

Alcohol and Drug Support (ADS) Being There Service Launches new Men's Session



The [Being There Family Support service](#) from (ADS) South West Scotland is a support service designed to help family members and friends of individuals who are suffering from issues around alcohol or drug use. Since its beginning most of the service users accessing support have been female, mirroring a trend which is seen right across Scotland in terms of the demographics accessing Family Support Services. However, both men and women are equally affected by the substance use of a family member, and men have just as much right to support for these issues as women do.

The Being There service has recently employed a male member of staff and through his partnership work with Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD) and the National CRAFT training program, the idea has been formulated to develop a CRAFT session aimed specifically at men in order to try and improve outcomes for men who are affected by the substance use of a loved one. After several lively and productive discussions, it was concluded that a CRAFT activity paired with some sort of physical activity might be a good way in which to engage with men who are otherwise reluctant to engage with family support services, and thus the pilot 'Walk and Talk' session was conceived.

The 'Walk and Talk' session is an opportunity for men affected by a loved one's substance use to come together as a peer support group and to discuss the issues they have all faced in caring for their loved one, whilst not being constrained by the traditional model of group support.

We believe that creating a different paradigm, where men can feel comfortable engaging with accessing support whilst also providing peer support to each other, can help to reduce barriers to services which men face due to stigma and stereotypes, thus improving outcomes not only for individuals but for families and communities.

If successful, the Walk and Talk sessions will be the first step in the development of an ongoing program of activities aimed at engaging men with the support they could benefit from. The Walk and Talk will be a proof-of-concept pilot project which can also serve as a means of discovering men's opinions and attitudes as to how, where and when they would like support tailored to their specific needs.

The first session took place on Friday 30 June, at noon and started at The Hut café in Dock Park, Dumfries and involved a leisurely walk down the bank of the Nith to Kingholm Quay and back to Dock Park, taking no more than 90 minutes. The sessions are scheduled to take place on the last Friday of every month going forwards.

Being There staff will lead the session and the team welcome referrals to the session from all partner organisations. If you would like more information or would like to refer a male service user to this exciting new session then please do not hesitate to contact the Being There team – beingthere@adssws.co.uk 0333 8806950 or the session lead, Math Thomas, on mthomas@adssws.co.uk or 07355094362.