

# Winter Newsletter

## Festive Meetings



**We are pleased to announce that we will be holding a meeting on Christmas Day at 8am. For more information, please check out our website.**

‘Around the World’- New Year’s Eve

Join us and other international SMART Recovery organisations all day on New Year’s Eve to stay connected wherever you are.

UK SMART Recovery Timetable (Sunday 31st Dec 2023):

11.00am - 12.45pm SMART Veterans Meeting (open meeting - everyone welcome)

12.45pm - 1.45pm Chair Yoga

1.45pm - 3.30pm SMART Family & Friends Meeting (open meeting - everyone welcome)

3.30pm - 4.30pm Tool Time Session

4.30pm - 6.30pm SMART Recovery Meeting (open meeting - everyone welcome)

UK Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/98936633844>

ID: 989 3663 3844 P/W: 614271

SMART Recovery USA covering 7pm - 3am (UK time)

<https://meetings.smartrecovery.org/meetings/>

SMART Recovery Australia covering 3am - 11am (UK Time NY’s Day)

<https://smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au/smart-recovery-meetings>



### Christmas Message from our Ambassador DJ Brandon Block

Firstly, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and a huge Thank You, to all our wonderful volunteers, without who this organisation would just not function, so it’s down to you all.

I’ve been a SMART Recovery advocate now for approx. 12 years and to see a worldwide charity which is run by volunteers who have lived experience, empathy, compassion, and selflessness is humbling to say the least...

We couldn’t run without you so, please keep us on our toes and keep us running.....

A huge SMART Thank You

*Brandon*

## Stay Well, Stay Connected, Stay SMART



## Facilitator Spotlight – Martin Barrett's story

### Background information

#### How did your addictive behaviour develop?

I didn't start drinking until age 18 (1983) and first became aware of it being problematic at age 30. I took a break then for 3 months and went on to a controlled drinking regime that lasted about 3 months. For 10 years I continued to chase controlled drinking. I had regular breaks from drinking which gave the illusion of control, but the reality was that I only stopped drinking when I ran out of money. In those years alcohol was my friend and had no part to play in me losing my career and then moving from low level job to low level job, losing my house, losing many friends, falling out with family, failing physical and mental health, and cognitive impairment. On the 1st August 2011 I started a structured recovery programme supported by SMART meetings and I've been sober ever since. Grief and trauma following the death of my father in a traffic accident when I was 7. Never fitting in anywhere.

#### What led to the decision to choose SMART Recovery? How long did it take to attend a meeting?

I went to my first meeting sometime in 2010, while I was still a drinker. After starting the recovery programme, I started attending meetings regularly, listening more and talking less. The whole approach seemed logical and that appealed to me. For my own reasons, the AA/NA/whateverA (Anonymous are It) approach never appealed to me. The SMART facilitator at the time was one Barry Daniels and it was important for me that he was in recovery himself. Also, there was a mixture of different people from different backgrounds all facing different challenges.

#### What have been the benefits?

Everything has got better and I can be counted on and I'm much kinder. I am an effective SMART facilitator and active member of the recovery community in West Yorkshire.

#### What have been the most significant changes you have made?

Changing what I value. I'm much less materialistic and much more appreciative of the people in my life. I feel this has resulted in my being true to myself and less manipulable. I can't be bought.

#### Is there any advice you would give to another person thinking about using the SMART Recovery programme?

Go to several meetings, if possible, with different facilitators and participants, not just one meeting.

