

# Meet Dwayne



For six days, we silently nod. He is the bearded man, sitting on the cold concrete in front of Tim Horton's, opening the door in exchange for coins and bills. \$100 on an average day. \$300 on a really good day. On the seventh day, we say hello. He introduces himself as Dwayne. It's 11am, but he's only on his third Red Bull Beer. Most days, Dwayne drinks 10 to 15 strong beers. "I have an addiction. Beer, and sometimes, crack."

Dwayne is also a cook (salted beef is a speciality), a tattoo artist, a criminal (with 68 convictions to his name), a patient (he suffers from painful arthritis in his hands and legs), a dancer, and a son. The role of son confuses him the most.

"I've been fending for myself since I was 10, and was kicked out of the home. I was hyperactive. I don't know what to think about my mom. I love her. But she didn't treat me right. She was a pill-head. She let my dad kick me in the face. I'm still fighting my childhood. I don't want to talk about it more. It makes me go nuts. I'll just go smoke some weed."

Dwayne's childhood was truncated. But his years on the streets have been elongated. Whilst he's had his very own apartment for three years, Dwayne often does not make it home. He prefers to come to The Meeting Place, rather than spend the day at home.

"You could say I am addicted to the place. Just like I'm addicted to beer. I'm sorry, but to be crude, it gives me a big hard-on being here. It's really hilarious. It's a big soap opera. Like Coronation Street or Jerry Springer. It's the same shit, just a different day. I don't need to watch TV, I can just come here."

## **Good outcomes**

Validation and recognition. "I'd like to try and get recognized. If I sober up for 6 months, I can be a counselor, they say. I know a lot about the streets."

Building capacities. "I don't read or write well. I'm trying to teach myself by sounding out the letters. I could learn more skills. Like in prison, I made my own tattoos with a staple and ashes. I learned to draw."

Less pain. "I want to get my pot license. The pot helps with my joints. Also when I do exercises that helps. Otherwise I can end up in bed for a few days. And I like to go dancing."

## **Perceived Resources**

Change of context. "I would like to move to BC for a month to get away from it all. Go in the woods, in the mountains, live off the the lands. I could smoke a lot of pot and not be disturbed by people."

Animals. "I like dogs, I'm a dog sitter for my roommate. I can take care of animals."

Trustee. "My rent is paid directly from my ODSP check. \$500 a month, and the government subsidizes it \$600. It's good that it goes direct."

## **Tensions**

Cleanliness and dirtiness. “I smell for a reason. It’s been that way since I was a kid. But you wouldn’t believe how nice my condo is by just looking at me. It’s really, really nice.”

Self-perception and deservingness. “My happiness is fucked ever since I was a little kid. I’m having a phony laugh right now. I’m grumpy. I’m your worst nightmare. I don’t want to be that way. But I’m just nasty.”

Social dependencies. “I have a lot of homies that I hang around with at The Meeting Place. It’s a place where we hook up at. What are you supposed to say about it? I can’t function without certain people. I can’t function...”