

“ I trust and believe in Rachel and her ability to help and support me through it.”

Trauma Survivor - Young person, 21 years.

Although I have not yet completed my recovery, I think it is important to reflect on how far Rachel has helped me to come. Before I started seeing Rachel, I was suicidal and couldn't see a future, constantly on high alert and exhausted, though barely getting any sleep due to flashbacks and nightmares.

While pretending to everyone around me that things were good, I was extremely isolated and cut off from the world. The shame, guilt, fear and embarrassment of what I had experienced kept me quiet. I didn't believe people would understand and thought that they would blame me. However, after I lost a close friend to suicide, I was determined that I was going to keep fighting and get better. Rachel assured me that though she was not going to do it for me, she would be right beside me every step of the way. Her ability to understand and the knowledge that she has, made me believe, for the first time, that I could recover.

The first part of therapy was about becoming stable and growing in strength to ensure I was able to face processing the trauma. This allowed me to grow as a person too, I realised I had something to give, and I wasn't just what I had experienced. When I started in this stage, I was disassociating a lot and was rarely in my body, I would often sit in silence for hours at a time not realising I was. Now I am able to show emotion, take part and interact, my ability to maintain healthy

relationships has grown. Walking away from the unhealthy relationships in my life is by no means easy and is still a work in progress, however I am slowly taking control of these with Rachel's ongoing support.

After only a couple of sessions, I was no longer feeling suicidal, I was much more grounded and the nightmares and flashbacks had decreased. Finally I was given the opportunity to get some much needed sleep. **Rachel gave me the ability to know and understand why I was feeling this way which itself has helped me to change the way I feel and think by adapting my thought processes.** It hasn't been easy to change these as they were deeply embedded but now that I can challenge my thoughts, I am thinking more positively about myself and my future.

I am currently still in the processing stage of the therapy and although it is very hard, it has already been life changing. The sessions are very tiring, and often a nap afterwards is needed, but the physical pains I still feel from the trauma and the level of stress the memories cause have decreased dramatically. I am able to know that I am safe now and I am not still in those situations. I trust and believe in Rachel and her ability to help and support me through it.