



Making recovery visible

In Sheffield we know that that there are 100's if not 1000's of untold stories (often shared in closed groups) that the general population don't get to hear about. Sheffield Recovery Forum is STILL on a mission to change that.

Tracey Goodall

What was life like for you at rock bottom?

I used to be a landlady and managed pubs all over the country, but I was also in a violent and abusive relationship for nearly 6 years. I started to drink more because of the situation I was in and to block everything out but I didn't think it was problematic at the time. I tried to get out of this situation on many occasions, even when I covered in cuts and bruises and going through breast cancer operations and treatment. I built up many crime numbers from all around the country, but was so isolated and too scared of him, even though I had him arrested many times and on two occasions it went to court I was brainwashed and believed id be killed and with the coercive behavior I didn't go to court and he did plead guilty to one off them because of the police statements. The abuse came to a head in, or should I say to the attention SYP police 2017 when I had been hospitalized yet again, this time I was lucky to survive.

What was the turning point for you?

The hospital got in touch with the SYP and they had a Marac meeting about me which means that I could be seriously harmed or murdered. I was then referred to the IDVA service, Independent Domestic Violence Advisor, which helped me with going to court, which then lead to more support from Action and going into group work with other woman in or out of domestic violence. It was the support I needed which helped me to flee from my partner who eventually went to court and he got 24 months conditional discharge and restraining order for life. So, if he comes anywhere near me or his family and friends he will get up to five years in prison. Around the same time my mum passed away with alcoholism and then I got diagnosed with a fatty liver, so I started attending treatment at START alcohol service.

What helped?

Within 5 months of attending Start, I was encouraged to apply for the Sheffield Ambassadors scheme in which I was accepted, and I started really turning a corner. While on the ambassador course we went to Northern College for extra training and enjoyed it so much, I enrolled on more short courses while doing this I started at Womens therapy Services for counselling to address the domestic Abuse and diagnosed with post-traumatic stress. They also helped with the grieving process of my mum, dad and nan who had sadly died while I was in the relationship. At the beginning the counselling it was so hard, going back and reliving that time, I felt so drained and it took days if not longer to bring myself out of the horrible gloom, but with time it did get easier and analyzing how it affects you the anger towards myself, the isolation I was in, the helplessness and not wanting to live, the mask id got used to wearing was all starting to make sense.

Then a dream came true when I took some time out for a holiday and got the chance to stay in Turkey, I so enjoyed it and that's when I realized that I was really worth something. I felt part of a family and was so proud, I made so many friends and was able to be me over there, I felt so safe and was able to shine, laugh again but being a part of something felt so good. My time in Turkey made me feel I could do more for me and actually see a future, so after 6 months I realized it was time to come back to Sheffield. I'd postponed my counselling while away but soon got back on track with that and ready to move forward.

What is life like now? How are things different?

It was a culture shock coming back but I had plans, I started my ambassador placement at Start (Addaction) and stuck to the counselling even through there was ups and downs, but before getting support I'd be stuck in bed paralyzed watching the clouds float by, constantly thinking of the horrible thoughts, drinking too much, the isolation was horrendous and that nobody cared, just existing from day to day and why am I here, what is the point off anything, I might as well be dead, I was a living zombie.

Now I look through the window and see the colours, I hear the birds singing, the sun is shining, the flowers are growing and even on a dull days there's still life going on and I'm embracing life with enthusiasm, making small goals and achieving them on a daily basis is giving me that self-worth that I am important and I'm making a difference and I can do things.

I am learning that I'm safe now and believing it and how to calm my anxiety in looking at ways to concentrate on things to calm me down to writing things down the good and bad, what's the worst that could happen!! Puts it into context. The goals are getting bigger, it is making me believe in myself and that I'm a lot happier and the mask has dropped, and I see the real Tracey again, who's loving, caring, and thoughtful and can actually make a difference in my life.

Going forward and getting a career back on track the support in what I'm doing, I feel that I'm being looked after and that I'm appreciated and cared about, plus I'm helping others which really means a lot to me and the experiences I've had through life will help others too. I was once a desperate lady who had totally been brain washed, abused so much that I tried to commit suicide just to get away from it all, who couldn't even get dressed in a day, drank far too much, couldn't eat properly and basically thought I might as well be dead, so frightened that couldn't even contemplate a future. To now omg what a difference !!!!



First two pictures are during the six years

