

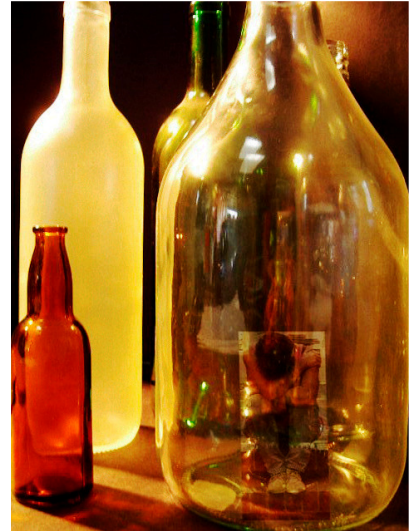
Get a Life not a Bottle Success Story

by Meagan Shand (BSc. Health Promotion)

The challenge was to stop drinking. I had suffered from depression which had built up over the years, gradually getting worse. I'd get into binges that would last for a week or more.

The final one was 8 bottles of Jim Beam over 6 days with no food. I had a blood alcohol reading of .475. Doctors said I should be dead, in a coma or at the least unconscious. I went into an alcoholic psychosis and it was the psychotic hallucinations that led to my hospitalisation and I knew then that I had a problem.

Until you accept you have a problem you can't do anything about it.



'Get a Life- not a bottle'
Healthy Body Healthy Mind
Art Exhibition Winner
Theme: Alcohol and Drug management

A supportive neighbour who knew I was in a bad way referred me to good GP, it was just up the road and I could stagger up there.

Once I sought help ... it was a long journey to recovery. I continued to have my ups and downs.

Crunch time came when I lost my job, I had a very good job I loved- I was drunk at work and I was lucky my boss knew someone at Palmerston drug and alcohol rehab centre and hooked me onto the coordinator. This was the first step towards recovery.

Eventually I was admitted to Graylands, where a psychiatrist referred me to Creative Expressions- that's when I started art therapy.

Going to Creative Expressions daily, helped me to gain self respect again. I also realised I wasn't the only one who was going down. The art gave me a purpose- There may have been a piece coming out of the kiln that day or something that gave me a reason to go. The connection with people was also good as I was a closet drinker and you could go there without judgement.

From this point I enrolled in Cert III Visual Art and Design at TAFE and surprised myself to get 95% for a colour and design unit. This was the highlight for me and I cried my eyes out.

It made me happy and content and proud of myself for achieving something.

I realised I wasn't hopeless, I started liking myself again, I felt more confident and found an inner strength I didn't know I had. I feel more settled and happier, I had peace of mind.

There were physical and mental health benefits, I could eat better, and had more energy to exercise.

I have a clearer head now, I am more focused and can concentrate. I see lights at the end of tunnels instead of a big black hole.

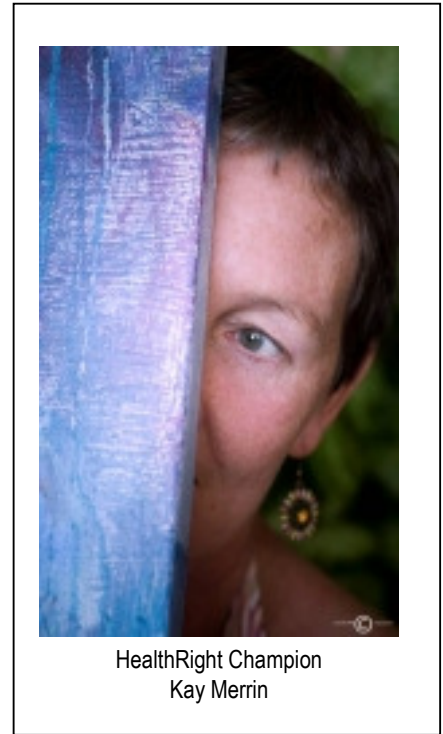
I have got my life back on track and I am in control of drinking now. I still have down days, I had a backslide over Xmas, and went straight to the GP.

The GP is my main contact now. I no longer have a psychologist or do art therapy .

I still have a drink every now and then, but I drink red wine because its got anti-oxidants.

My message is - ask for help once you are aware of the problem, see your doctor or just talk to someone. Remember you are not alone.

The bottom line is that if you want to change you have to accept you have a problem.



Your Physical Health may be the last thing on your mind ...
But you know you have to get your Health Right
See a GP
For a Physical Health Check

Go to www.healthright.com.au for more information

Call HealthRight project co-ordinator Ann Bates on (08) 9433 0329