal the steak pie or get her gingie bottles fuck sake. At least yeh get 2 bob back oan them.

PAULINE *Mum* Aye, imagine getting caught stealing rolls! We raised a rookie criminal!

SAM *Jo* I was hungry! There's no food in this hoose except that weird tin a meat that barks when yeh shake it.

ALL Woof woof! (all bark)

PAULINE *Mum* That's the dug's dinner, Jo!

SAM *Jo* Aw so the dug's got dinner n I've no? Suppose I'm lucky I managed to eat the rolls before Mrs McGinty caught me, eh McGinty?

ROSIE *McGinty* Look, I'm no wanting any trouble. But yeh need to feed the wee yin. I'm finding Jo in my shed that often I'm thinking a charging rent.

SAM *Jo* Dae a get a key then, Mrs McGinty?

JIM *Dad* Uck, leave him be. Life's a gamble, Jo.

PAULINE *Mum* Naw seriously Jo, if yer gony steal food, at least bring some hame for your poor starving maw!

ROSIE *McGinty* Starving you!? You drink yer calories!

PAULINE *Mum* How dare you! It's called a liquid diet, aw the celebrities dae it.

SAM *Jo* See my maw's basically Beyoncé. (flicks hair)

ROSIE *McGinty* Uck I'm away hame. Good luck Jo – yer gonnae need it, wee yin.

JO IN THE DARK

COREY It's night-time again, but it doesn't feel like night. It feels like the lights are all on somewhere else, and my hoose is the only wan that never gets any.

SAM I'm lying in my bed, stomach making noises, like it's trying tae talk to me. Saying feed me... please... just something. But the kitchen is empty, just tins, bottles & arguments.

COREY Mum & Dad are at it AGAIN. Voices banging aff the walls, like doors that never shut right. Money this, money that. Who spent what, who's lying, who's no trying. They forget I'm even here sometimes, like I'm a shadow they keep walking through.

SAM And I pull the blanket up, like a shield, like it's armour, like it could hide the fact I'm scared. No big-scared, no big-monsters-under-the-bed scared. Just... that quiet scared where your heart feels too wee and too loud at the same time.

COREY I try to imagine other kids in other hooses, where the loudest thing at bedtime is the telly getting turned down, or somebody laughing, or a mum shouting "right, light out" – not because the leckie's ran out but because it's just bedtime and you're loved and fed and feel safe.

SAM Safe. That word feels heavy. Like something I'm holding, but it keeps slipping through my fingers. Every time my dad slams a door or mum smashes a glass – by accident, or on purpose. I can never tell, to be honest.

COREY I love them though. That's the strange thing. Even with the chaos, even with the shouting and the empty fridge, and the forgotten birthdays and the SHHH JO, LATER JO, NOT NOW JO, GEE ME PEACE JO – they are still my mum and dad, they are broken in ways I just don't know how to fix. But I keep trying. Wi' every wee smile and every daft joke and every time I tell myself "they will get better, they will."

SAM But sometimes in the dark I let myself wish. Wish for calm, wish for a hoose that smells like dinner and sounds like laughing. I wish for a bed that's warm and a belly that's full. I wish for a morning where I don't wake up worried.

COREY I whisper the same thing every night, just in case someone is listening, even if it is just the shadows.

SAM I don't want much. Just a quiet hoose, a hug and a place where I can feel like a kid instead of a ghost.

COREY And then I close my eyes, pretend I'm somewhere else. Somewhere safe. And hope that tomorrow might sound different.

I SIT & WEEP

(Charlie / Sophie / Angela)

I sit & cry, does an angel contemplate my fate. And do they know, the places where I go when I'm feeling low...

Cause I've been told... too be seen and not heard.

So when I'm lying in my bed, thoughts running in my head, and I feel that love is dead, I'm hearing arguments... instead.

And through it all... naebody gees me affection nor food or protection, whether I'm right or wrong.

And down the stairs they bawl, "Get tae bloody sleep, or get battered till you greet."

Then I run and hide, they always hate me, I'm having arguments instead...

When I'm feeling sick, and the pain runs down to my feet, I look above, and I know I'm never blessed with love.

And when I get the blows, he batters on my bones, and when I think I'm dead, I've peed the bloody bed instead.

And through it all they offer me aggression, punishment & depression, whether I'm right or wrong.

And down the stairs they bawl "Get tae bloody sleep, or get battered till you greet."

Then I canny crawl, they always hit me... I'm having nightmares instead.

I TOOK A TRIP

(Janice)

The open highway runs off before us, stretching out its grasping hand. Beckoning us like some lost children, with the promise of some forbidden land.

Fate casts the bait we must all follow. And in some lost night we try to score the dope, the love, the lust of sorrow. To screw my head in, just once more.

I took a trip for some adventure and lost myself in some dark place, so now I must go forever searching every empty face.

Narrator (Andy): Jo recently lost a sibling, is really deep in addiction and struggling.

JO MISSES BROTHER'S FUNERAL

Narrator: The room smells like yesterday – and a week before that. Curtains shut tight like they're trying to hide Jo from the world, or maybe trying to hide the world from Jo. There's a cup on the floor, or a bowl? Doesn't matter, everything's just there. Jo sits on the edge of the bed, shaking – not dramatic, just constant, like a faulty engine that just won't switch off. A phone lights up. Missed calls, messages, voicemails. Jo just flips it face down...

- IC Gary – Inner Critic** Look at you, couldn't even make it to your own brother's funeral. That's a new low.
- IM Janice – Inner Mentor** Jo, you're hurting, that's why this is happening. But you don't need to stay here, Jo.
- IC Gary** Hurting? Don't dress it up. You chose this, AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN...
- IM Janice** You can change, Jo. Even now you can choose something different than this.
- JO Gillian** Aye... I'll sort it... tomorrow... I just need, just one more to settle...

Narrator: BANG BANG BANG. A knock at the door. Loud... urgent... Jo freezes.

- IC Gary** Don't answer, just let them go, whoever it is. They will see you like this.
- IM Janice** No, answer it. Just open the door. You don't even need to say a thing – just open the door.
- FRIEND Helen** Jo... just open the door, c'mon...
- JO Gillian** Go away... please just go away...
- FRIEND Helen** I'm not leaving. Not today. Not after... well, not after everything... Jo... c'mon...

Narrator: Jo's chest tightens. The funeral. The black clothes sitting in the corner that never got worn.

- IC Gary** You missed it. Your own brother's funeral. You didn't make it. What kind of person does that!
- IM Janice** A person who is unwell. A person who is hurting. A person who needs help.

Narrator: Jo stands, legs shaky, but moves towards the door... stops... turns back... sits back down again. BANG BANG BANG. Another voice appears.

- MUM Neillette** JO! OPEN THIS DOOR RIGHT NOW!

Narrator: Jo flinches, jumps up and just as unlocks the door, mum stumbles in full of anger, then Jo's worried friend, scanning the room.

- MUM Neillette** Yeh never showed... Yer own blood... Yer own... brother... Too busy getting oot yer face, Jo.
- IC Gary** Say it... say yeh didn't care... because that's what it looks like.
- IM Janice** No. You care too much. That's why you couldn't face it.
- JO Gillian** I... tried... I did... I just...
- MUM Neillette** You're useless. Today of all fucking days, when it mattered, Jo.

Narrator: The room goes quiet. Because it lands. It lasts so heavy.

FRIEND *Helen* Alright, ENOUGH! This isn't helping. Mate... we were worried sick, I've been at that door chapping for ages.

JO *Gillian* I wanted to go... I swear... I just... couldn't stop. I thought if I took another wee something I'd manage it, then... uck, then God knows what. I woke up and it was gone. I missed it.

IC *Gary* You've ruined everything.

IM *Janice* You're still here. That means something.

JO *Gillian* I don't know how to stop. I keep saying I will. I keep thinking I will. But I can't. I just, I'm weak, I'm so fucking weak. But I really don't want this anymore. I wish it was gone and no my brother...

FRIEND *Helen* You're not weak, Jo. You're stuck. There's a big difference.

MUM *Neillette* Listen Jo, I've probably not went about things right either.

Narrator: Silence. Just breathing. Shared space... shared pain.

IM *Janice* Look – they are still here. You haven't lost everything.

FRIEND *Helen* We'll get you help, Jo. Proper help. But you've got to let us in, aye?

MUM *Neillette* We'll figure it out, together, somehow. None of us wanted to be like this – but we will figure it out, we will get better.

Narrator: Jo looks between them, for the first time in a while doesn't feel completely alone.

IC *Gary* You don't even deserve this.

IM *Janice* But you still get to accept it. You will be OK.

Narrator: Something just slightly shifted in them all. Not fixed. Not healed. But not hidden anymore.

MIRANDA See, recovery isn't some perfect straight line. It's crawling back to yourself again and again. With scraped knees and honesty. "One won't hurt." Feeling the exhaustion of fighting myself every single day. The inner critic, the inner mentor in a constant battle. Back and forth, up & down. I can do it... no I can't... today's the day... no tomorrow maybe... I'll reach out for help... maybe not.

DEPTHS OF DESPAIR – DEEP IN ADDICTION

JO *Aleem* Aw man, ah feel heavy burst. Ah knew I shouldnae huv took they pills oan tap a whit ah already took.

IM *Janice* I need to get off this slippery slope.

IC *Gary* Och... fuck sake, it's done noo, might as well enjoy the buzz.

JO *Aleem* Naw, that was too much. I'm getting heavy tired noo.

IC *Gary* That's it noo Jo. Gouch approaching, woohoo.

IM *Janice* What if I fall asleep 'n' don't wake up again? That be my life over 'n' I don't want that!

JO *Aleem* Oh... bro why did yeh huv tae leave me? Ah cannae bear life without yeh. You were always there for me. Noo I'm caught in the mix 'n' depths of addiction. This is scary man, I'm fucked.

IC *Gary* It's fucked noo. Probably better aff no here anymore. Be with my bro n maybe find peace.

IM *Janice* Naw, don't, yeh canny think like that. Yer still young and there's plenty a life ahead of yeh. There's mare tae life than this.

JO *Aleem* Aw c'mon Jo, snap out a' it. Sitting bawling my eyes oot's no gonnae help the shit situation.

IM *Janice* Maybe ah could ask for help. I just know ah cannae keep living like this.

IC *Gary* Yer losing gouch time Jo. Just enjoy it, fuck it.

Stage direction: Jo starts to fall asleep, the lights dim. Lights up as Jo awakens.

JO *Aleem* Aw man, that wiz some weird dream there. Whit da' fuck wis that aw about. Wan minute there wiz some heavy dark shit creeping me right oot, next minute my bro appears wae a beautiful white glow a' roon him, here tae save me 'n' telling me to get my life in order 'n' quit aw the drugs n drink. He wiz telling me that he wants me to live 'n' no lose my life over same shit he done. Telling me there's a better life ahead for me. Weird shit man, that was a trip.

IC *Gary* Load ah pish, forget it. Your awake noo and plenty a time tae catch the dealer again.

IM *Janice* Naw Jo, maybe there's something in that dream yeh know. Maybe it is a sign tae get better and that there is a good life ahead of yeh.

JO *Aleem* I'm pure stunned wae that dream, it's really threw me. Part a' me wants tae just go get mair drugs 'n' just fuck it aw, but there's a part a' me that thinks that actually was a sign fae the after-life, fae my bro. I fucking miss him so much man. Life can be so fucking hard.

Stage direction: (KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK) Jo shuffles about in angst.

FRIEND *Arturo* Jo, answer the fucking door! I'm no leaving. I know your in there I can hear you.

JO *Aleem* Aww fuck, that's Fran. I canny face Fran. They will know I'm oot my face. My eyes are like dug's baws wae aw the greeting n everything else, I canny!

IC *Gary* Just ignore Fran. Nosy fucking bastard banging on the door like that.

IM *Janice* Maybe he knows something's no right. He's probably wondering where ah am cause been isolating again. Probably heard about my bro – maybe just answer.

FRIEND *Arturo* Jo, answer the door pal, come on. Just answer, let me in mate.

JO *Aleem* Alright, alright Fran, I'm coming. Gees a sec.

FRIEND *Arturo* Thank fuck Jo, I've been thinking the worst. I thought you were deed. Are yeh alright?

IM *Janice* Maybe just be honest. Say how I feel. That I'm done 'n' just don't want be here anymore. That I want just take aw they pills 'n' no wake up again. Maybe I need just say it.

JO *Aleem* Aw I'm fucked, man. I just canny take any mare a' this shitty life.

FRIEND *Arturo* For fuck sake Jo. I've never seen yeh like this before. What's going on? Yeh can't be thinking like that.

IM *Janice* No. Talk to Fran, Jo. You've known Fran all your life since use were like 6. Fran will understand. Be there for you. Help you even.

JO *Aleem* Aw Fran, I'm fucked. Drinking, taking shitty pills, anything I kin get. I'm an addict 'n' it's spiralling out of control. I don't want be here anymore mate, I'm just done.

FRIEND *Arturo* C'mon Jo, you've always been the strongest person I know. Talk to me. You mentioned addiction. I can maybe help you with that.

JO *Aleem* Whit dae yeh mean help me? You? You know about addiction 'n' how tae help me?

FRIEND *Arturo* Aye Jo, I realised my drinking was getting out of hand, so my dad's good pal Jim spoke to me 'n' took me to an AA meeting. It was the best thing I've done 'n' it totally saved my life. I go to meetings all the time 'n' the people are nice, we support each other. We all know we've each been through hell 'n' back and there's a total sense of peace amongst us. Knowing we're putting in the work towards sobriety 'n' never alone in this journey. Life can be good.

JO *Aleem* Dae yeh really think this will help me, Fran? I'm drowning here mate.

FRIEND *Arturo* Hunner percent, pal. It's your way out. You really don't want end up 6 feet under. Your too young for that, there's a better life ahead for you Jo.

IM *Janice* He's just quoted the very words my bro said in that dream I just had. How spooky is that? Maybe my bro is really looking down on me.

JO *Aleem* Ah ok. I'll try it. I'll go to the next meeting. Thanks Fran.

FRIEND *Arturo* Funny timing Jo – my next meeting is in 45 mins 'n' it's only a 10-minute walk from here. So you ready? Will you come? Make that first step?

JO *Aleem* Aye Fran. I think I should. I know I need help. Am ruining my life here otherwise. Thanks so much for this and for coming here the day, it's been an eye opener. Just what I needed to be honest – a wiz in total depths of despair here, I didn't see a way out. Let's go, I'm ready. Thanks Fran.

Narrator: After going to the first meeting with Fran, Jo surprisingly met & re-connected with their old neighbour from childhood, Mrs McGinty – that same Mrs McGinty you's might remember from the beginning, when a wee young Jo used to steal her rolls cause there was no food in the hoose.

JO & MCGINTY – POST MEETING

JO *Angela* Whit's aw this talk about God, Mrs McGinty? I came here to talk about my addiction, no tae join a new religion.

MCGINTY *Sophie* Your no the only wan tae get put off wae the talk a' God, Jo. When we first came to the meetings most people felt like that.

JO *Angela* But I don't get it. And whit's wae the prayer at the end? It aw seemed a bit religious tae me, n I don't believe in aw that pish.

IM *Janice* Well I went, that's good eh, it's a start.

IC *Gary* Just go score, yeh need it after aw that garbage. What's the fucking point in that.

IM *Janice* C'mon, gee er' a chance tae explain. She's trying tae help yeh. Just listen, what harm will it do.

MCGINTY *Sophie* It's easy enough tae confuse the word spirituality wae religion, Jo, as I suppose it relates tae God. But these meetings are a spiritual programme – not a religious one.

JO *Angela* I'm still confused n no sure.

MCGINTY *Sophie* Well, we believe each individual can choose a higher power of his or her own. Basically a god of their own understanding.

IM *Janice* Shoosh – c'mon, you've managed get tae this hour without using. Just listen to her. You can get better, you can.

JO *Angela* So whit's your take oan it then, Mrs McGinty?

MCGINTY *Sophie* When in active addiction we have a spiritual malady. It's the inner void that we fill with substances. Inner restlessness, discontent and emotional imbalance – that can be characterised by selfishness, fear and a sense of disconnection from a higher purpose or power.

IM *Janice* It's starting to make sense now eh, what she's talking about.

JO *Angela* That does sound a lot like what I'm feeling, Mrs McGinty.

MCGINTY *Sophie* See, your feeling like that cause yer filling that inner void n that's no good Jo. What we need to do is be open-minded to the idea that some power greater than ourselves may be able to help restore our sanity.

JO *Angela* Ah get what yer saying. And I dae want tae live, life's short. A mean look whit happened tae my brother, that really fucked me up big time.

IM *Janice* You deserve to live. You deserve to be happy. And you can be if you're willing to put the hard work in. Your brother would want that as well.

JO *Angela* Aye, noo ye've explained it, aye I think so. I do feel a bit a' hope now.

MCGINTY *Sophie* So will yeh be coming to the next meeting, Jo?

JO *Angela* Aye I will. Yeh know whit, wild horses wouldn't stop me. I feel good, I'm gony try. Thanks so much for this. Fran & you might just be my saviour here again – just like when I was a wee thing stealing yer rolls. You always made me laugh and looked after me when ma & da where... well, yeh know.

MCGINTY *Sophie* Aye, yeh hid it tough. But I'm here for you, Jo.

EVERYONE'S ALCOHOLIC

We are a fellowship that's made up of women & men, who on learning we were alcoholic can never safely drink again. We all suffer from an illness that centres in our mind. It starts with the obsession then the allergy close behind.

We started drinking essentially to find some comfort ease but by the end of our drinking days we were beaten to our knees. We had been mastered by king alcohol to be denizens forevermore. He also sent his Dee-Tees and they came in our door – the shakes, the sweats, the blackouts, he sent them all as well. He made us all progressively worse as he took us all to hell.

He's cunning, baffling and powerful when he's got you every day. He makes people do outrageous things – that's the price he'll make you pay. He'll make you lie, he'll make you steal, he'll make you beg and borrow. He'll take away your family life and leave tears, pain and sorrow.

So when we reach our gutter after suffering years this way, we force ourselves unwillingly to a meeting of AA. It's there we find recovery, the programme and big book. It's there we find sobriety if we open our eyes and look. We learn about the first drink and how dangerous that can be. We learn about the psychic change and we learn to live life free. We find ourselves a sponsor, someone we can trust. We find a higher power that also is a must. We give our time up freely as we give this thing away. We practise the 12-step programme to keep us sober every day.

It's nearly been 2 years now since I had my last drink, because I now live ODAAT and always think... think... think...

JO VISITS MUM & DAD

MUM *Pauline* Who's that...?

JO *Corey* It's me Ma, Jo.

MUM *Pauline* Aw Jo. How yeh doing?

JO *Corey* I'm good Ma, really good actually.

DAD *Jim* Aw look whit the cat dragged in. No seen you in a while. Cutting a wee dash there eh.

JO *Corey* Haha aye well I try my best. Yeas doing OK?

DAD *Jim* Uch, so-so, just getting oan wae it. That's life init. Gotta roll wae the punches n aw that, sometimes life's quicker oan it's feet – but see the trick is tae get back up again.

MUM *Pauline* Yer da's stealing life tips fae Rocky noo apparently. But aye Jo, we're doing alright. Tell us whit's been happening wae you. Last time we seen you things weren't great – none of us were – are yeh doing better noo?

IC *Gary* Your gonny ruin their day if you start talking about this childhood shite, Jo.

IM *Janice* It will be fine. Just be honest. Maybe tread carefully tho, it's been a while 'n' yeh know yer da can fly off the handle. Well yer mum as well, but you can do it. Just be positive. Tell them about your recovery and how well your doing.

JO *Corey* I know Ma. I was in a dark place then. That's why I'm here to be honest, after all this time.

MUM *Pauline* Are you in trouble, Jo? Is that why you're here?

JO *Corey* Naw Ma, the opposite actually. I really am good. I've been getting help with my addiction, been doing counselling and that. It's just opened up a lot of feelings from when I was wee, and I just... I just wanted to talk tae use about it. My counsellor and my sponsor thought it'd be good for me, help me.

MUM *Pauline* Ehmmm... whit yeh talking about, we did our best Jo. Why you bringing past up.

JO *Corey* Naw Ma listen – I'm no here tae argue or blame. I just need talk it out. Cause to be honest back then I didn't feel I was wanted here. I was left to fend for myself – in fact we all were. And then there was the way you and my da were. I mean obviously now I know you were living in the same hell I was in addiction. I just... I think about it all a lot Ma. Counselling is helping me address my feelings and thoughts rather than play the blame game. Cause I know I also made bad choices growing up and blamed you both for all the bad in my life. I just wanted to try talk it out, make amends. Cause I don't want live in the past anymore. I want look to the future now.

MUM *Pauline* Jo... aw... god, your right. I am sorry. My drinking was just chaos back then. I couldn't handle it and you were getting more n more out a' hand. I am sorry tho. I'm doing a lot better now, I've cut right down. I'm really trying this time.

JO *Corey* It's alright Ma, I get how addiction gets a hold a' yeh. I just wish as I got older we could have all talked more instead I just became a wee arsehole, stealing and getting into trouble. But I was so sad, lonely, even hungry – 'n' to be honest Ma, I just wanted you to notice me, so I guess a lot of it was attention.

DAD *Jim* Jo, I wasn't much better. I cared more about my gambling than anything, betting on everything. Then got so angry, it just took over me and I took my anger out on your Ma and yous and the hoose. It wasn't right. So I'm sorry 'n' I'm glad you're getting help and changing your life.

MUM *Pauline* Aye, yer Da stopped the gambling as well. Goes tae they meetings. 'n' I am cutting down, Jo.

IM *Janice* This is going better than thought or hoped for. Maybe your mum needs help the way you did.

JO *Corey* Amazing Da, good on yeh. And I do appreciate the apologies. I mean, we can't change what happen'd – but I hope now we can build a better relationship and communicate wee bit better eh? Mum, you could try meetings?

DAD & MUM Aye, Jo...

MUM *Pauline* I've never even thought about it Jo. I just thought I could do this on my own, but it's been so much harder than I thought. And I really do want stop.

JO *Corey* That's good Ma but you do need support. Come get the tools you need, work the 12 step programme, it helped me. Aw 'n' you will never guess who helped me after my first meeting and now is my sponsor?

MUM *Pauline* Who...?

JO *Corey* Mrs McGinty. Aye, she's my sponsor now after all these years. Been amazing.

MUM *Pauline* No way... Mrs McGinty... she used tae look her nose down at us.

JO *Corey* Naw Ma, she never. She just worried about us all. But yeh know whit Ma, I never even knew she had an issue wae drink. It just shows yeh – no one really knows what other people are going through or suffering from. And she always looked out for me, Ma.

DAD *Jim* That's very true Jo, very true. So whit yer saying is we are aw a bit fucked up, aye?

JO *Corey* So Ma – will yeh come to a meeting?

MUM *Pauline* Aye Jo, why no eh. It helped you, maybe I do just need help 'n' support along the way.

JO *Corey* Good Ma. I'm glad I came see yeh both. Noo whit's fur eating, I'm starving.

Narrator: Jo's doing good, putting the work in. Working through their troubles, healing and starting to enjoy life – a sober life.

PURE BUZZING

BILLY I used to chase chaos like it owed me money. Now I'm chasing sunrises.

SOPHIE Awright, calm doon, Bear Grylls fae Paisley.

BILLY Aye I've swapped hangovers for hilltops, trading last night's regret for a flask and a view that says — mate, yeh made it another day. And I'm obsessed. No, seriously obsessed. With life, with wee daft things like making my bed, like it's some Olympic sport.

SOPHIE Gold medal in duvet discipline, thank you very much.

BILLY I collect hobbies now, like I used to collect excuses.

SOPHIE Gym in the morning... mon then, wan mere rep, ya weapon!

BILLY Cold water swims...

SOPHIE This is Baltic... who signed off oan this?

BILLY Journaling at night like I'm some deep philosopher, but really it's just — dear diary, I didnae spiral today. Class. See, recovery gave me this strange new high — clarity. And it's wild, man, cos nobody warned me that peace could feel this loud. I laugh more now. Real laughs, belly laughs. The kind that sneak up oan yeh in Tesco when yeh realise yer buying fruit instead of regret.

SOPHIE Who even am I? Avocados... behave.

BILLY Aye there's still days where the old voice pipes up — "go on... just the wan" — and I answer back now, stronger, steadier.

SOPHIE Away bile yer heed, I'm busy living noo.

BILLY Cos I've got plans now. Big ones, wee ones. Even just-get-through-the-day ones. And every win feels massive. Like just making a phone call I've been dodging.

SOPHIE Right, stop being a dafty 'n' just dae it.

BILLY Or sitting in silence and no needing to escape it. I've fallen in love with becoming — not perfect, but just better than yesterday. And maybe it looks mad from the outside, this pure buzzing, hobby hoarding, sun chasing version of me. But mate, this is what it looks like when someone who nearly lost everything finally finds something worth keeping. So if yeh see me, half freezing in a loch, writing poetry on a bench or talking to myself on a run — just know, I'm no crazy.

SOPHIE Awright... maybe a wee bit. But at least we are clean & sober eh.

BIRTH TO ADDICTION

How often do we tell this story of our life to addiction? It's just a story that we have told about our lives, to help others, but mainly to help ourselves.

Our critic encourages us to look down on our life with scorn. Our mentor gives us confidence to look up with hope.

If a snake sheds many skins, then people so do I. I have been an institutionalised and troubled child, a drug-numbered youth, a drunken old fool called Jo, and now a soul forever wise.

The freedom that we earned from pain, with Creative Change Collective's support, is unique. We are just a group of folk who wish to change the narrative. Showing that you can move on with your life (anonymously) and reconnect with yourself.

POSITIVE QUOTES

PAULINE I am worthy of all I have.

NEILLETTE Every day is a blessing.

ARTURO I am enough.

GARY Belief and strength comes from within.

CHARLES We suffer alone but heal in communities.

SAM The best days of my life are ahead of me.

ALEEM I will live in the moment, not the past or future.

ANDY One day at a time... this too shall pass.

ANGELA We do and can recover.

COREY I am grateful for today.

GILLIAN We all suffer the same – don't let judgement rule you.

JANIS I look for happiness in the smallest of things.

ROSIE I feel free.

HELEN I choose life.

JAMES Don't judge me on my past – I'm not there anymore.

HANNAH I am not to blame & let go of all the shame.

MIRANDA Positive mind, positive results.

SOPHIE I feel safe.

BILLY I am blessed.

NO BLAME, JUST BREATHE

HELEN I used to carry my childhood like a heavy rucksack – full of broken chairs, empty cupboards and nights where the shouting echoed through the walls louder than the wind. I carried it everywhere – school playgrounds, back alleys, pub doors I wasn't old enough to walk through, but somehow always found.

CHARLES I told myself I was just surviving. Just fitting in, just getting by. But somewhere along the way, surviving turned into hiding. Hiding in bottles, in smoke, in anything that made the noise inside my head go quiet – just for a while.

ANGELA And for years I blamed the past like it was a life sentence. Blamed the house, the chaos, the empty fridge, the nights my mum and dad were lost in their own storms. But here's the strange thing about healing – it doesn't arrive with fireworks. It comes quietly. Like a door creaking open you never noticed before. And one day, I sat across from the 2 people I once thought had all the answers, but were really just 2 wounded humans trying to survive their own stories.

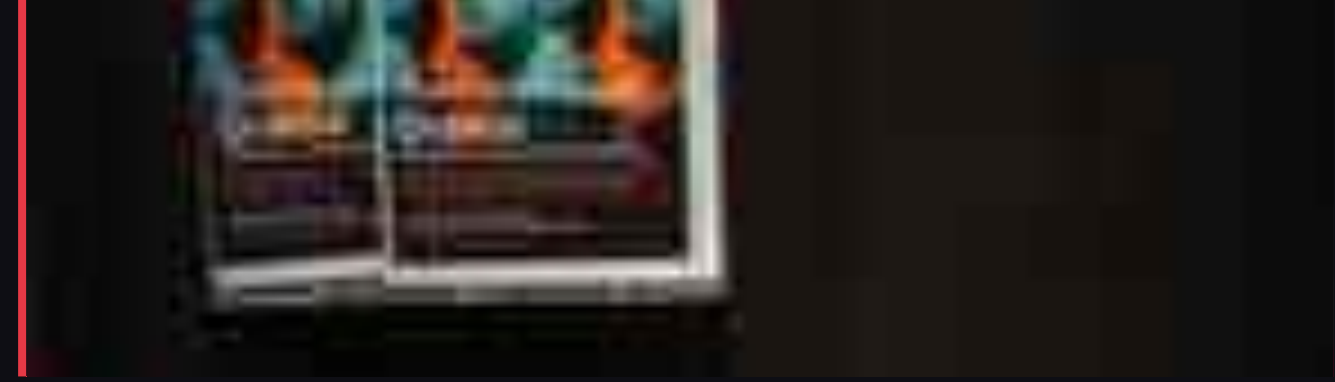
ROSIE No shouting, no pointing fingers, just truth. We spoke about the nights we never spoke about. The hunger, the fear, the loneliness sitting in the same house together. And something shifted. Not blame, not shame – just an understanding. Because addiction doesn't grow in monsters. It grows in pain that never learned to speak.

GILLIAN Now we talk. Really talk. About feelings instead of burying them. About choices instead of regrets. About tomorrow instead of yesterday. My parents are in recovery, I'm in recovery. Three people once drowning in the same storm, now learning how to swim in the same direction.

MIRANDA And for the first time in my life, home doesn't feel like a battlefield. It feels like peace. We laugh more now. We listen more now. We see each other – not as the people we were, but the people we're trying to become. And I feel something I never thought I'd feel growing up: I feel light. Like someone finally took that rucksack off my shoulders.

HANNAH No blame, no shame. Just breathe. Just forgiveness. Just three people, walking into the future clear-eyed, clear-hearted and clean. And for the first time... I don't feel trapped by my story.

ALL WE FEEL FREE.



Hot Seats works.

5,000+ participants. 300+ groups since 2016. CLERO-accredited. Delivered in community recovery, prisons, residential rehab, approved premises, probation and online.

HSTRON3 is one cohort. The work continues — every week, across multiple settings, with a structured pathway from participant to peer-support volunteer to certified facilitator.

5,000+

PARTICIPANTS

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