

There & Back Again!

How two people implemented & built on acquired skills learnt from 'The Living with Bipolar Disorder Course' to re-engage in life.

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Providing care all of us would recommend to family and friends

Aim

- A brief overview of the course
- How the course helped?
- Making the course your own?
- How helped re-engage with life?
- A reflection on living with bipolar.



Living with Bipolar Disorder Course

- What is Bipolar Disorder?
- Stress & it's links to the BD
- Coping strategies & Routine
- Mood cycles
- Impact on individual, family & friends?
- Problem Solving
- Using a timeline/life line
- EWS, Staying Well Plans & Advance Statements
- Self regard & unhelpful thoughts
- Medication
- Self Advocacy & working with Professionals



Rock Bottom

- Loss of everything
- Unable to take care of myself
- Self-loathing – guilt as to loss
- Complete loss of self
- Self medication and engagement with mood
- Relationships affected
- Caught up in past – NO HOPE
- Poor self Esteem & confidence
- Negative enjoyment & poor motivation – LOW MOOD



How the course helped?

A Qualitative study

- 1st time loss & feelings of guilt discussed
- coped better with feelings re. stigma
- developed a more positive view of bipolar
- developed responsibility & control
- Feeling & being involved in own care
- More assertive & 'sticking up for ourselves'
- Meeting others – emotions/feelings normalised/validated
- Changed thinking & behaviour
- Impact on the Family



How the course helped?

- Understanding bipolar – trust & safety
- Meeting other people reduced loneliness/isolation
- Normalised experiences
- Not my fault
- Triggers, EWS, coping, management & communication
- Structure & Routine - Activity scheduling
- First feelings of hope - could have some control
- Reignited my love and passion for learning - Recovery



How J. made the course his own?

“The course generously provided the conceptual tools for me to untie and deconstruct the sterile net, of a diagnosis, that was cast over me.

By being provided the forum to individually and collectively untangle our experiences, I could begin to distinguish what I considered to be *my* illness.”



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Making the course your own?

Dorset HealthCare
University NHS Foundation Trust



- Extract information useful to self
- Be responsible for own recovery
- If motivated with ideas – act upon them
- Course immensely helpful – useful additional support
- Worked with CPN to build on & implement
- Built shared Careplan involving everyone
- Enhance communication within family/friends
- Link with other learning/courses/support networks



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How Helped J. re-engage with life

“In an environment of warmth and delicate humanity I explored my history, experience of altered states and internal psychology with support.

The following process of reconstruction empowered me to make informed, increasingly accurate analyses of my behaviours and thoughts. Enabling more precise judgements and brought clarity to self-reflection.”



How helped re-engage with life

- Developed sophisticated recognition & management of BD
- Understand self a lot better
- Highs & Lows happen to everyone - its how managed
- Made realise other options
- Able to reduce medication
- Personal trainer, NLP practitioner, SLAP Coordinator & Peer Specialist.



How helped re-engage with life

- Teaching bipolar course & set up a self help group
- Use routine to lead a balanced and productive life
- I know/like myself.
- I trust myself & trust my supporters
- Using knowledge of course to help others rewarding & empowering
- Being honest with self and others
- Not being afraid to ask for help
- Able to celebrate even smallest achievements



A Reflection

“I started to recognise & develop new self management techniques which in turn rebuilt my self confidence and gave me more hope. It helped me understand the illness triggers & stop highs & lows escalating.

It's not easy & I needed to work on myself & everything on the course quite a few times. But the fact that I am now able to control my previous bipolar roller coaster of a life so it is much happier, calmer & where I am able to help others, feels amazing.”



A Reflection

“I realise that I can live a successful and meaningful life, I know that there will be wobbles but the knowledge that it will not last and I will get better takes some of the sting away.

I used to think that all doors were closed to me because of diagnosis but now I realise that new doors have opened and that for others I know where to find the keys to unlock them.”



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