



Lisa's story

A single mum with three children, Lisa was finding life increasingly harder to deal with. While trying to recover from domestic violence, Lisa also had to try and cope with the emotional and physical demands of a child with ADHD too. She was sinking deeper into depression and needed to help herself so that she could help her children.

Lisa was referred to Surrey Care Trust's mentoring programme and matched with Emma, a volunteer mentor whom she began to meet once a week in a local café.

"I didn't feel like a good mum; I felt I was constantly arguing with the kids. I thought I was worthless and I really was just existing day to day. I knew I needed help before things got out of control so I went to the Hub in Redhill and asked what kind of help was available. They told me about the Trust's mentoring programme and soon afterwards I was matched with Emma.

"Of course it's hard to open up to a stranger, but I realised that it was only by being truly honest with Emma about my problems that she could really understand what was going on in my life and be able to support me.

I found that I really relied on seeing her at the beginning as I found that talking to her was such an emotional release for me; here was someone that wasn't going to judge me or gossip about me and my problems. As well as listening to me, Emma would also suggest practical changes I could make. Sometimes I didn't feel confident to make those changes but Emma just encouraged me to try again. Without me knowing it, Emma was building my confidence and my self-worth – she believed in me and so I began to believe in myself.

Soon I felt confident enough to go on some courses including a course on supporting a child with special needs. I met other mums with children with extra needs and sharing experiences with them really helped too. I was then asked to speak to the group about ADHD and I felt so proud – I've never done anything like that before.

Looking back I don't recognise the person I was then. I was a self-doubter but now I think that if I want to do something I can – like passing my driving test recently.

Mentoring has made realise what a powerful therapy tool talking is. My relationship with the children is better and I have become a befriender to an elderly lady and I feel the time is right to more things like that. I'm thinking about the things I want to do in my life like going to university that I just didn't would be possible before."

The Working Together for Work and Local Learning Perspective projects are funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery, through the Big Lottery Fund. This funding has enabled us to provide mentoring and support to Lisa.

