

### Rugeley Coffee Morning - Jerry's Story

Jerry originally accessed Chase Emotional Wellbeing for 6 months for therapy to address depression brought about by financial difficulties, the break-up of his marriage and post-traumatic stress disorder from working in the Forces. The therapist suggested it would be helpful to go along to the Social Hub coffee morning in Rugeley in order to socialise and meet others that may have been through similar experiences.

The first day Jerry arrived at the group he felt terrified and this he feels is an understatement.

"I got to the door and I was in two minds whether to come in or not. I put my back to the wall and stood in the corner as I was too scared to sit down. I wanted to run but the social hub worker, Yvonne, persuaded me to stay. I listened to everyone else talking and I didn't take part but went away feeling slightly better off because other people were saying what they were going through and it hit a nerve. I had therapy before my second session at the social hub and I realised I had made a big achievement from attending, so I decided to go again. I also had a phone call from Yvonne which I found encouraging."

"The group has been so helpful, it's been really good. It has brought me out of my shell and I actually go out socialising outside of the group as well now. Before, suffering with depression, not going out of the house, I was not looking after myself personally, now I look after my appearance more, my hygiene, I am on top of everything."

"A big change has been that I am no longer so dependent on drinking alcohol. I find I can go out socialising and have a coffee and don't feel I need to have a drink to pluck up the courage to socialise. The first time yesterday I had people around my house and I cooked a Sunday lunch for them and that made me feel brilliant. Part of it was to pay my friend back who helped me through my depression. He used to come round on a Sunday and make sure I had something to eat. Things are so different now- I used to wait until the early hours of the morning to do a supermarket shop because there would be no one in the shop as I just couldn't face people. Now I go shopping on my own in the day all the time.

In the past I have been in the forces and also was a professional wrestler, this gave a sense of having to fight my way through life. Last week someone got right in my face aggressively and was being verbally and physically abusive. Even a few months ago, I would have reacted violently to this but instead, I walked away. He struck me over the back of the head with a bottle and I still just walked away. I felt proud of myself and the person I was with was impressed as they thought I would lose it. This is linked to the group in that I feel more emotionally and socially balanced so don't feel I need to be aggressive anymore."

"I look forward to coming now to the group. I was the first person here this morning. Although I am retired, I am keeping myself busy. I have joined a couple of social groups such as the British Legion and the RAOB, which is a charity organisation. I have also joined the Old Comrades of Rugeley, which is for ex service personnel. So now I am getting involved in lots of community groups and it's all due to attending this group."

"I would recommend this group to others as it has helped me 100%. I want to thank the group – all the members, volunteers and staff for helping me out."