



Ryan's Story

Life before No5 was full of challenges and dark moments that I struggle to find the good moments in.

I was attending college at the time and between school work, my personal life, and work I was struggling badly with maintaining my mental health and began to slide further and further into depression. My anxiety was incredibly high as I struggled to see how I was going to be able to complete everything and continue down the path I wanted to take. I remember that everyday I would wake up and not want to. I wanted to just close my eyes and not have to deal with the world anymore. Thankfully I did have some good friends around me that made life a lot easier than it would be alone, but I knew that I needed to get help and make some true progress in my journey to achieving a strong mental health and that is when I began looking for a counselling service that would be a good fit for me.

It took a fair while to find one that fit me and eventually one of my friends suggested No5 to me. I was apprehensive at first but as my friend had been herself I thought I would give it a shot and referred myself to be put onto the waiting list. This time was very anxious for me as I was waiting for the service to be ready for me to come in and also constantly picturing what it would be like, what I would say, wondering if the counsellor would be nice, would they like me, would they understand me and what's happened to me. All these thoughts were going through my head daily and my anxiety was through the roof. During this time, I was also at a new college that in itself was proving to be very mentally challenging. **I was so desperate to offload all of these worries and issues and truly get help and thankfully I did.**

Roughly 6 months or so after I had referred myself I got a call stating that I could begin my sessions and I was ready to do so. I went to the first meeting very nervous but at the same time ready to get into it and begin the process. I quickly realised that all the worries I had had prior to attending was all for nothing as my counsellor was amazing! She always listened to everything I had to say, no matter what it was and never judged me even if I judged myself harshly. I had never been listened to and respected in this way before. **Constantly, I would keep quiet about my struggles as I didn't want to put people down or make them feel bad, but my counsellor continuously ensured me that I was the most important person in the room and that I was safe to say all I wanted to.** I would sit and just talk and talk but it never felt like an interview or even a counselling session and more just like an open, honest conversation with someone I knew I could trust.

Counselling allowed me to change my life around and begin to see all the good I could do and I saw value in myself, my skills and my time. I have been so much more confident in everything I do, taking more pride in my actions and self and making sure that I don't get into my own way and miss important opportunities. Setting boundaries is also far easier for me now, and I no longer allow people to misuse me and abuse my kindness. I truly believe that counselling gave me back my life and allowed me to see a future for myself and it is for this reason that I chose to become a Young Ambassador in order to help others and give back to the charity that gave me so much.

Since joining the young ambassadors I have been shown so much respect for what I bring to the table and have been allowed to show them off and represent No5 many times. I have truly felt like part of the organisation and have gained a lot of experience, through taking part in campaigns, making videos and even being able to do a tv interview. This confidence is what I now carry into my new job and continue to put into the multiple projects No5 allows me to work on with them.

Truly if there is anything I have gained from this experience it's myself. A new me that I can finally be happy with.