



Situation at Assessment.

Michael* is an unemployed 40-year-old who struggled with alcohol and confidence for most of his adult life. He describes spending much of his twenties and early 30s intoxicated, such that holding down work was impossible except for brief periods working in a supermarket or in gardening. Exacerbating things further were debilitating feelings of anxiety and worry that anything he did try to do was “not good enough”.

Michael was allocated for a CBT intervention in the first instance. During his first session a list of problems were drawn up and a workplan co-produced to tackle the most urgent of these – as defined by Michael. As he shared his story, a list of his strengths were also drawn up, recognising his kindness, his intelligence, his inner strength to have come off alcohol, and survive the many traumas he had experienced. Equally, Michael remained very anxious and unsure about any strengths he had and the future more generally.

Progress

Therapy sought to help Michael understand himself, his strengths, and how to harness these for the future. Despite the challenges he had faced through his life, incl alcohol-fuelled violence from his parents, Michael was a very sensitive person who felt deeply about things. He was offered tools to help him name and understand those feelings. Each session addressed a different theme as per the agreed workplan, e.g. anxiety, or confidence, or worry, such that Michael gained multiple coping strategies to manage these different feeling states which he then practiced in real world settings.

As Michael grew in self-awareness and confidence, he was also supported in actively thinking about his goals for the future. He felt sad that he had missed out on his education, so options to address this were explored. He ultimately signed up for a degree with the Open University funded by a part-time job he secured on a farm. Michael viewed this job as a steppingstone though which he might be able to help others in turn. Then he found advertised “the perfect job” – a support worker helping those struggling with addictions.

Michael applied for his dream job and was successful. Far from feeling “not good enough” Michael recognised his strengths coming together in a role that he would be uniquely qualified to do given his own prior struggles with alcohol. He also changed the focus of his OU degree to psychology and now aims to play a therapeutic role going forward in the recovery of others from addictions. His future is very bright.

“Eliminating worry from my life is amazing; instead of catastrophising I problem solve. It is empowering. I now have a sense of control over myself to step back and evaluate and make decisions. No more panic panic. At the start I was constantly anxious anxious anxious, and didn’t even want to leave the house. Since CMP, I have learnt that these are just thoughts, and where those thoughts are coming from are from me.

I am v v v happy with things, and with starting full time work - my dream job! Even going to the interview I was excited rather than nervous. I was not worrying, And I got the job - my dream job! Who would have thought that someone with a problem with alcohol, would now be going back to support others with similar problems. I just cant believe it and I cant thank you enough.

Michael