



SCOTCH WHISKY
ACTION FUND

MANAGED BY



Bazooka Arts



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Organisation: **Bazooka Arts**
Date of Award: **2021**
Amount Awarded: **£17,782**
Project Name: **Creating Change - Alcohol, Relationship, and Me**



Bazooka Arts works predominately in North Lanarkshire with satellite projects running in South Lanarkshire, Glasgow, and East Renfrewshire to improve health and wellbeing through participatory arts projects both one to one and group arts therapies, in person and online. Bazooka Arts provide a wide range of art forms, including visual art, drama, dance movement and film. Therapeutic arts specialists and registered healthcare professionals help people make long-term improvements to their health and wellbeing. They work with all ages and abilities in health, education, and community settings, prioritising the inclusion of people affected by health inequalities, poverty, and isolation.

The Project:

In 2021, Bazooka Arts received a grant of £17,782 from the Scotch Whisky Action Fund (SWAF) to deliver the Creating Change project, a therapeutic programme on the negative impact of alcohol while creating an adult peer education resource as an outcome in addition to a greater insight, or a change in understanding with regards, to the impact of alcohol on relationships; a change in behaviour regarding habits around alcohol; improved mental health and wellbeing; and improved quality of relationships. The proposal for this project came from the prevalence of the impact of alcohol on past and present relationships being a common issue for many people accessing Bazooka Arts mental health support services. The grant contributed to the cost of salaries for art therapists, filming equipment and editing, arts materials, and hall hire.

The Impact:

In total forty-six participants took part in the Creating Change project. Rather than launching the film project immediately staff facilitated therapeutic arts and theatre courses for existing and new participants to build a safe inclusive environment. These were comprised of a silk painting group and theatre tonic workshops. This approach helped people to become comfortable enough to begin talking about their experiences and relationships to the theme of alcohol.

In the second stage of the project, they began making the film. By this stage participants had gained confidence to share personal experiences and perspectives with the group. During the film making process participants gained technical skills in camera use, lighting and editing, which they expressed an interest in learning more.

As a result, a weekly therapeutic film making group has been created supporting participants to develop their skills further, using it as a medium to explore personal experiences and societal themes and create conversations.

Participants are offered the opportunity to choose to focus on the aspects of film making they are most drawn to whether it's auto biographical or fictional story development, script writing, acting, costume, set and prop design/making or the technical skills of camera, lighting or editing. Whichever aspects people focus on they do so as part of the whole production team, which is a great way to develop strong working relationships. From the feedback therapeutic film making has had a profound impact on participants health and wellbeing, improving confidence, resilience and providing interest/meaning/excitement that is motivational.

The safe space and open discussion the project provided encouraged eight participants to join a dramatherapy group run by staff and two students on placement with Bazooka Arts in Coatbridge from the new MSC dramatherapy training programme at Queen Margaret University.

"Thank you for your patience and support and for making the work we have done possible." – Zoe Brook

Case Study

JM is one of our peer support volunteers who has been volunteering with the Additional Support Needs (ASN) Drama group for several years. Despite working with the drama group JM is incredibly shy but is very good at supporting others to find their voice and helps people with ASN to create and share scenes on a weekly basis.

JM is currently in the process of transitioning from female to male and is undergoing hormone therapy, he has a long history of mental ill health and grief but has mainly focused his time with us on volunteering and supporting others – despite offers of one to one support to directly address the issues.

This project was a turning point for JM, focusing thematically on alcohol use, in a supportive group environment seemed to enable him to talk more openly about his experiences of mental ill health much more freely than focusing directly on mental health.

In the project evaluation JM shares the following observations;

"I think that the project was really successful in starting and facilitating conversation on the subject and allowing people to participate at whatever level was comfortable. It really helped me to be in a group where people talked openly about their experiences with alcohol and about mental health in general. It made me feel more normal and less shameful to acknowledge the ways they've affected me. It made me feel less ashamed about having used alcohol to cope. I think being involved really helped my confidence in speaking in group situations and being more open with people. I feel so much more comfortable with the group of people who took part now and I really value having a space like this because it can be difficult for me to open up. Learning more about film was really interesting as I don't know much about the subject, and I'm interested in being involved in that

aspect of future projects. I talked to a worker about sober events for queer people in Glasgow that I didn't know existed and I'm interested to look into further."

This project has been a catalyst for JM who has gone on to take part in a dramatherapy programme. It is the experience within the project with the people who took part that have made this next step possible. He will be going on to work on a film about Stigma and mental health with Bazooka Arts next year.

EDINBURGH

1st Floor, QM Two, 2 Lister Square
Edinburgh EH3 9GL
t: 0131 222 9200



www.scotch-whisky.org.uk

LONDON

16 Old Queen Street
London SW1H 9HP