

GOOD NEWS STORIES

Prevention and Promotion Fund for Better Mental Health – Rotherham

A widow reconnects with people and purpose in the community

Rebecca (name changed) is a 64 years old widow. She recently lost her husband suddenly. He went to work, had a heart attack and never came home. Rebecca is affected by depression and anxiety and she has to take medication that helps her to sleep. She has a mental health worker who phoned us and asked if we could pay a visit to Rebecca for a conversation about how we could help to get back on her feet could help her.

When we spoke to explore what mattered most to Rebecca she said she didn't want to know about craft groups which she said would feel a bit like "going back to the classroom" as she put it. So Age UK Rotherham's Wellbeing Officer suggested her trying some charity work so she could mix more with other people and get back on her feet by doing something useful for others. Rebecca said she felt quite isolated and we got the impression that she doesn't have much of a friendship circle around her who she can socialise with.

Rebecca said she would have a go at Charity work so the next day our Wellbeing Officer, took her to the British Heart Foundation shop in town. She filled out an application form and had an interview there and then. Rebecca started volunteering with them the next week. She does 3 days a week and is thoroughly enjoying the activity after 4 weeks. She says she has met some "shady customers" but gets on well with the staff.

Having originally stated that she would prefer to be self sufficient saying "I can cook my own scran at home", Rebecca has now started going to a nearby lunch club and enjoying the food and friendship on offer.

Rebecca is now also "going back to the classroom" with an arts and crafts group. She is still not feeling 100 percent but with her busier lifestyle she says she doesn't get so much time to "sit and stew" like she did previously. She always says thank you for helping her along in the right direction and she tells me she has now joined

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Maltby Gym.

When we first met Rebecca she was saying she couldn't go on and wanted to "end her own life." 6 weeks on she is moving in the fast lane. What a difference! From this low point and with a little bit of help, Rebecca has begun to piece her life back together and has rediscovered the value of helping others.

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