

Another chance at life - a patient's story

On the 27th December 2021 I hit my rock bottom and could see that my life had become completely unmanageable. I'd hurt a lot of people close to me, including my wife, my children and most definitely myself. I was hurting so badly I had contemplated taking my own life on more than one occasion. That day I made a phone call to the Priory...



In many ways I knew what I was doing with the self-destructive behaviour but didn't exactly understand why I did it at times. I had reached a point whereby I just wanted to make myself feel better by whatever means and that often involved drugs and other women. I didn't think for one minute that I had a drink problem but I'd figured out that every time I drank alcohol I then wanted to do a line of coke and then the floodgates would open and I'd want more, which would then send me off into another world of wanting sex or comfort from other women. As a result, I just thought I was a very selfish person who wasn't capable of seeing anything good in my life or capable of looking after anyone or anything. I would self-harm, self-destruct, catastrophise and manipulate everyone close to me or any situation to get what I wanted. I would have thoughts and feelings and just think 'well that's me, that's who I am, and I can't change who I am'. I kind of knew it all stemmed from childhood but didn't understand how and why exactly it affected me in adulthood.

Never at any point in 47 years did I ever think I might be an addict, because to me an addict was someone that used heroin, crack or drank every day and I was not like that - I had a normal functioning life with a family, a business and I didn't drink or use every day.

That first phone call with Priory was an initial assessment with a lovely lady from Chelmsford called Sue. I told her my brief background and she instantly identified with me and said I had suffered childhood trauma and that I had a very strong case to be taken in for the addiction treatment programme. I was desperate to hold onto my wife and family and everything material that I had around me and I knew I couldn't do it on my own - so I jumped at the chance to be admitted. It followed up with an assessment with an equally nice chap called Dr Swami, whom for me was something like a God with strong powers to make me better, but that was also my own wishful thinking!

From the very moment I walked through those doors in Chelmsford I 'surrendered'. I'd never heard of the 12-steps, let alone been in any sort of institution like this, but I wanted to feel different and begged for help. Whatever I needed to do, I was willing to do it, and from that day forward I became a sponge and worked so hard to get the stuff they were teaching me. It was probably the most painful experience of my life; I was scared of where my life was heading at this point but I threw myself into my treatment – and the support and love I received from the team in primary care at Chelmsford was amazing. They almost had to break me into little pieces and help me start again with the re-building process.

Then as I neared the end of my 28 days they sat me down and Dr Swami told me that some people are worth investing his time in and he encouraged me to consider secondary treatment, as 'primary was only scratching the surface'. He said I had a lot of 'inner child' work to do to get to the core of my issues and almost be 're-parented'. This almost broke me again at the thought of being away from my family for a further two to three months, plus I had a business to run; but I trusted him and the whole team at Priory and knew that they always had my best interests at heart. After a further consultation with the lovely Andrea Taylor at The Elphis, off I went for the start of my secondary treatment.

All the team once again were so supportive and loving towards me and I formed a very special bond with certain individuals like Gavin, Deborah and Andrea that I will forever hold onto. I was warned it would be painful at times, trying to go back to the beginning and re-live past childhood trauma. They took me to places I never knew existed, but I had faith and the more faith I had in them the more positive things started to happen. The whole team invested as much time in me as I did myself and this then followed with Andrea offering to do couples therapy with me and my wife. This has been so helpful to us both.

After being at The Elphis for a total of four months (two months residential and two months part time day care) I eventually graduated. It was one of the most emotional days of my life because I'd come so far in such a short space of time and what the whole Priory team had done meant the world to me and my family.

Someone said I was being given my life back but as far as I'm concerned, they have given me the chance of a life that I have never had and for that I will always be eternally grateful.

Today I still go back to have my one-to-one therapy with Deborah and couples therapy with my wife, and I'll always hold the whole team there in the very highest of regard.

Thank you!



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