

Harriet's Story

When Harriet joined youth club she was always polite and took part in most activities the program offered. During an anti-bullying workshop ran by the police as part of a youth club session Harriet, who was 14 years old got very distressed, although she has always been a little shy, quiet girl we could see that she was troubled.

That night was pivotal to Harriet's future, Harriet found the strength and confidence to tell us (youth workers, parents and sister) that since starting year 7 in school, over three years before it all became a nightmare. She was being bullied in school, the same group of young people would constantly find anything to pick on her, laugh at her or gossip about her, the name calling and horrible behaviour grew deeper through her heart.

She felt like no one would understand her, she would always cry alone. The difficult feelings, painful memories and overwhelming situations caused by the bullying led Harriet to take back control and she devastatingly began to self-harm... her way to try and change how she was feeling inside.

It took over a year for Harriet to share her feelings of being out of control and afraid, that she had been experiencing because of all the bullying. Once she confided in her older sister, parents and workers that evening in youth club, with time, understanding and a listening ear, Harriet began on a journey to try and cope with her life the best way that she could. We didn't know how long it would take or if she would ever get there, but one thing was sure she never gave up and she had all our support behind her.

After months of knockbacks and long waiting lists from the medical professionals and access to specialist services it was a tough time for Harriet. Relationships take time to develop, and change takes time. With support from those who cared and the care and support from her big sister the 'episodes' continued but were less frequent, finally receiving appropriate medical support and the texts to her sister in the other room saying 'I need a cwtch' were still heart-breaking but at least we all knew the cutting and self-harming may just be becoming a thing of the past.

Now at 16 years old Harriet has shown to be one of the strongest young people I know and have had the privilege to work with, she has shown determination and such strength to change her life around. As she has grown older she has learnt to remember that no matter what anybody else says she can do many things and nothing will stop her anymore.

Not only has Harriet overcome her personal difficulties she became involved with Carmarthenshire Youth Council. With a little encouragement and a bit of support Harriet learnt to count the good qualities that she has that helped her build up her self-esteem and confidence, despite her past situation. She has just sat her GCSE exams, found a part time job and is looking to a bright future.... Something that was a distant thought a number of months ago.

