

## Case Study

### The perspective of a Space2BHeard Re-Mind Service User

#### Introducing Tracey

Tracey, 54 was busy getting on with her normal life, working full time as a teacher in Hull when over the Christmas period 2019 she became physically unwell. Tracey recalls that she found herself dizzy, losing her balance and experiencing a lot of pain in her body with no clear reason as to why. Over a period of a few weeks Tracey declined eventually unable to move easily as well as losing her ability to talk coherently. By March 2020 she found herself unable to leave the house, coincidentally at the same time as the first national lockdown. This was a really scary time for Tracey and she got referred for an MRI scan to investigate what was going on. The results found long term issues with her spine and she also got diagnosed with Fibromyalgia.

As a result of her illness Tracey had to go on long term sick leave from work, so as well as living with long term pain, Tracey found her income effected too. Alongside this the pain was preventing Tracey from getting quality sleep which effected her mood.

Understandably, though at the time Tracey didn't realise (due to her physical unwellness being her first concern) that her Mental Health has started to decline. She was experiencing regular and intense panic attacks and anxiety and it wasn't until she passed out from her panic and an ambulance was called that paramedics quickly identified the panic as the cause of her distress.

Before this was suggested to Tracey she had a real fear that perhaps she was dying and that her situation had become hopeless. The realisation that actually this layer of fear, anxiety and emotional distress was related to her Mental Health was something of a relief to Tracey, she knew she could do something to help her Mental Health in order to recover, which would in turn help her focus on her needs around her physical health.

Tracey in the meantime got a referral to the Pain Clinic in Hull, which was a "really helpful place, they took a holistic approach to my health and I got a lot out of the sessions there". From there they referred Tracey in to Re-Mind at Space2BHeard to help support her psychologically with her physical and emotional struggles.

#### Tracey Experience of taking part in the Re-Mind programme

When Tracey got the opportunity to join the group sessions at Re-Mind they were being delivered on Zoom Initially Tracey's response was "I wouldn't normally want to do a group thing, but at this stage I was willing to give anything a go, I thought this could go one way or the other so 'just do it' and see what happens".

Shelley was Tracey's group therapist, and also the therapist that took Tracey through to her one to one sessions in the second part of her treatment.

When Tracey started her group she found it was "really nice to be with other people, experiencing similar things. It



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was so validating to know I wasn't alone. After two sessions I felt like I had known the group for ages and it was actually fun! The way Shelley ran and delivered the group, she couldn't have done a better job. She is really down to earth but such a professional. I really can't put in to words how good it was. The learning I did around the connection to the mind and body really made sense and made my illness and fear make much more sense. The way Shelley explained it was straightforward and manageable. This was important for me as cognitively I was struggling and found it hard to remember and understand things. The things I was learning during my sessions, I had to take away and use. After all you are only in your sessions for one hour in a week and there are 24 hours per day so during all that time I was practising what I was learning and using the tools I was given".

### What changes has Tracey made as a direct response to her time at Re-Mind

Straight away Tracey found she could be more mindful and in the moment which took her attention away from thinking about her pain 24/7. This was a big relief to her "It helped to calm me down, I was more mindful and my anxiety came down too" she goes on to describe being "more in the now, it gave me hope this was a transitional illness that would end. I was so hopeless, I know it sounds dramatic now but I thought my life was over and I felt I was drifting away"

"I came back to the here and now and after three weeks I noticed that my pain started to reduce. I am still living with pain but the emotional distress on top of the pain has lifted. I think I am 80% improved and 20% managing ongoing struggles with my physical health.

"I think I could make these changes because my confidence grew around my illness and myself which helped me rationalise things. I noticed if I was slipping back and I would use my tools to bring myself back. I started to leave the house again and the fear started to reside"

"I was then able to negotiate with work to go back one day per week. This was due to my growing confidence and I am so glad I didn't have to lose my contract of employment"

"I am not normally a 'gushy' person but I feel so delighted to feel like myself again. I would recommend Re-Mind to anyone and I wish it was more available to more people. I honestly don't think I would be sat here now so thank you"

