

ÁTJÁRÓK

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Bonus Pastor Alapítvány

Case study

"The street raised me"

Short summary

Zoltán, 35 - alcoholic, drug and porn addict, gambler

Zoltán arrived at the Bonus Pastor Foundation's therapeutic home in Hungary on 17 January 2023, completely broken, desperate for hope and a way out.

He heard about us from his godmother, who called him from Germany when Zoltán hit rock bottom and was haunted by the thought of suicide. But he knew he wanted to live and wanted more than anything to start a new life, so he asked for help.

He started his therapy with great enthusiasm, almost absorbing the new things that surrounded him. It was a profoundly moving new experience for him to be surrounded by respect and love from everyone at the Therapeutic Home. Up to now, he had to literally fight for any special attention, earning the respect of the gang by fighting and abusive behaviour.

During the nine months of therapy, Zoltán has worked through his life, going through each of the stages of therapy. He completed the stages of being a new client, a new member, a regular member and an old member - with many responsibilities.

During our exploratory interviews we used a number of tools, including genograms, monodrama, psychodrama tools as the therapy progressed and the elements of family formation. For Zoltán, the most difficult part of the therapy was dealing with his relationship with his parents. He was born as a second, unwanted child in an impoverished family where the father was an alcoholic who often abused the family during his regular drinking. His mother worked long hours, but as a woman of weak nerves, she often defused her tension by beating Zoltán. No wonder that Zoltán soon spent more time on the streets, mixing with bad company, than at home or at school. His maternal grandmother loved Zoltán and his brother dearly, and they often went to her for refuge, but sadly she died early and Zoltán became completely vulnerable to his unpredictable parents at the age of 13.

His father died relatively young of an unexpected death from a heart attack, and Zoltán had to deal with their troubled relationship and mourn him separately.

He wrote a letter to him, saying everything he wanted to say to him, so he could end his relationship with him. Sorting out his relationship with his mother was much more difficult, it was only towards the end of the therapy that he was able to put that relationship to rest and accept that his mother was unpredictable and could not be trusted. Regular one-to-one support sessions, group therapy opportunities, feedback, morning and evening meetings, feeling circles and a number of individual care sheets all served to support Zoltán's recovery.

Zoltán came in with severe physical pain which limited his mobility, during the check-up it was discovered that he had two spinal injuries which forced him to be hospitalised during therapy. Already at the end of the therapy he met a woman who also wanted to get rid of her alcoholism, which disrupted his recovery process. Zoltán fell in love and made a bad decision when, against the advice of the therapy staff, they moved in together after the end of therapy. The relationship lasted only two weeks, Zoltán left it, but it was so disturbing that he slipped and turned to alcohol. He immediately called his counsellor, they talked and he started going to support groups. Since then he has had a secure job, working as a security guard for a company. He keeps in regular contact with former therapy group members and his counsellor.

Zoltán wants to finish his studies because he has only completed 11 grades, but with a little support he has the potential and ability to become a good experiential support worker. Both his advisor and his godmother support him in this. Now it is up to Zoltán to decide how he will shape his life. His biggest dream is to start a family, to have the kind of loving and close-knit family he never had as a child. Whether he has the stamina to make it happen is a question for the future.

Magdalena McAlister

Social worker, mental health professional