

## Testimonials

DP says:

I have moved on from my problem drinking. Much has changed in my life, and while things are far from perfect, I feel that I am doing well.

My new job prevents me from drinking too many days a week. Before, I was working 3-4 long shifts a week. A day off was an excuse to drink the night before. Now, I am working five days a week. My responsibilities are heavy, and I have fully accepted that getting drunk is NOT a stress reducer. On the contrary...

The new person in my life is not much of a drinker. He has seen me drunk a couple of times, and he agrees this is not a good state for me to be in. So...I work with him to avoid the state at all costs. It has been effective.

When I do drink, I actively avoid becoming intoxicated. This is a HUGE change for me. It seems so simple.....

The bottom line is that any drinking is usually in conflict with everything else in my life. I love to ride my motorcycle, for example, and spend time with my children. Alcohol is not a good mix with either.

Admittedly, I enjoy some wine, and even wine tasting activities, which are prevalent around here. I like crafted beers. I generally avoid mixed drinks, although we have just returned from Las Vegas, where we had one; but I did well and didn't overdrink.

If this drinking thing was a battle, I feel as though I have won. But diligence is involved. I don't want to be anywhere near where I was.

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TS says:

It has been over three months now since I found HAMS. I consider myself truly fortunate because at the time that I found HAMS I was literally ONE day away from attending my first AA meeting, on the advice of so-called health professionals here in Ireland. I wish that I could say that I would have had the strength to walk away from AA's spirit and self crippling programme, but the truth is I would have become one of the ferocious believers because of the desperate state I was in. This was a lucky escape indeed.

Since joining HAMS, I am now at a stage where I feel very in control of my life. I rarely drink before 6 PM, and only once have I gotten involved in a rage situation where I tell random passers-by what is wrong with their narrow Catholic beliefs. I have had many nights of Alcohol Abstinence out of choice, and I genuinely don't feel like boozing the way I did before when I was sliding into the belief that it was a disease overtaking me that I had no control over.

Luckily I don't know how to drive nor do I have kids or a partner. My family are extremely Irish traditional and conservative, but I stay with them because I am not brave enough for the alternative: life on the streets.

The minute I make a plan I break it. I am a historian and have had writer's block for years even though the words are so, so clear in my head. I cannot imagine sitting down and writing without being boozed and spliffed off my head. This is going to be a huge challenge to get over for me.

The HAMS CHAT saved my life. I have severe sleeping problems. Connecting with people across the globe, just chewing the fat as ye yanks say, has helped so much with the severe isolation and loneliness that cripples me.

There is so much more I want to say but this post is long enough. My gratitude to you all, especially PCT: what you do with such compassion and dedication has already made a huge difference to my life.

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CW says:

Hi, Group.

It's been a great holiday season for me. I've abstained almost 5 weeks and headed through New Year's. I think the tone of this group and the individual members have been a big part of my being able to do this. Thanks to all of you. The idea of moderation and the acceptance of that really helps. I'm not very good at moderation but abstinence without the sword of Damocles hanging above my head is really nice.

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JC says:

To my surprise, the principles taught in Harm-Reduction were very practical. Learning the principles helped me in getting a new attitude towards addiction...period. As a result of learning about HR I think I am better prepared over-all to help others who suffer with drug and alcohol problems.

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AB says:

Being in HAMS has reinforced to me that I deserve dignity even if I am using meth. It has taught me that every human being has dignity and should be treated as such, whether they are addicted or not. Harm reduction means giving voice and hope to those who might otherwise not have a second chance.

HAMS does not ignore or condemn me for my drug use. It meets me where I am at "right now", therefore it is practical and can be used in my everyday life. This is really important because not having those skills to practise with in my every day life can mean death.

HAMS is a place where I can come ~ and say Hey I picked up again and not be judged for it. But instead I am offered healthy alternatives and a feeling that I am worthwhile too.

HAMS recognises ALL of the factors that go with any addiction/alcoholism. Practising harm reduction as I learned from The Speed Project is a good way to try to level your self out, a good way to learn about how to use safely, and how to come down. It helps me remember while I'm using to sleep, eat and drink water.. Essential life skills that I may not have put into place otherwise.

Ken you have allowed me to have a voice in this group and the wider arena and I thank you for that and this group ~ it means the world to me. I don't know what I would do without you guys.  
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HP says:  
Farewell Alcohol!

Thank you everyone for all your support and well-wishes! Right back atcha!

I really hope I can maintain permanent abstinence this time, because it is simply the right thing for me to do. In like 20 years, I've been mostly sober---my longest period of abs being five years when I was preggers twice and nursing my babies. I was still of the AA mentality, which is the main reason the abs didn't stick I just know it.

This will be the first time I'm a sobriest after having found and devoured Harm Reduction. It is such an entirely different animal than any other approach, and it gives you so much more legitimacy, and validation for exactly who you are and where you are at---and it gives you total freedom of choice---that this time in sobriety feels completely different for me than any previous time. It feels really Real to me, it feels like it is totally mine, it feels completely un-forced upon me, it comes without any self-judgment of any weakness on my part. ...I mean, when I was drinking, Harm Reduction even helped me to rarely beat myself up when I overdrank---which prevented me from overdrinking to the degree I used to during previous drinking phases.

What I am trying to say is that Harm Reduction made me a better person and feel better about myself as a drinker, and now as a non-drinker. I really ought to write Patt Denning a thank you letter for her amazing, life-saving, psyche-saving book!

It could be hard to give up the relaxation that came with moderate drinking, and the high that came from moderate+ drinking.... but I will never miss getting drunk! And the truth is, I was not able to not get drunk sometimes, even though I didn't want to. That was simply not ok with me personally. So, doing a cost benefit analysis about my drinking really helped me to make this solid choice I've made.

Also, before I quit (30 days today!), I read Controlling Your Drinking, and I took the two tests in there, and it revealed to me that most people who scored where I scored ended up choosing abstinence, for different reasons. One reason is that it is just too much effort and work to try to control drinking. Turns out that fit me.

Wow, 'it sure do feel good gettin to have a sober Christmas!' Sober and free from cravings, thoughts, desires to drink. No more ugly, mean, flying, biting monkey on my back.

## Holiday Blessings

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EG says:

I found HAMS searching for a sane approach to a problem - I could not accept AA's dogma and reductionism (I've been around AA on and off since age 6). I had my reasons for drinking, and yet I had drunk myself into a corner. I was physically addicted, my nervous system was shot, and I was an emotional train-wreck. HAMS made sense to me; I truly believed that I did NOT have a disease but was making choices that were providing some benefits with a high price in consequences, but could not (would not) make the leap to "abstinence only". I was particularly afraid of stopping "cold turkey" considering the volume of vodka I'd been consuming.

The beer taper described on this site worked beautifully for me to break my physical dependence. It was not necessarily fun, but not painful, and it was exciting to know I could do it. As my brain started functioning better, I discovered I really like having access to it most of the time. Using the "HAMS toolkit" (17 elements), and taking a practical, active approach to understanding myself better gave me the clarity to make choices that better support my goals. I explored the factors that lead me to reach for a drink, and I continue to explore and practice alternatives.

I've been working with the HAMS approach for almost 9 months. Vodka is no longer a part of my routine, and drinking moderately when I choose to imbibe is no longer a problem. I'm adding more abstinence days, and the days I do drink, it's usually wine with dinner or a couple drinks with friends. As I get healthier, feel better and learn to relax naturally, I enjoy being in my skin more, and the desire I had to obliterate awareness is dropping away. I continue to work with the elements and read the HAMS site for support and insight. Better is DEFINITELY better. Thank you, HAMS!

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