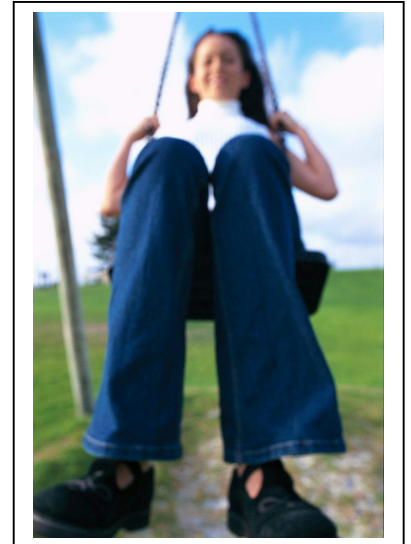


JANE'S STORY (as told by her Peer Supporter)

When I first met Jane I wasn't sure just what Peer Support could do to help. But after a couple of meetings we got to know each other better, sorted out a plan and got started straight away.

Jane lives with Scheuermann's Disease (curvature of the upper back) and an under active thyroid gland which has caused her to gain weight. Her GP has only looked after these conditions with medication and has not addressed the need for correct dietary and exercise requirements.

When I first met Jane she was sleeping on the floor on a mattress and this caused a lot of pain from the Scheuermann's Disease in her back. I helped her to get a bed from St Vinnies and she has said that it has really helped in the management of her pain.



Jane is fully aware of the types of foods she needs to eat to have a healthy diet but her financial situation dictates otherwise. She has made use of her one month Lifescrpts membership and has attended Curves in Kwinana (jointly set up between the local GP Division and Curves). Living in Medina, Jane is quite isolated so I have taken her along to the June O'Connor Centre in Rockingham which has been great for her as she knows most people who attend. Initially she needed support to attend but after lots of encouragement, she attends three times a week on her own.

Jane was seeing a local GP who was not really sensitive towards her health, both physically and mentally. I told her about a female mental-health-friendly GP in her area and she agreed to see her. This new GP has already addressed the physical aspects of her conditions and the need for walking or swimming, so we are now doing gentle walking three times a week.

Part of Jane's mental health issues involves her biting her finger nails and picking at both her finger and toe nails. We have spoken about ways to combat this and she is doing really well and the sores have healed really well.

Initially Jane projected as being weak and needy, but after working with her she has become more confident and the real Jane has begun to emerge. She is a very strong and intelligent lady and has all the answers she is looking for. She has real hope for the future.

I have worked successfully with John her Case Manager ironing out a few problems, initially in regard to boundaries and just what Peer Support is. Now we are liaising well together in a more positive light.

Jane is really enjoying Peer Support and in her words says this:-

“Peer Support has been great for me, without it I would be at home looking at four walls. With Steph coming to see me she has had me at the gym and going to the June O’Connor Centre a couple of times a week. I would recommend it to anyone. Steph is also a great get-up-and-go person and encourages me to go to these things.”

So, in summing up, Peer Support is about showing Jane how to take small steps to change her life. This has already had an impact in a positive way on many levels as her physical health has improved and this is having a knock-on effect improving her mental state.

So as Peer Supporters we need to support participants to take small positive steps to a healthier happier life.



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