



Developing Follow-up Support After a Mental Health Crisis

A lived experience by Owen Salem

My Journey

- ▶ Was always academic in school
- ▶ Didn't know what to do after sixth form
- ▶ Went to university and studied physics. Because people thought I'd do well
- ▶ Didn't do very well
- ▶ 1st mental break end of 1st year
- ▶ Didn't understand why I felt this way
- ▶ Saw a university counsellor where I learned I had depression
- ▶ Mental health improved but not back to normal
- ▶ Problems continued into 2nd year where I dropped out

Getting Help

- ▶ Continued to be unemployed for over a year
- ▶ Didn't really help the whole "feel like a failure" thing
- ▶ Job Centre signed me up for an employability program through YouthFed
- ▶ Taught me employability skills and helped me meet people my age
- ▶ Still hated myself but was uncertain about needing help
- ▶ Came forward and asked for support
- ▶ Set up weekly meetings on zoom

Recovery

- ▶ Developed coping strategies to manage the “black dog days”
- ▶ Tried a lot of different things
- ▶ Gained the confidence required to get into the world of work
- ▶ Started applying for jobs
- ▶ Got a Christmas temp job in retail.
- ▶ Then got an admin job with Youth Fed

Tackling Early Signs

Developing coping mechanisms



Early Signs I Recognise

Early Signs	How I Tackle Them Early
Disinterest in hobbies	Force myself into them Put my feelings into my hobbies
Going to bed early	Keep self awake until reasonable time Ask friends to do something online
Feeling “on edge” and lashing out	Take self out of situation Understand that I’m tense and calm down
Loss of appetite	Eat 3 meals
Heavy drinking	Limit how much I drink Limit what I drink
Ignoring friends	Send text messages to start a call Make sure I get in a call as then I’ll stay

Empowering Service Users To Support Each Other



What would I say to my younger self

- ▶ Accept yourself for who you are
- ▶ Not being perfect doesn't make you a failure
- ▶ Everyone deserves to be happy, you included
- ▶ Don't react to what you can't control
- ▶ Take pride in the little things. Small achievable goals help

Thanks For Listening

