

Vignette twenty-three

I was to have the most beneficial and therapeutic relationship with my Key Support Worker. The trust was almost instant as she looked across the room at me with a sympathetic look, as people talked about me as if I was not in the room at my discharge meeting. When I left hospital, she came to visit me in my own home. I felt that the less formal way of meeting with someone compared to the interaction with my psychiatrist or psychologist was very beneficial to me. Over the year being supported by her, she did some great work with me. I think one of the most beneficial was to introduce me to courses and then supporting me to attend them. This was great to get back out in the community and start interacting with people again. It was very scary especially while carrying my own stigma of what I had been through. But the more I interacted with people the less alienated I felt and the more skills I gained, the more confidence I had in my ability to function well as a human being.

My Support Worker formed a relationship with my parent's which was also very beneficial. They had struggled so much seeing their daughter go through so much turmoil with mental illness on top an already strained relationship. She was instrumental in helping my parents and I connect again and building up a healthy relationship. So many 'bridges had been burnt' before I was admitted to Hospital and it was really important for me to have my parents full support again. Besides the main support I received from my Support Worker I received supported from others in the team. They were all consistent in the way they supported me. Sometimes it was just the small things that made a big difference in my recovery, like going down to the beach with my support worker, sitting on some rocks and having casual conversation with another human being. It was these moments that I remember and that have become very special for me.