



Pippa's Journey*

Hansa Lodge, Essex
Residential Service for Women
with Learning Disabilities

Pippa's history

Pippa had a very difficult childhood, experiencing bullying while she was in school. This led to her becoming physically challenging towards her parents and siblings. It was only when Pippa was in her early 20's that she was diagnosed with autism and mild learning disability. Her ongoing challenging behaviour escalated to the point where her family could no longer cope with looking after her at home.

Aged 25, Pippa was detained under the Mental Health Act and admitted to an inpatient psychiatric unit for a short time due to hearing voices and feeling compelled to act on the things she was hearing. On discharge, it was felt that Pippa needed more specialised support to ensure her needs were met.

When Pippa came to us

Pippa struggled with social interaction and found it difficult to converse with others, due to repetitive use of words and phrases and very narrow interests. She was very intensely and easily upset, with significant mood swings. She spent time on her own rather than socialising and hardly engaged with staff, which made it difficult for them to understand what she was saying, especially when she was upset or anxious. This resulted in her throwing and breaking things, and screaming very loud without obvious provocation.

Pippa's care

The staff were patient with Pippa and they helped to build her confidence at her own pace. They encouraged her to gradually access community groups like the Autism Hub.

Over time, Pippa became more confident in interacting with others. Staff supported her to believe more in herself and develop interests and skills. Pippa has now discovered a love for writing, drawing, jewellery making, baking and photography. Before the COVID-19 lockdown, she was looking at registering at a local college for a photography course.

To help with her communication, Pippa was encouraged to write down how she is feeling. She now has a personal journal where she writes down her feelings and plans for the future. Each morning she shares what she has written with staff.

Pippa was educated on the importance of STOMP (stopping over medication of people with a learning disability, autism or both) and she has been able to independently request a reduction in her medications.

Her symptoms are now managed with a minimal amount of medication. Pippa now has a better insight into her mental health and she speaks directly to the GP to make appointments and to request for review for her medication.

Pippa today

With the right medication and support from the team, Pippa has become a lot happier and calmer in herself. She is able to manage her anger better and now engages with staff and her peers.

Pippa loves accessing the community independently, she is more independent in household chores like cooking and house work.

After the COVID-19 lock down ends, Pippa hopes to volunteer in a charity shop and hopefully pursue a course at the local college. The future is looking very bright for Pippa.

*Name has been changed to protect her identity

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