



Introducing Alan.

Please provide a couple of sentences about your living/lived experience in mental health.

22 years as a chef and going on 30+ years with poor mental health, I was always doubting myself, being highly critical of myself and never thought I was good enough. This I feel held me back as a young chef and continued throughout my career. Chefs never show signs of weakness, never admit they are struggling, so... I never did. If I knew then what I know now about opening up and talking about my mental health, my career could have been a completely different story. Conversely though, If I hadn't gone through what I have, I wouldn't been in this 'new' and exciting career I am now.....

I am a living, breathing 'survivor' of poor mental health, and now an advocate for reducing stigma around mental ill health.

Favourite colour

Definitely Red, as a Liverpool FC supporter I have to say red!! Even my car, an MG is red.

Favourite recreational/social activity

I love music, especially vinyl. It's something you can do to wind down, to entertain, to connect. I use music as a way to relax AND to motivate me

Favourite food

Favourite food will change, as a former chef I still like to try new and exciting things, but, if I had to name one favourite food it would be slow cooked pork belly with a chipotle BBQ sauce...

Tell us a little bit about why you want to become a peer support worker?

Everybody needs that person they can turn to. Someone that isn't their doctor, their parent, their mate. Someone who will listen, support and guide them, walk with them and hold on to 'their hope' until they want it back and do it all without judgment.

Tell us one goal you would like to achieve with APTF?

Making a difference. Letting people know they are not alone, and they don't need to be alone. We've got this... together.

Can you tell us how APTF is different to other services offered to people with mental health related challenges?

APTF, to me, links peers that share similar interests, and locations. We share experiences, good and bad and we can learn from each other.

How do you think a younger peer would benefit from your support?

Growing up, I never thought that there was anyone to talk to, that anyone would understand or want to listen. And maybe, back in the 80s and 90s that was true. In 2023, it is a completely different story. Everybody should have a peer, to talk to, vent to, rant to, cry to....

I want young people to get the best out of themselves. See the potential they don't think they have. Have the confidence to achieve their goals and fulfil their dreams. Help them bridge the gap between where they are and where they want to be.

Especially young people who are thinking about becoming chefs, baristas, etc., I can guide them and educate them in preparing for a career that is equal parts demanding and equal parts rewarding. The things they don't teach you at culinary school or in hospitality courses.

