

Personal Case Studies – Some of our Successes

MS (42yrs): When MS was first visited, he sat in a darkened room, unable to cope with light and noise. His physical and Cognitive side effects meant that he could not make a simple snack or carry out straightforward tasks. He needed many months of support and Therapy before he was able to go out. We worked alongside the Neuro Occupational and Physio therapists to support him in his recovery. When the Stroke Group was first set up however, he became the first Volunteer for the group.

Together MS and myself went on BBC Wiltshire radio live to promote the group, which in itself was a massive achievement. While at the studio, the presenter, Mark O' Donnell, learnt that MS used to play for England under 21 Rugby Team and asked if MS would become the Rugby Correspondent for BBC Wiltshire Radio. He has since done live interviews throughout the Six Nations and Rugby World Cups, giving his comments before and after each match! This was a huge achievement considering the massive cognitive difficulties MS has following his four Strokes. MS is currently studying Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy, so that he can use his experience to help future Stroke Survivors. He is still a Volunteer for the group.

CJ (64yrs): Following his stroke, CJ had lost the ability to read, write and speak. He spent two years trying to relearn these lost skills and to regain his speech. He became a member of our group and joined in with many of our activities. He has made a remarkable recovery, but it has been a long process. During our last terms' activities he gave a talk and presentation about his hobby as a Beekeeper – what an achievement!

He has now become a Volunteer for the group and produces our Service Leaflet and the monthly Newsletter, singlehandedly!

PJ (48yrs): PJ left hospital with limited mobility in his leg and no movement in his arm. We worked steadily together to set tasks and goals for him to achieve, attending the gym, Stroke Exercise classes and the Stroke group. He has made good progress and has now had his car adapted so that he could return to driving and regain some of his independence. He is someone who is benefitting from the Courses that we are running, learning Computer skills and Digital photography and is taking advantage of the support offered to try to get back to employment. He has recently started Voluntary work in a local Café and has now become a Voluntary Driver for Back On Track – Stroke Rehab Service.

MH (19yrs): MS is the youngest member of our group and had his Stroke aged 17yrs. There is very little for teenage Stroke Survivors in Wiltshire and so the Neuro O.T asked if he could attend our group. He has recently moved into our area and so has few friends and so rarely goes out to anything. My role was access activities that could promote social interaction and opportunities to improve his physical, psychological and cognitive function. A programme was set up so that throughout the week he goes to the gym, attends a Stroke exercise class and comes to the group. I have accessed a golf club to teach him one-armed golf and he is now having weekly golf lessons!

Through attending the group he has made many friends one of whom is now going to learn one-armed golf with him and has offered to drive MH in his newly adapted car.

MHs' speech has greatly improved and he has grown in confidence.

His family have also received a lot of emotional and practical support in their efforts to help their son.

We have linked with the local Learning Curve Service and are looking at suitable Courses that he might be able to do in future. The difficulty for MH, as with so many Stroke Survivors, is that he cannot read and write at the moment and his cognitive damage is such that he does not fully understand the full impact of his Stroke. Sadly MH had hoped to go to University and train to be a Doctor.; this highlights the type of challenges we face through our work in Stroke Rehabilitation.

Over the months we have now progressed and we have been able to get MH Voluntary work at a local Scrapstore where he is learning many new skills. We have worked with him so that he is now able to catch the bus unaided and comes to our Stroke Support group, where he is now a Volunteer. We have enrolled him on various courses including Jamie Oliver Cookery and a 'One Handed Cookery Course' that Back On Track ran for eight of our young men.

JC (42yrs): JC is one of our female Group members. She has had three strokes and has completely lost her ability to speak, which cannot be re-learnt as it is caused by the physical effects of Stroke as opposed to the speech area of the brain being damaged. She had completely given up after her third stroke and had not even allowed Speech Therapists to visit her to work on her swallowing reflex. Her mother read an article about our group and got in touch with me.

After my visit JC agreed to come to the group with her partner – the first thing she has agreed to attend in three years!

She used to sleep all day and watch films all night, but now since attending the group she has new incentive to get up and be part of regular activities.

She attended the computer course along with a Speech Therapy helper and we arranged for her to be given a Communication board so that she can initiate conversation when in the group. This has now been expanded for use at home.

Life for her and her partner has changed dramatically as they now attend all the activities, outings and Social events run by the group.