

## **My story -Clinical Commissioning Group- 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020**

- My Experience in hospital
- My Recovery Journey
- My Recovery Portfolio Build
- My present situation
- My ideas for improvement within services on mental health.
- These are topics I will be talking about and if there are any further suggestions please do say.

### **My story:**

Hello everyone. Thank you for inviting me to talk to you today.

My name is Bill Singh and I am Expert with Lived Experience of Mental Illness.

I would first like to share with you a bit about my story.

I have been married for 40 years and have two grown up sons aged 36 and 37 and have a very lovely wife.

I was employed full time in technical and management roles in the manufacturing and distribution industry here in England for over 20 years.

I was however, born in Scotland where I was educated and worked in the Strathclyde Police and served as a Police officer.

About 3 years ago I had a complete meltdown and suffered a huge mental breakdown. I found myself in a huge mind maze from which

there seemed to be no exits. I found myself in a very scary place where I felt alone and everyone who was close to me mattered no more.

After several visits by the Crisis Teams I was admitted to Wotton Lawn Hospital where initially I spent a few weeks. This was not really helpful as I was given various medications and eventually discharged. I was then re-admitted three times in total having completely relapsed from the ineffectiveness of the medications I was prescribed. It had affected me so badly that I made several suicide attempts with the last one being the closest to fatal. I was very lucky!

My final admission to the hospital was for a few months and the staff who had become very well aware of me, looked after me just as they had done before. I was finally diagnosed by the psychiatrist as having borderline personality disorder and discharged having been given various treatments and eventually prescribed the most suitable medication for my illness.

After discharge I was not sure what I was going to do with my life as I had resigned from my job during the course of my illness. I had never used the benefits system and had no choice but to do so.

I was assigned to further CBT sessions and was aligned with a Nurse from the Recovery Team. Eventually, I decided to become a volunteer with the Social Inclusion Team initially which is now in Ambrose House.

This was the start of my real recovery journey. I met with the manager there Dominika who put me through the Corporate Induction and I became an Expert by Experience Volunteer. I was tasked in the Social Inclusion Hub with doing simple administration tasks to build up my confidence. Dominika then suggested that I might be a good candidate for the Severn and Wye Recovery College. I was not sure about this but my wife said that she would settle me in by coming along for a few sessions of the course. She found the Recovery College to be a great way of furthering my confidence and was so intrigued by it that she

did the course alongside me as my Carer. We both completed the course and I had the chance of a new lease of life. I went on to complete a BTEC in Education and Training which allowed me to become a tutor in the College. It was time for me to give something back.

I started my own Recovery Journey Portfolio and began networking. I was invited to attend a co-production conference in London with other experts by experience to share our story and give our views on the benefits of co-production. After this I was asked to discuss the topic of tackling Stigma on BBC Radio Gloucestershire. I joined the Integrated Accelerator Pilot Project headed by Rebecca Barrow and was asked my views on the new assessment tool carried out by NHS Social Services teams. I was given training on the tool in mock set ups which I found very interesting. This has proved very successful and it is no longer a question of what's wrong with you- its now- what matters to you- that is important. Getting to the core of what is important is vital. This has been proved by the effective use of personal health budgets which in the long run save the NHS from re-admissions to hospital and give the service user a chance to live a fulfilling and independent life. Last year the Integrated Project Team won its place to attend the Spread Academy for training. This is run by the South West Academic Health Science Network in collaboration with renowned US-based change agency The Billions Institute -global leaders in large scale change. Six members of the team were invited to attend and I was asked as an Expert by Experience if I could write a 500-word essay on the importance of Personalisation in the NHS. Following this I was very privileged to be given the opportunity to attend and be part of facilitating team. This has boosted my confidence a lot and I shall be attending the spread Academy again March as the facilitator of the team this time. Since coming back from that event last year, I have chaired a panel of experts by experience in front of 300 guests in the NHS on the subject of personalisation by

sharing stories of our personal journeys. Chris Lubbe- who became Nelson Mandela's private bodyguard after his release from prison also attended this conference and as an inspirational speaker gave his views on personalisation and shared his own personal journey as an activist on Apartheid in South Africa. I am an Ambassador for Action on ACES. I have attended many workshops and meetings in my recovery journey portfolio and am currently sitting on the Mental Health and Well Being Partnership Board and recently am co-chairing with Marieanne Bubb-McGhee Deputy-Service-Director- Hospitals (Operational Management) on the new working group at the Office of Police and Crime Commission to assist and advise on Reducing Reoffending in people with Mental Health problems, Learning Disabilities and Autism. I have also in the past had the privilege to speak in front of the Senior Leadership Network and was part of Facilitating the Values meetings for the Merger between the 2Gether Trust and Gloucester Care Services with Listening being the most predominant Value to be utilised.

So, this is part of my continuing Journey of Recovery so far.

I would also like to say there are many improvements that can be made to help people who experience Mental Health.

- Earlier intervention at the primary health stage for Mental Health
- Permanent experienced mental health nurses at GP surgeries
- Faster response time for those in crisis
- Mental Health Hubs within hospitals especially assisting ED's
- Further recognition of the Recovery College with increase in funding
- Correct psychiatric diagnosis and treatment before hospital discharge
- A good plan of action for those leaving hospital.
- More nurses and doctors and less agency staff.

- More advice and assistance for carers of service users

Any questions please?

Thank you all for listening!!

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