

Back on my feet

The following is a letter from Heath recounting his “road to recovery” .

I have lived with social anxiety and depression for many years. Two years ago it got so bad that I left my job. Then following a major depressive episode I quickly withdrew from society into a self imposed, and seemingly permanent seclusion.

For more than a year I saw virtually no one other than a psychiatrist and a psychologist. This continued until one day my psychologist gave me a brochure on Pathways’ Mobile Service. Initially I was hesitant. I thought it would involve talking to someone for an hour or so, and then they’d go away again.

Finally I met my current support worker, Merle. I was able to meet with her for a chat and most importantly develop a rapport. I found her very easy to talk to and she had a keen understanding of what it’s like dealing with social anxiety.

We would talk about the health side of things, but as time went on we’d end up talking about all sorts of stuff. The conversation flowed naturally and the interaction with Merle quickly became a highlight of my week. I also got to meet other support workers and found them equally enthusiastic and kind.

In January, I was temporarily hospitalised. The first person outside my family to call me was Merle. I could clearly see that this wasn’t just a job to these professionals, but that they really CARED.

Eventually, with encouragement and support, I was able to eat with Merle in a busy food court. This, for me was a great achievement and one of the primary goals of my return back to society.

Now I am able to leave the service and continue to interact in public. I would like to thank the Pathways staff, in particular Merle, for their time, energy and encouragement in getting me back on my feet.

Heath

