

Supplement 7. Experiences of counselling.

"He was talking about what triggers my major depressive episodes, and it was things like, he was talking about how to recognize the small things that then build into the big things, and how to deal with them and how to recognize them and how to put in place a system of recognizing what I can control and recognizing what I can't. So it was useful in that respect." (p25,M,coun)

"I suppose that I would have liked her to have been a bit tougher. And sort of ask deeper questions, probably. It's always quite awkward I think, because you go there and you know, it's -- and you've got someone sitting opposite you smiling and thinking, well go on, say something, say something. And they're waiting for you to say something. But you don't know what to say. So it felt a bit strange." (p26,M,coun)

"I felt as if I could talk to her openly and maybe try to get to the bottom of things. Just to see if there is something that could get me on the right road sort of thing... I feel as if it did help the first few months. And then things just steadily over the weeks got back to how it was before...when I had my counselling, I'm sure for two or three months afterwards I felt a lot more positive. I was living in my other house then. I was living in H where the town's quite busy. And I'm sure I was doing more and forcing myself to do more... I remember her saying that you've got to try and be more positive and try to take every day as it comes like and try to do different things. And I think it. I know in my mind what I should be doing. But it's just doing it... I sometimes listen to the radio. But it's usually the television if I'm not sleeping. And the television's just on. I'm not particularly watching anything -- it's just on." (p29,M,coun)

"Now I'm happy to put my proper clothes on that match -- as opposed to track suit bottoms and a really grotty t shirt, and not do my makeup and not do my hair. Whereas now I wouldn't dream of going out without having done my hair or my makeup. You know, I've always had my hair short, but I was letting it grow long, because I couldn't even face going to the hairdressers -- that would have been such a challenge." (p32,F,coun)

"She said I was a giver.... which means you give to everybody, but then you don't expect anything back. But she said everybody needs to have something back. You can't keep on giving and giving, because she said, you'll burn yourself out and that's not fair on you, she said, or on your family... [She] would say to me...it's all fallen back on you, hasn't it?... I only live down the road from my parents, and I can't see them struggling... They know that at the end of the day, it's me who's the reliable one, if you like.... She said, why should you have to be the one who's always doing that. Or who's expected to do it."(p33,F,coun)

"Difficult to say... external changes made things a lot easier... a second job... a bit more money... the holiday abroad booked... it was difficult to tell whether it was her counselling that had helped me or the changes in our circumstances that had improved."(p35,F,coun)

"I thought it was helpful. At the time I was on a bit of an even keel, so I didn't really need it that much. But, you know, I still had problems and everything, so I found it really helpful just getting to know my own traits a bit more so that when I do have bad episodes... I don't think I really have changed. I think I feel a bit more insightful into things and maybe a bit more wise... Talking about your life and you know, it's not like he told me what to do and how to feel about things, but just asked the right questions and get you to talk things out in your own head. It's almost like you're having a conversation with yourself, it gives you the right...to think about the right things." (p36,F,coun)

"And I thought well what, you know, what is this all about. I'm not getting anywhere. And then either she said something or I said something and it twigged... And I said to her, I said, it's like defragging a computer. And putting that stuff into little boxes, or into -- and chucking out the stuff that the mind or the computer doesn't want. And as soon as I said that, things started to click into place...I don't know whether it was through trust probably, and seeing the right person, I was able to download, or offload all those things to L and she put it into perspective." (p37,M,coun)

"Before, I'd given up on life and I couldn't see a way forward. What was the point? Because I was physically unable to do anything I wanted to do. But now I look at it more positive." (p42,F,coun)

"I think I'm doing all right. I know I'm hard on myself. I'm very hard on myself... but I'm not doing it consciously. I'm doing it unconsciously. So that is harder to control. Because I'm making decisions on something and not really thinking, I'm just doing it. And thinking, yeah, I can do this. And maybe I don't even know what I'm doing to set the bar... I'm setting the bar and not really thinking about it." (p43,F,coun)

"I think my understanding of myself has changed beyond recognition. Yeah. I would say I'm a lot more self-aware and a lot more -- you know, I do understand myself a lot better than I did a year ago. Not only that, I actually accept myself a lot more than I did a year ago. I can actually say, you know, this is me." (p45,F,coun)

"I don't know, she sort of -- you know when somebody says something and it just actually resonates. And it's a much more real experience. Things click into place, somehow... You know, just putting it into a visual -- just in a way, I don't know, something just clicked. Something that I understood. I think they sort of tapped more into me as a person, and I wasn't just being talked at or... Because sometimes you can talk and you know that you're not connecting on any level and they don't understand you and they're not actually really listening to what you're saying." (p44,F,coun)

"the counselling that I received and my domestic violence support, helped me to understand why I was feeling the way that I was and obviously to, you know, talk about the things that I was experiencing. And get it all off my chest. I'm in a much better place now... They listened. I didn't realize that I needed somebody to talk to.... So having somebody outside of that bubble.... if they needed to give me advice, then a professional, experienced opinion was easier and it would come across differently as well. And they could listen without getting upset... I think it was just having that outside person to possibly shed a tear with, who was not emotionally involved." (p46,F,coun)