



<p>Project: 'Reflections of trauma, challenges, and healing: An oral history' Respondent: Robert Smith Year of Birth: 1964 Age: xx Connection to project: Respondent Date of Interview: The 7th of April, 2022 Interviewer: Dr Sue Morrison Recording Agreement: Yes Information & Consent: Yes Photographic Images: No (Number of: 0) Length of Interview: 1 hour, 21 minutes and 6 seconds Location of Interview: Hillhead Community Centre Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)</p>	 
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Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.31-0.48	Respondent was born in Glasgow and has lived within the Glasgow area for most of his life. He now lives in Kirkintilloch.	
0.45	Interviewer asks about the respondent's understanding of the term trauma.	
	<p>"Trauma...For me trauma is a negative experience. But I've only just learned what trauma is. Because I think when you don't recognise yourself going through trauma sometimes. It's only when you reflect back on it. I think that has massive implications when you look back at childhood trauma. That you don't maybe realise maybe you've had childhood trauma till you're an adult. So, I always find the word trauma more about...It's a negative experience you've had in your life that's had an impact on how you move on and how you move forward and stuff like that. And how your personality's defined sometimes. That's where I see where trauma is. But I just think it's a generic word that probably doesn't...and can be used in so many different places and conversations. That it gets kind of...not to say overused but it's...It's hard to define. Is it a trauma of experience? As opposed to a physical trauma, a mental trauma...So, I just find the actual...the word for me trauma, I just always associate it with an actual...just a negative experience. That's what I would say my understanding of it is."</p>	0.51-2.42
2.43	Interviewer asks the respondent to give her some examples of trauma.	
	<p>"I think, as I say, any negative experience. Whether it be a traumatic event. Whether it be losing a loved one, losing a family...As I say, being as I say, having real mental health and addiction issues...Did that come from a trauma? An underlying trauma that's not been recognised. If you're turning to alcohol and drugs as coping mechanisms. Is that born out of a trauma that's not really been dealt with. And I think for me, and as I say, for GRACE as an organisation... We try and make it that it's ok to talk about past experiences. Not so much to delve into the war stories of it. But recognising well, aye, you've been through a tough time. You've been through a tough time but don't let that define your</p>	2.54-8.45

future. So, you look back in another year and say you've been through another tough time and it just becomes like a series of traumatic events or negative experiences I would say. Each and every year it's trying to put a line under it and saying-right, well that's happened to me, How can I move on from that? And how can I learn from that. And what can I take out of there then. Recognise, one I wasn't to blame or I was to blame. It goes both ways and that's it being able to live with that. Live with all that stuff within yourself. And I think that's really important. No matter where you...The person's maybe caused trauma. And your family and friends and what not... Or, you've received that. I still think it's important to recognise it and just kind of look at it logically and say- well, that was then...Try and not repeat that. Try and find out why that happened. And a lot of that's about delving into yourself. And actually looking at yourself honestly. And that's very, very hard. Cause, sometimes my own experience of it was the same. When you look into yourself your behaviours and stuff like that. It's not a nice thing. It's not a nice thing to look at yourself and actually not like yourself because of what you've done. But that's...I found that was the best way of recovery is to look and actually recognise and say-no...That wasn't nice stuff that you did. That wasn't...Then should you admit that? That, no I shouldn't have done that. I regret doing that. Then you've got the opportunity of looking back and saying- Well, why did I do it? And that's when it brings up a lot of that...Your learned behaviour and your personality and stuff like that. And what made you react to certain things. So, I think for me I always...Any kind of traumatic event is first just to look at it. To actually look at it and accept that it happened whether it hurts you or not. But, that's the first step in moving on is awareness. It's that self-awareness of no, I was that person. I'm not that person now but at that time I was that person. Then saying-Well, that person was born out of my experiences before that that turned me into that. That's the way I work on myself. And that's what I try...When I'm speaking to people and speaking to people within GRACE...And saying-It's ok just to put your hands up and say-You know what? This is who I was or this is what I've been through. I say-That's alright. But, let's just look at it and see...make it so you're not carrying it about with you as a negative experience. You're just constantly carrying negativity about with you all the time. Let's look at it see it for what it was. Then try and say-Well, what are we going to do with that now? How are we going to use it. Are we going to try and deal with it or just constantly carry it about with us. Which, as a society and for people that don't really get the support or find it hard to get support. That's where the biggest challenge in all that is. It's people that are carrying this baggage of...whether it be low self-esteem or negative experiences or, as I say, addiction issues, mental health issues. They're just carrying them about with them and they're not getting a chance to just put it out on the table and say-Look, I've done this. I've been through this. But, I don't want to carry it about with me. I want to just drop it off. And say- Right, I've dealt with that. Now can I look forward to a new positive me that's not carrying that about with me. And that's stuff that I had to do."

8.47

Interviewer asks the respondent about his own personal trauma issues.

"The full length of the thing would maybe take too long for the different things that happened to me and I made happen to other people. One of the things I'll just touch on where how trauma can affect you later on. As an adult I was as I say...I believed when I looked at myself that I was quite a selfish person. Pretty self...and it was all about my needs and wants. And not being satisfied with what I had. Always wanting more. Always wanting a newer car or a nicer house. All this stuff and always wanting more. And always thinking-Ah, well, it's all about how much money I can have. It's all about how much money I can have in my pocket. And it almost is, kind of, ring fencing stuff round about me. Saying-This is mine. This is mine, this is my space, this is my stuff .And I found when I look at that when I was training to be a counsellor I had to do a lot of self-awareness on myself. It was harrowing at times looking at yourself and seeing what kind of person you were. But, as I took it further back and we're talking about childhood trauma. And I realised something then about possessiveness and the need to have stuff close to me and have stuff that was mine. When I was brought up in, as I said, a tough place in Glasgow; really, really tough. And the stuff we used to have...We used to get brok...our house used to get broken into quite a lot. So, a lot of stuff that we had was taken away. Then, as I say, I started getting slightly older. My Dad was an alcoholic. There's no point in not sharing that because that's the truth of the matter. Although, he would probably deny it to a certain degree. Cause, he...he had different levels of what an alcoholic was. And that's a story of saying that he was off the...Which I thought was quite funny actually. He would convince himself...He would tell...Convince me...'I'm off the drink.' I said-'Oh, that's good, aye.' 'Aye, I'm only on the wine.' He classed that as-'I'm only on the wine so that doesn't mean I'm off the drink If I'm on the hard stuff that means I'm drinking. And that...He kind of totally convinced himself of that. The fact that he was buying cases of it was a totally different matter. But I looked at the childhood stuff and I realised...and it nailed down to one wee thing. I got, when I was younger, a radio alarm clock which was high spec at that time-A radio alarm clock! An alarm that wakes you up with music! This is just-wow! And as I say I loved it and I can still picture it and my Dad pawned it for drink. And that stuck with about-That was mine. That was mine and I found that probably stuck with me through, as I say, when I was getting stuff-No, this is mine. That's my stuff. And I would keep it and I would maybe lock it away and I would have special places to keep my stuff that...And I think a lot of that stuff came from not being able to keep something that I really enjoyed. So I think that stuff I kind of learned on... about how things can happen as a child. There was... And, again, it's things about confidence that was shot to pieces as a child. Because the kind of abuse around being the dysfunctional family, that was all going about, that wrecked my confidence and everything else. But, that went right back to going to primary school as a very young child. And being sent off with my wee school bag and my packed lunch to the school. But when I went to the school I used to go by a high school. And I used to get jumped all the time going to primary school and they would come and steal my packed lunch. You know the bigger guy...boys would come out and say-'Oh what have you got in your bag the day? We're having that.' Then sent on my way. Obviously, my Mum would complain to the schools but it's like most things in schools. They can't be

8.47-28.30

there twenty four/seven. Wee things like that always stick...always stuck in my mind of no that's...that's not really...that's not really my fault. That was a...That was how my head was through that. And how that feeling of not being appreciated and actually being picked on...Then when I went to hospital it manifested itself the opposite way. I was never going to be a victim again. So, I went the opposite way and I would have been quite violent and cheeky and not engaging with anybody. No respect for anybody. And that kind of stuff... I found that I accept that stuff. But, I accept it but I only accept it because of the work that I put in. And my thing about speaking to people is- Aye, is it nice to look at that stuff? No. Is it nice to look at some of the stuff I did at school and stuff like that, and some of the violence that surround it? Criminality and stuff like that. Was it good then? No. Did that have an effect on people round about me? Probably. And that wasn't nice. But, I've had to kind of deal with it and say-Well, that's because that's where your head was at that time. That's exactly where...I said-Nobody showed you to deal with those kind of feelings. You were never taught to deal with feelings of insecurity and stuff like that. Or, feelings of how those things have affected you. Cause you just weren't taught that so you just get on with it. But only in later life, looking at that, that I realised-you know what I accept that. But, it wasn't my fault because I only knew what I knew at that time. I didn't know how to deal with stuff like that so you just take it in internally. So, you react to what you know. And that's where...But, that continued right through...through my adult life. That continued right through because it was never ever dealt with even after school going into an adult. That selfishness and that self-preservation taking a hold of you. Saying-I'm going to be this and this...Being, it's all about what I want. That carried right through to adulthood to coming to then realise... I don't think you realise how bad things can be till you actually experience it. Cause, sometimes when you're in negative experiences you're just accepting it for what it is. But, there's a million different instances of-That just should never have happened. Tons of regrets that should never have happened. But, I accept they shouldn't have happened. But I also accept on my own belief that things happen for a reason. And something's going to come out of it. Something has to come out of it. Then it's if you do the work and actually stick with what you know and what you want to know. And delve into places where it should be. Some of the stuff...Which, I'm focusing a bit on childhood stuff just because it. I think a lot of my adult life is thingymed out through my childhood experience. What is...it's still hard to... And you think you're fully recovered. But I've not fully recovered. I don't believe...Or I have and I'll never, ever know. There's something like two years maybe in high school maybe the whole of high school. But, I'm trying to be kind to myself and say it's only a couple of years. That I have absolutely no recollection of. Absolutely no recollection whatsoever. And that's frightening. I've met people that I was at school with. And they've said-'I remember we were at school together.' And I have absolutely no recollection of who they are. Absolutely none whatsoever. And some of that's quite frightening when somebody's saying to you-'We spent years together hanging about. We did all this together.' Don't remember any of it. But, I don't think that's necessarily...And that's where that's a memory block of where was my...If you're going to take drugs and alcohol that early in your

life then it's just wiping your memory away that quick. At that time I was... the need for being in control, and the need for being the big man, and the need to be...Being liked and loved, and stuff like that, because it never really happened in my family life. The need for that was born out of...I mean, I had the perfect thing in such... of access...My Dad was an alcoholic and a cooper, obviously, making the barrels. So, he would siphon all of the barrels of the whisky before their fixed. So, he would have bottles and bottles and bottles of whisky all over the house everywhere for ginger bottles, milk bottles anything he could put it in was full of it everywhere. And my Mum suffered from depression badly. So, she had boxes and boxes of valium. So, I had the perfect kid in a sweet shop of access to all of that. So, I'd be using all the valium and the whisky. It was like-come on this is it. And then because I'd access I'd be going to school. If I felt...No, I'll just fire a few valium in before I go to school. People would say he's a mad...He's mad that guy. He doesn't care. He's great. And it was if that kind of false respect you thought you were getting. But, I had all this access to this stuff so I used it all. And I smoked at the time as well. And I would be-Bye the way, give us a fag and I'll give you a wee shot of this whisky in my bag. So, that was the...That was my introduction to...Now, I don't know what to say and I don't know that's the thing. I couldn't actually say whether it's the drug and alcohol at that early age that's totally wiped those years out. Or... If there's something I've not found out yet that's delved in there that I don't actually know about yet. Maybe we'll never know or maybe a year from now something will pop into my head and say- this happened at school that you've obviously blocked out. So, I don't know. That's the kind of...I don't remember the majority of it. But, I get wee snippets. I get wee snippets of bits as a memory thing of there was a teacher that really wanted to help me but I wouldn't let him. He recognised something. And at the time I remember him saying-you're really good at art. And he... I know he really wanted to help me. But I was...no way I was accepting it. Because that would just be me giving in to something. And I quite enjoyed being a complete...Whether it be a rebel or a complete uncaring...not feeling anything. Not having any feelings about that...And I lied that notoriety about it. I like the notoriety of -Oh, that's him. And that started right from the very beginning. I mean my first...I was in a fight the very first day of high school. The very first day of high school I was in a fight and that's what set it up. Because I went... I had this...And when people say you have a massive chip on your shoulder or whatever. Maybe that's what it would be classed as. But, I was getting...I was making sure that I was in control and I was the one that was making decisions. And I was the violent one. I was the one I was never going to be the one that people picked on. And that probably came right from my school...my packed lunch taken going to primary school. So those things you kind of...I don't know if that's the right way or the wrong way of how you try and justify your behaviour. So for me it's not about justifying it it's about accepting it. Because, you can't justify if you've done something really bad. There's no way you can justify it. You did it. You just need to accept it. But, trying to justify it is a totally different thing. But, do I share these stories with other people? Aye, because it's...Cause sometimes the...when I look at other people and I look at their behaviour and whether that be violent behaviour or whether that be the opposite where you are very timid. I try to speak to them

	<p>and say-We're not all born like that. So, is there something that's making that person violent. And that is...I try to speak to them in that way and say well, what's on your mind? Why are you doing that? If somebody smashes and table and you ask-why did you do that? They say-'Well, because I felt good about it.' I say-'Well, what's making you? There's obviously something you're not feeling good about if you're needing to smash a table to make you feel good.' So that opens up those conversations. Cause that's what I would do if I thought I wasn't being recognised or I wasn't being given enough attention. You kick off to get it. And we all do that in different ways. If I think I'm not getting enough attention at school. Well, I'll make sure I do. I was actually...I had my notoriety with setting off the school alarms multiple times every single day. Every single day I would constantly set. And everybody knew it was me. I was expelled that many times. I must of done various things. But it was that notoriety -'that's him that keeps setting the alarms off. And as a child you think-by the way, I'm a pop star man. People are talking to me. That's that kind of want to be the centre of attention sometimes. But probably a lot of that masks probably the underlying insecurities. Because you're using...using different things to mask a lot of it. Whether that be playing up, whether that be taking drugs and alcohol and stuff like that. You're trying to mask all that stuff that's underlying and cause you belief that people will not accept you for who you are. And for a lot of my life that's how I felt. That I wouldn't be accepted for who I am."</p>	
28.31	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent if the counselling course was the first time he had looked at himself.</p>	
	<p>"That was the first time that I realised. And the strange thing is I didn't intentionally set out to look at myself. It was mainly a part of being accepted. When I was doing the training I had done a wee bit of reading up on psychology. I did some Open University stuff as I kind of...Cause, I had to do something. We're not touching on the full traumatic event where I ended up on my knees and knew I had to do something. But the actual bit of was because it was part of the training and the things that were said. Cause, I really wanted to get to use my experience. I really wanted to use my experience but I didn't know how to. So, when I was doing the training they were talking about- It's alright to use that experience but you'll have to use it in the right way. And it was a thing about-you can't bring yourself into somebody else's life till you sort your own life out. This stuff about empathy. So, you have to make sure that you've got...you've dealt with a lot of issues because if you are counselling somebody and they bring something up it's going to affect you. Because it's going to bring all...And what's going to happen is your head is going to go into your experience and not be supporting what their experience is. And that stuff was eye opening for me. I went-alright, well, let's look into this stuff. And, I basically just spent lots of time with just looking back and trying to pick all the memories that I had and memories that I didn't have. And then some of the memories-things would pop up that I just really didn't want to. And they were harrowing some of the memories that popped up. And you're like-Jeez man. How do I feel about that? And that's a hard thing to do. And that stuff of having...And it was only later in life... and it's still a thing that happens just now. It's still a thing that kind of lives with you. That you forget some of the stuff</p>	28.49-33.49

	<p>that happens. The abuse you block out. Or, it's just something there that you know. Something there that you're never looking at. You know, there's something there but I'm not going to look. There's a wee door at the back of your head saying there's something in there. But, don't open it. Just don't open it. And there was a lot of that stuff I found in my own life. There were doors. And I'm not going to open that. But, then I realised as part of my own recovery stuff-You're going to have to open that door. Because if you don't open it somebody else could. It could just happen at the most...At a time you wouldn't even think about. So why not do it now? And when your head is looking to challenge the stuff in your life; do it just now. And it's...That was a traumatic event in itself. It's a traumatic event when you open up a wee door. I know I picked on my Dad was an alcoholic but he was also very abusive to my Mum. But I didn't see that. I actually witnessed it. I was there. But it was behind the door in my head and it wasn't till I opened it up that the pictures came back. And there was never any...Right up till he died they were always behind the door. It was probably more when he died that probably the door opened. Then these pictures came back of blood and abuse and all the stuff that came with it. And I was like that-Jeezo. But, I do...I think maybe that happened for a reason. Maybe...Maybe if the door had opened while he was still there then our relationship together wouldn't have been what it is. That's the thing probably. That's my kind of take on it."</p>	
33.50	<p>Interviewer asks when the respondent where he took it from there when he reached a certain level of self-awareness.</p>	
	<p>"When you get to a point it's a daily process. Self-awareness is always going to be a daily process. Every decision you make, every action you make sometimes you have to think -Is that me people pleasing? Or is that me being me? And a lot of that stuff you've got to deal with on a daily basis. Cause, if you don't do that the build-up...Cause as soon as you start people pleasing you start doing it. And that's a spiral. Before you know it you're lost. You're totally lost in just pleasing everybody else and not even thinking about your own needs. And I do that on a daily basis. Sometimes I need to look about any decisions I make. Why am I making this decision? You're doing that because you're just being selfish. Because that's...You've still got these wee traits of selfishness. Cause we all have. Everybody's got them. We've all got them. But, sometimes it's just about looking at those things and saying-No, is that the right thing to do? Because it's the right thing to do. I try and look at things like that. I try and have a great belief now of... And I have a great faith as well. And probably part of my recovery stuff was probably finding God as well in my life. As an additional support for want of a better word. And that put...But, that put me in touch with a lot of different people. And finding...and met people that actually just wanted to like you for being you with absolutely no things of wanting anything off you. But, that built up a strength and a faith in me to say-You know what? Just control the things you can control. The stuff that's not in your control. Don't even give it a second thought. Cause, it's got nothing to do with you. And that's the way I leave things. I leave things and do what I can do the best I can do it. But if things are going to fall apart and things are not going to work out. Well, that's alright because that was going to happen anyway. You weren't in control</p>	34.00-38.00

	<p>of what happened there. So with certain people that will make decisions. Their own decisions have impacts on me. But, I just allow that because that's their decisions. I don't have control over other people's decisions. And, again, that's through every part of my life. Through my marriage and everything else and starting anew. And, being...having an organisation like GRACE. But, I have to have it on a thought process of-It's not about me. It has to be- it's not about me. So, things happen within GRACE then they were meant to happen within there. I'm only, kind of, there if ...And the foundations I've built have been put there. But I can't spend every single day worrying about what's going to happen. Or, worrying about whose going to come through the door. Don't get me wrong it used to be like that. There's still bits of that but definitely not half as bad as what it used to be."</p>	
38.05	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent what the self-reflective training that he received was for.</p>	
	<p>"The training I did as in the various training I did when I was coming out the other side of my recovery stuff. And I realised my life had to change. I'd spent my life in the building trade. If anybody knows the building trade it's a selfish environment anyway. Cause, it's all about how much money you can make and everything else. It's all based on what you can do. But, I realised I couldn't go back into that environment again. Because I was always just going to go back into the same cycle of stuff; work hard, drink hard. That is the nature that I had. So I changed and as I said previously I did some Open University stuff. And I started attending different recovery meetings. And they were say-By the way we can get you some... We are doing some wee trainings on relapse prevention and stuff like that. So, I attend some AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) meetings. There was some cracking learning the twelve step programme and stuff like that. Great learning stuff. And absolutely invaluable for me in my recovery. Learning twelve step programmes and various stuff like that. And the psychol...I started delving into the psychology. And that's when I was going to go into the training for counselling. So, at the time I wasn't working or anything like that. And that's a different story and I'd no money because I'd drunk it all. But, as I say, I need to get an opportunity for counselling...Alcohol focus was running were running counselling skills for the COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) So, I said-I'm going to go for that. Went...I had enough for the first module. I think it was something...Maybe something like three hundred and sixty a module or something. And I'm on job seekers and I'd basically saved up and people had said put that towards if you can get that. So, I got the first module. So, I was part of another group, recovery group. The ? 40.38 it was called. I was part of them and they saw what I was trying to do. And I was changing my life and I wanted training. I'd already mentioned I wanted to set up GRACE. This concept... And they're like that-'That's brilliant what you want to do.' Then I was blessed they said-'Do you know what? See your next three modules. We're going to cover the cost for you.' And I was just...That was the catalyst for my thinking of- If you do the right things the right things will happen. So, I was progressing and I knew I needed to do more learning, And I</p>	38.19-50.40

knew this was a total career change. Then the big decision was to fit into further education or adult education. And that was in itself an experience of stigma and being judged and everything else. Cause, I'd been through a recovery programme I applied to all these colleges to do an HNC in Social Care. And the amount of knock backs I got. They said-No, you can't do that. You've not been in education long enough. And this was when I forty or something. Round about that time. I think I was forty, forty five, around about that maybe. So I was a bit annoyed-'You've been out of education for thirty years. You can't just think you can come into college and do an HNC. You'll need to start off with a wee access course'. And I was like-'See at my age I don't have that amount of time to go through all that. And I do believe I've had a very successful career.' Obviously I said 'I've had an education. It's been a life education what I've had to learn. So I've got all that.' No, they weren't wearing it. Just some of the stigma...'You just need to sort out your recovery first. 'You're not long enough stable.' Nonsense, man, absolute...And it was just terrible the knock backs I got. And I just found that really disheartening. But, then, eventually, I got...And it was City of Glasgow College. And, again, when people in your path...There was a tutor there.... The lead one who decided who could come into college. And I'd got as far as-No, you can come in for an interview thing. Total disaster on my part because they wanted an initial entry test thing and I was like that-I've got no idea what this is. Write down why you want this and all this. And I'd basically nothing to give. I don't even know what to write or anything. Then I had to go back into the interview and the person looked and said-'Oh, Robert, you've not got anything here. Tell us. Just tell me.' Realising that I had no issues about sharing my story of my recovery. I explained it. All over where I wanted to be and everything else. And she went-'You know what Robert? Yes, You're getting that. I'm going to give you that place. Because you deserve it. And I think if you need help we'll help you get to where ever you want. And I just thought-Aye, again, that's somebody believes in you. And that went just brilliant. Then, when it got to college I was twenty five years older than anybody else in the class. But I didn't...My head wasn't there. My head was just-I'm the same as you. We're here to learn. And I had a lot of fun. It was something totally brand new for me cause, obviously, I was never at school during school time. But then what I realised is I can't do this on my own. I need support. So, student support were my best friends. Every single time I was in college...And I knew everybody in student support cause I was there constantly. 'Robert, what is it this time?' 'Well, I'm not sure about what that word means?' I was just constantly...and they got to-'You know what Robert. You're doing the right thing. Come to us for something you're not sure about.' And I did that all the time. Then they helped me financially as well. And saying, 'No, Robert.' Because that was the time...I was homeless at the time. And they said-'Because you're homeless there's discretionary funds that we hold as well. Let's apply to the discretionary funds. To make sure you've got enough to get your lunch every day when you're here and you've got your transport costs and stuff like that.' So, they were very help...And it was just...that was that moment of clarity that you need support to get to where you want to go. And that's... You can't do this stuff on your own. And I saw so many students not completing that course. And not one of them...And I would

say to them-‘Come down to the student...Come down to the support.’ ‘Oh no, I’m not going down there man. They’ll think I’m daft.’ And that was and I thought-No just...And I saw so many fall away from there. But then at the end of it... I ended up getting an A. I think there was only was so many in that full year of all the different classes. I think there only were three or four at that time that got it. And I was one of them out of the full year. And I was just-‘What?!’ But I knew that it wasn’t just me. It was a combination of everybody doing their bit and saying-‘Oh, I’ll help you with this Robert’. ‘I’ll help you with this bit.’ ‘I’ll help you sort this out financially for you. So you don’t feel distressed.’ And all these different bits of support. I thought-That’s how you achieve things. And those experiences for that was... That’s the way you go. That’s the way we should be. That’s where we should have organisations and support ones there where actually it’s alright just to come in and say-‘Actually, I’ve not got a clue.’ That’s all right. When I came through I didn’t have a clue. Cause the only way is to just learn it. And it goes back to that-you only know what you know. And that for me has been something that’s helped me right through my life. And still helps me to this day. People do support people. And people that support you like supporting you. And that’s the bit I love about it. And that’s where there’s a lot of...People don’t access support enough. Because they feel as if they’re the burden. But they’re not seeing the opposite side of-No, but it’s not a one way thing. It’s a two way thing. You’re getting support and getting a lot out of it. And the person that’s supporting you gets a lot out of it as well. So both of you are going to get a great outcome of it. Both of you or a crowd of us. Everybody’s happy. So, that’s the stuff that I build my life around. If there’s something I don’t know. I’ll go and ask. Because I wouldn’t...I don’t want to be...Have a stressed head worrying about anything I don’t know anything about. So why don’t I just go and ask somebody. And that’s the strange thing. To not...Building stuff up and checking in your head whether your head’s in the right place. And if I’m sitting worrying about stuff then I should be talking to somebody. So, whatever’s on my mind and that can be anything from family issues, to work issues to whatever. If there’s something on my mind speak to somebody and say-Well, this is what I think. What do you think? Or, can you help me with this because I don’t even know where to turn with it. And they’ll...Nine times out of ten they’ll keep you right. And sometimes you need somebody to just say, no, just keep doing what you are doing. And it’s that acceptance that we all have things in our head that pop in and we can’t control. So, it’s just about recognising that and saying-Well, what can I do with it? And that’s the way I do stuff. I don’t...But that gets...That gets me through things. That’s...I do have a great belief in- things do work themselves out. I do think...But, they’ll only work themselves out if your head’s in the right place. They’ll work themselves out if you say-By the way this is a struggle. I need to ask for help. Things will not work out if you keep it all in your head doing nothing then hope it all works out. No, things work out if-By the way there’s opportunities for you to do that. And you take the opportunities. If you don’t take the opportunities then you look back and say-By the way, I missed that. How did that not happen? I say-‘Well, because you missed it. You had all the opportunities sitting in front of you. You had all these people saying- I’ll give you a hand. And your ego was in the way that much that you didn’t

	accept any of it. Now, you're wondering why everything's falling apart. That's the way I see it."	
50.42	Interviewer asks the respondent how he went about setting up GRACE.	
	<p>"The setting up of GRACE came basically from those previous conversations of the trauma I had been through. The need for myself to get support. The support I needed wasn't there. Tons of recovery groups. Tons and tons of recovery groups. Which I accessed a lot of them. But there's certain things that are within the recovery aftercare stuff that there's needed. There's certain stuff about life skills, and building life skills and building education. And building meaningful activities to your day. Stuff that I...And it wasn't just all about sharing war stories. They have their place and they're absolutely invaluable for support. But, what I needed was more than that. I needed-How I get into further education. How I do some volunteering. How I get a job. How...I needed all that stuff included in my support but around about people that had experienced it and people who could empathise with it. So, I was finding I couldn't get the right support that I needed. And that's why I battled so hard with the colleges, and various other organisations and various people. 'This is not right-the things you're doing.' Getting the right support from services wasn't working. And people saying- oh, you need to...You've got an addiction issue. You can't talk to anybody about your mental health. All that kind of nonsense. It was like-This isn't right. And I had experienced that and I thought no, there should be somewhere. That's a group of people who have come so far and they're ready to make that move. And say-I want to...a bit of education...I need to know where I am. I'm not so much in crisis at the moment but I need somebody to sustain that. I need to sustain that or, I'm going to end up back in crisis. And there was nothing like that. So, that's where I said the concept...I said-We need to get this aftercare within the community. And that's were the first premise of it came...And then I went to visit various other organisations. Seeing what they were doing. Took ideas from how they were...How that worked and that didn't work-Well, that worked. And we tried this and it didn't work. And I'm not going to go down that way. Various things like that. Then realising well alongside that I need the training. So, you need the training then. That brought its own thing. And oh well, the struggles I had with training and going to col...maybe we should...That, obviously, didn't work, so we should be bringing that kind of meaningful training into the community. And into the group that's all sitting here. Instead of having that nerve wracking thing of trying to go to college when you're still just at the beginning of your recovery. Or the beginning of your...And that's like no, we should be bringing that to us. So that's where the concept started getting...So, well, we'll need to bring in learning stuff. What's the stuff we need to know about? And then just bring stuff. We need confidence building stuff. How are we going to do that? We need to make sure it's within our reach and it has to be in the heart of the community. Where you feel comfortable.' I'll just walk along the road. And I'm bound to know people. Because we're all in the same community.' And you feel that relaxed about it. And that was the ethos of it. Is just have that safe space to be yourself, talk about what you want. Not being judged about anything because everybody within the room has been through something. So,</p>	50.49-1.02.20



nobody's got the right to judge anybody because we're all the same. And on top of that lessons are we things we can pick up and learn. Some of the experiences that I had with the self-awareness stuff. I would share a lot of the learning I did through the psychology stuff and the stuff I did through the counselling. So, I just bring all these wee modules into GRACE. And it just started off I just bring me, using my own experience, bringing in wee modules from what I had learned education wise and some of the life skills that I had learned. Then from that inviting other people to provide training. 'Do you want to come in and do that wee workshop for us?' 'And do you want to come in and do that?' 'Will we go and attend that?' And just building up a group of-Right, now we've got...We're getting quite established. We'll need to try and get some funds to pay the rent and for venues. So, let's try and have a wee car boot sale. So, it just started off wee bits like that and then just gradually grew and grew. But the ethos itself never changed as opposed to...It's the group of people that feel comfortable where they are. And they feel happy to cry where they're sitting. And that's alright. But, they also feel comfortable to curse and swear where they're sitting. Because that's how they feel. And that's alright. And that's just having that...There's not anything you can't talk about. There's not...And we put in different activities that are varied from one side to the other. Just because it's opportunities...Because, if you've been through a life of negative experiences and trauma and stuff like that. You never really got all the opportunities. You were never the...Whether you're in a chaotic household or a chaotic head that never would never recognise opportunities. Or that would never have the confidence to take opportunities. This is where...And what we say within GRACE-if the opportunity's there just take it. Because you don't know whether that opportunity will come back. And you don't know if that opportunity was actually designed specifically for you. And it's only when you do it you say-By the way, this is what I've been looking for. And that's the way we try and keep that, that positivity going and see whatever stuff...And why we always welcome different things and try different things. Cause as adults we became old before our time. Suddenly as adults we became... And if you've been...If you've lost out on a lot of your childhood stuff. Being a child...You just always seem to have been old. You always feel yourself-I've always been an adult. I've never really remembered being a child and having...jumping in puddles and just doing things that are just stupid. That's what I try to encourage within GRACE. See all these opportunities-just go for it and have a laugh. Cause, see if you were a child you would go and do it. You would say-'oh what's that? I'm going to use a shot of that?' And you would just do it. You wouldn't try and overthink it and say-'Now, wait a minute. Should I do that? Could I do that?' Just do it. And that's what we try and encourage. You know what? Whatever happens just do it. You'll either like it, dislike it or find something absolutely fantastic that you didn't know you had. People are doing art classes. Didn't know they could produce fantastic pieces of art. Because they'd never done it before. So it's -'Oh, I can't believe that I did that.' And it's those things that we want as part of an aftercare programme that actually says- no, everybody has got skills. Every single human being on the planet has got skills. And it's just finding out where your skills are. And if you've never had the opportunity to find those skills then you're never going to know. So, we

	<p>don't know, as I say, we've got budding artists, musicians, technicians, film...Who knows? But, if the opportunities were never there then that's not your fault. That was society's fault for not having the opportunities for you. Now it's we're saying as adults-Get back into if you were a child and you had an opportunity to do something. Would you go and do it? And everyone will say-'Aye, well, if I was younger I would do it. Why do we say that? I don't get this thing about-Aye, if I was younger I would do that. That just baffles my head. Because I try to always have a young head. Have a young, enthusiastic and willing to try. And quite happy to accept that sometimes they're bad and sometimes they're good. 'I told you just to accept that.' 'Oh, you know, I shouldn't have done that.' You don't... The next... An hour later you couldn't care less. You just get on with it. And that's what we're trying to...In my head we're trying to instil within GRACE and its many shapes and its many changes that it has. Because it moves with... Again, it's quite fluid. It moves with whose there and what skills are there. So, it moves about. It's never, ever static. There's never such a thing as a static programme. Because we don't have static heads. Our heads are all about and-I'm thinking about this, and I'm thinking about that. And I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that. And that's what GRACE should be about because people will move it about with their heads and what their experiences are. People's experience will move...And that's the way...why, people will say, sometimes you don't know what's happening from one day to the other. I know, because you know what? That's what life's like by the way. What do you think? We just take ourselves out of life into this place? And in our heads sometimes we try and do that. And it's like-No, just accept that things change all the time. The best thing for us to learn is how we deal with the change. Not trying to make things not change. And that's what we try...And that kind of stuff I love doing. And I get a great buzz out of it."</p>	
1.02.21	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent if GRACES programmes are the opposite of heavily structured and if he thinks that works better in the context.</p>	
	<p>"I think there's definitely an element of both (structured and unstructured activities). I think there's specific things that will need a specific structure. But, I think what it misses is with too much structure you'll lose the creativity in it. There's no room for-Oh, wait a minute. Oh, that's a great idea. Why don't we do that? There's no room for that. So, that fantastic idea of doing something slightly different is totally lost. And for me that's a travesty because there's so many people with lived experience and skills. They could make an impact on how we all learn. And how we all behave and everything else. And how we all look at ourselves. If we can just let it be...People are allowed to deviate a bit and go-Let's go down this way and see where this takes us. And that...And I like that. Society doesn't like it so much because society wants you in a box. And we've always struggled with that as an organisation. Cause you need to fit into a box. You need to be this kind of service or you need to be that kind of service. No, no you don't have to be that. That's you saying that's what people want. But our experience is no, that's what they don't want. They don't want to be put in this mould. They don't want to be regarded as an addiction service. Or, a mental health service or a recovery...they don't want to be classed as that. They don't want to be classed as service users and...No, they just want to be</p>	1.02.33-1.08.43

	<p>part of a community that supports each other in whatever form that takes. Now, if it means they all need different support at different times. That's alright. Because we can't just say...Not everybody needs support at the exact same time. So you have any kind of meeting or any kind of project and activity and say-'We're having that Wednesday, twelve o'clock and four o'clock. That's when we're having it. And expect everybody to be in the exact same frame of mind at that time. That's not how it works. Somebody I'll say-No, I'm not right to go to that. No, it's moving enough if you can't make it that time. Why don't you try that then? If that doesn't suit you why don't you try that? And just find a way that you'll find the structure that you need. Cause we can structure ourselves if we want to. We can still make that commitment. Where the organisation is informal or fluid or whatever. That doesn't mean you are. You can still have that opportunity of structure in your life. Which, you know what, which happens. I'm going to be here at this time every week. But, I know if anything happens in my life. The changes... I know I can just say-look; I'm going to have to change that a bit. Without any judgement whatsoever. So, you've got the best of both as far as I'm concerned. You've got the structure that you want. Not the structure that's imposed on you. And that's the way...And that's where I find lived experience works best. Because your lived experience isn't structured. So, why are you trying to put me into that? And if you've got the trauma and traumatic experiences with structure. The last thing you want to do is to be put back into that again. And say, no, you need to do this, and you need to do that. And if you don't do this these are the consequences. That's not giving you the responsibility for you to make the choices. And that's about encouraging that and saying, no, you make the decisions. When you want to come in. What days, what times and everything else. The better the experience you will have will be determined by how much you commit to it. And if you say you're going to pop in just whenever it suits you. If I can be bothered I'll just pop in for half an hour and grab a cup of tea and leave. Will you have the same experience as somebody that's says- no, I know what I need. And I want to do that. And I know if I stick with that I'm going to be better off doing this. They're going to have a better experience than you of it. So, that's about...It's empowerment. People taking that empowerment and not being scared of it. People taking that responsibility knowing-You're doing that in a safe environment. The safe environment with lived experience amongst your peers is...Gives you the confidence. And that's where I go with opportunities of...If you've got the opportunity to do something in GRACE take it because this is the perfect environment for you to do it. Because, if you don't do it within this environment then you'll never do it. It's all set for you where you can be who you want to be. Take that opportunity. That's what we always try and encourage and that's...And, obviously a lot of the bigger picture is that's fine within GRACE and within the organisation. But, there's so many people out there's so many people out there that we can't reach. And that's always going to be where my head will never rest. "</p>	
1.08.44	Interviewer asks the respondent how people come through the doors of GRACE.	

	<p>“People come through the doors in many ways. There’s referrals from statutory services, there’s self-referrals, people who just kind of want to find out what they want to do, there’s word of mouth, there’s friendships there’s talk...So, there’s that many opportunities. So it could be, they see something on the website or on the Facebook. But we try to keep it as much as informal as we can because we see it takes a massive amount of effort and a massive amount of courage just to come into a Community Centre. Now that in itself... So we try to be as flexible as we can- whether that be actually speaking on the phone first or somebody coming to the front of the Community Centre or somebody coming in with you. So there’s various ways of doing it. Whether it’s a phone call and just a chat just to find out what GRACE is all about. But GRACE is an experience. And sometimes the hardest, hardest thing that we’ve got is explaining what GRACE is about because it does have all this stuff that I’ve spoken about, multiple activities, from drama, art, yoga, digital the list goes on. I think there are around 38 different activities. Considering it just started off with me just using my experience... But that’s a different kettle of fish. But there’s a feeling and there’s an acceptance within GRACE that you really need to experience. There’s something about you can’t...That’s hard to get across. And the feedback for that is when people come in to GRACE that have heard about GRACE throughout the community, and it’s only when they come in, they’ll say-Oh I wish I’d come in earlier but I just wasn’t sure it was for me. And that’s the stuff that we’re always going to be looking for. There’s still tons and tons of people out there that we can kind of help”</p>	<p>1.08.50 - 1.11.09</p>
<p>1.11.10</p>	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent how GRACE is funded.</p>	
	<p>“GRACE is funded through various funders. The Alcohol and Drug Partnership are one of our first funders, way back. Even though the funding’s probably stayed the same from away back, which is a totally different conversation, but, they’re our core funding to a certain degree. Then, throughout the years we’ve applied for funding from the Lottery, The Robertson Trust, Corra Foundation, STV Appeals, Community Grants...Throughout the years we’ve tried to find pockets of money to try and bring the activities in. To get to where we are just now where a lot of the activities we’ve done... We’ve done quite well in such that funders have seen what we’re trying to do. More so over the last couple of years anyway more than anything else. We struggled for so long, as I spoke about previously, because we didn’t fit into a box. And funders found it quite hard to cat...And, it’s probably the way we were trying to explain it because it’s quite hard to explain GRACE. Because it’s quite open for so many types of people through so many different things in their life. So, that’s hard to fit into funders structure cause they’ve, obviously, got criteria and stuff. So, we always really struggle with that. Lately we’ve try to work out with the funders to try to spend more time speaking to them and explaining it. That’s part of it. The biggest challenges we have with funding is our core funding; is we need the correct core funding. If we’ve the correct core funding for multiple years then it just gives that stability for us to then attract other funding for different projects. And that’s where... where probably the biggest struggles that we’re finding just now; is getting that core funding for multiple years knowing that GRACE’s doors are always going to be open. And that means...And, if they want</p>	<p>1.11.15 - 1.19.57</p>

to develop into other areas. Then, knowing the core funding is there means we can look at that other stuff. If we're always looking at where we are just now and whether we can stay afloat, and whether we can keep the doors open. It's not...We're then not getting that opportunity of reaching out to more people that are not getting the support, which is who we want to reach. We want as many people as possible to get support that need it. But, if we're not getting that opportunity to outreach to do that then that becomes a shame as far as I'm concerned. Because the GRACE model we know works and it makes a massive difference. But, again it's missed opportunities. But, if we can get the core funding sorted...Then, if that's at the correct level then I believe other funders would jump on board. And say, well, you're quite stable there. We'll help you support this development of that or the development of that. And I think...Also, volunteers or members do a power load of work in fundraising and trying to bring some income into GRACE. So, it's...They're doing their best. Because everybody wants the doors to be open. Everybody wants the support that they need. And they're trying to do their best; we're trying to do our best. And we just want funders to say- Well, we're doing everything we can. Can you come on and say-By the way, we're going to make sure you're alright and your full organisation can relax and then start thinking about moving forward. But we're not there yet. And that's on the wish list of-can we get sustainable or long-term funding? That way we can start developing income generation stuff. And, that's a diff...There's hundreds of things we could do but we're always watching our backs. We need to watch we don't shut down with over capacity and...And, I just feel for the volunteers and the members and the amount of hours that they put in....Their time...As opposed to masses of organisations that have got multiple members of staff and everything else. And our budget isn't massive for core funding that we ask for and we're looking for. Cause we've got the amount of volunteers doing the amount of hours. I mean, I'm sure the...I'm sure I just saw something yesterday that was over the two years the volunteer's hours amounted to like something like a quarter of a million pounds. The volunteers....taking that as a minimum wage. That's not us going to a funder and saying -Give us a quarter of a million pounds. That's like-Go on, recognise the value of GRACE. Can you at least cover the core funding? Cause you're going to get a lot more back than what you put in. One of the... I can't remember what it's called. The social investment thing. We got somebody to come in and work with us and they worked out that for every one pound invested in GRACE you get eleven pound back. And that was their...they did the full research and that was their figures. And that for me highlights-what you give to GRACE you're going to get back in multitudes. And, it's just, seeing the impact it can make. If we can get to where we've got with us being ten years this year. Can you imagine with the correct support from funders, the Scottish Government? Whoever it be. Just say-By the way, this is a model that should be supported and everything else. Let's invest in it and take it forward. Cause, the benefits are going to be massive. For not just our community but for every community. It's actually looking at different ways... In the past if things have not worked. Don't just keep doing the same things. Go look at different ways of doing it or different ways of budgeting or funding. Well, look at it. Cause, trauma's not going away, addictions not going away, alcoholism is not going

	<p>away. We know the drug deaths are rising. They're going the opposite way. But, nothing else is changing. And it's like-Come on! Look at what's happening and let's focus on that. And we've got lived experience people that are seeing where...Well, this is what benefits me. Well, listen to them and invest in the community support where it's at. There's that much money spent on research saying-The community support is a great model. The money spent on the research for it. Just give it to the community and then we can show you it so... Sorry, I get on my soapbox sometimes when it comes to funding."</p>	
	<p>"Only final words are, through my lived experience of before GRACE and what I went through. What my life's like now within GRACE is life changing. And I see other people whose life's gone the exact same way. And I think that the vision for GRACE when it was very first started; was there to be a GRACE in every single community. And I'm still sticking to that whether it be in my lifetime or future generations. That I'd love to see; a GRACE in every single community."</p>	<p>1.20.10-120.49</p>
	<p>Interviewer thanks the respondent for sharing his memories with the project.</p>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div>  <p>Heritage LOTTERY FUNDED</p> </div> <div>  <p>Oral History Research & Training Consultancy</p> </div> </div>		
<p>Group Recovery Aftercare Community Enterprise is a registered Scottish charitable organisation SCO043551</p>		