



Case Study - Amanda McAuley

Be Confident, Feel Good Course.

Amanda came to Sheffield two and a half years ago with her 4 children. After having left an abusive relationship and suffered from post-natal depression, she found it hard to re-establish a life for herself & her children and make new friends.

She was helped by her Health Advisor, who recommended her to try joining one of Valley Community Learning's short courses-'Be Confident, Feel Good'- to help her regain the confidence to begin to move forward with her life.

Initially Amanda wasn't keen to go "I didn't want to go at first- I wasn't really interested in meeting new people because I didn't feel I could trust anyone after what had happened to me" she said. "In the end, I just went to the first session to please my Health Advisor".

Amanda went to the first session of the course and was surprised by what she found "When I went in, it was quite a small group of people and everyone was really friendly". She enjoyed the activities, but was not convinced at that point that she would go back the following week. She did go back the next week, however, and was glad she did "At that point, I really started to enjoy the course and when the course finished a few weeks later I realised I had met some really nice people and felt much more positive about life".

When the course had finished, Amanda decided to try learning something else and chose another short course, Introduction to Complementary Therapies-" I went along with someone I had met on the 'Be Confident, Feel Good' course. We learned how to do Indian head massage, aromatherapy, hand & shoulder massage, reflexology and crystal therapy in a small group".

The complementary therapies course inspired Amanda to go further-"I got really interested in reflexology and found a course based online that I could do to go alongside the practical experience from my local course" Amanda really enjoyed the online course and hopes to soon have a qualification in reflexology.

But Amanda didn't stop there. Instead she found further courses she could do to extend her knowledge & skills in complementary therapies-"I have gone on to study Reiki therapy at Stockport and Hopi ear candling online and I've really enjoyed both courses"

Amanda hopes that she will be able to turn her interest and knowledge of complementary therapies into an opportunity to work in a way that suits her and her family "I've always wanted to go back to work but I want to do something different that helps people. I'm hoping that when I've finished my courses I will be able to work as a self-employed complementary therapist and I would be really interested in offering services alongside local doctor's surgeries, homes for the elderly etc as well as private consultations."

Amanda is also looking at branching out into teaching complementary therapies to adults in community classes " I am thinking of studying for an adult teaching qualification so I can pass on what I have learned to others in the community who are interested" she said.

Things are looking very different now for Amanda from when she went along, reluctantly, to her first session of 'Be Confident, Feel Good'. With help from her Health Advisor and Gleadless Valley Forum's Learning Champions Amanda feels able to look forward to a brighter future "I have been through some really difficult times in my life, but this has helped me to feel really positive about the future"

Interviewed by Sue Manser, Planning & Development Champion.