

# Client Storyboard - Emma

## The initial struggle

I was first introduced to the Rehabilitation Team when I was preparing to be discharged from Rowan Ward, after a 6 month stay.

I have an anxiety disorder that had resulted in a planned suicide attempt through a substantial overdose, whereby I was in a coma for 4 days. I was then placed on a section 3 of the MHA.

Overwhelmed by the long-term impact of domestic abuse I felt highly anxious; I had a stutter and could not express myself clearly. I seemed to always be tearful and found myself to be continuously apologizing.

Due to the severity of my mental health, I could not function well enough to be able to sustain work or feel able to engage with education or training. Recently separated from my abusive husband I was faced with managing a new house, in a new town that I was unfamiliar with.

Lacking confidence and experience in decision making and money management, I was scared about the future and all the things that I needed to do to function independently. I felt that I didn't have the necessary practical skills and with a recent diagnosis of ADHD I didn't know how I was going to navigate life.

I felt guilty about the suicide attempt, though still feeling like a burden to my friends and family, I regretted that it hadn't worked. I felt afraid to engage in community activities and overwhelmed by the recovery pathway ahead.

## Building trust and supporting new beginnings

With home visits throughout the week, the team offered me a safe space to process my thoughts and feelings. Listening and supporting me to identify the steps I needed to take to feel safe.

I wanted to make my new house feel like a home, a place where I wanted to live. Though I needed to regain my confidence in decision-making, and in my ability to complete the practical tasks of managing a home independently.

I also wished to feel less isolated, to connect with my community and travel confidently.

## Small steps to recovery

The team worked collaboratively with patience and understanding. With regular visits I received consistent emotional support, encouragement and reassurance, as well as practical support. The team provided me with a sense of hope to allow me to heal.

My support was flexible and individual to my needs. It was never a tick box exercise of having to do specific things during my supported hours. Talking, offloading, or even talking about everyday things, was recognised as the invaluable part of my recovery that

## Client Storyboard - Emma

it is. Talk time was never seen as wasted simply because there was nothing tangible to show for it, which was so important for me; to feel heard, valued and validated.

With support I started to visit the supermarket, I built confidence in making decisions around furnishing and decorating my home, I made steps towards setting up household bills and changing my address.

I was supported to obtain a concessionary bus pass, as my driving licence had been revoked due to my mental health. The thought of navigating busses was terrifying at first, but I talked it through and planned it, which enabled me to attend a dentist appointment.

My health and medication were closely monitored, and referrals were made for me to access therapeutic interventions. I completed the stabilization course and have access to the 1-2-1 Brain in Hand coaching support service, for ongoing support specific to my neurodiversity. When I left hospital, I was taking eight tablets for my mental health, I'm now just taking one.

Gradually my stutter disappeared and normal speech returned, as my body began to relax and I gained confidence in myself.

I began reconnecting with friends and socialising again, something that I had previously avoided for a long time due to my intense anxiety. I started to make connections in my community and got to know my neighbours. I had friends round to my home for a meal for the first time in years and I'm so proud of that. Neighbours too.

### A milestone achievement

In such a small space of time, there have been many milestone achievements, some big, some small, but all an important part of my healing process:

- Re-reading my suicide note and feeling like a completely different person - now feeling stronger and having the desire to want to live. I'm so glad and so grateful that I woke up (from the coma).
- Getting to know myself, my qualities not just my faults. Accepting that I was not the problem and turning my mental health around.
- I have learnt, and continue to learn, what safe boundaries look like for me, how to set them and keep them there. Setting boundaries in my family relationships for the first time.
- I've learnt that it's OK to not be OK at times, as we're all human. This has been so helpful.
- I feel safe in my new home.
- I feel grounded, settled and content for the first time ever.
- I've booked a holiday to France and have things in my life to look forward to.

Being asked to have this case study done about me has been so helpful! - It's given me the opportunity to read my progress from the perspective of those who support

## Client Storyboard - Emma

me. Writing my reflections for the case study has helped me to reflect on how far I've come as well as encouraging me to look to future goals.

### Looking to the future

We all have a human need to feel grounded and know there is a reliable base for us somewhere, especially those of us that have suffered from trauma, abuse and mental illness. I have finally found my grounding in my new home, and with the teams continued support to help me grow in confidence, resilience and skills, I know I will be OK.

I've learnt to recognise and value myself and my own needs compassionately. When I have inevitable blips, I am reminded that this is OK and that it will pass.. as it always does.

I'm gaining strength in getting through the divorce process, in order to be able to fully move on. I feel held and supported by the team to face the challenges ahead.

I'm now working with the team to navigate the system of getting my driving licence back, as I feel much more stable and ready for this next step.

I have many future plans – to travel to Scotland with my daughter, to regain my physical fitness, to start EMDR therapy (when I'm ready) and to get a new puppy.

I'm healing, I have hope and I'm so very glad to be alive.