



**"BEFORE THE RECOVERY COLLEGE,  
I HAD VAST, VAST  
SELF-HATRED**

**I FELT I WAS A BURDEN TO EVERYBODY  
THAT I KNEW. TOO SCARED TO LIVE A LIFE.  
TOO SCARED TO COMMIT SUICIDE.  
A VERY UNPLEASANT PLACE TO BE."**

Phil, Mersey Care Recovery College student

# PHIL'S RECOVERY STORY

"I have a history of substance abuse and addiction, which were my coping mechanisms of not being able to deal with the amount of stress I had in my life. I took huge quantities of cocaine and alcohol, hoping that nobody would realise that I was afraid doing the job I was doing.

The consequences of my lifestyle choice? A trip to a mental institution. I had an inability to cope with life, what life was throwing at me. I had vast, vast self-hatred. Feeling I was a burden to everybody that I knew. Too scared to live a life. Too scared to commit suicide. A very unpleasant place to be.

I got sick of being sick. And nobody else was going to be able to fix me. So when an opportunity like the Mersey Care Recovery College came up, I was fully aware that I had to engage with the process. To have a look at myself. To try and find out what I needed to change and to take steps to do that to have some quality of life.

## **"TODAY? I FEEL LIKE I'M MOVING INSTEAD OF SINKING"**

Today? I'm in a far better place. I don't drink or do drugs any more. I'm not only able to look after myself a little bit more but to look after my mum who has dementia. I have still got a lot of issues but I feel I'm moving in the right direction. I feel like I'm moving instead of sinking. And that movement is really important for me, I feel like I'm making some sort of

progress instead of wallowing. Instead of drowning.

I've been looking at confidence building. Trying to be a bit more assertive. Given my circumstances with my mum, I have some issues putting across where I'm at and what I need from other family members. So I can get the help that I need and some time for myself. So I don't move backwards and get really, really ill again. And being useless, useless for my mum.

I am able to take a step back and look at myself in a slightly better light than I've been able to. I've always been very harsh, very negative with myself. I am learning how to be a bit more positive and kind.

I would probably tell myself that it's a fantastic opportunity to become closer to the person I've always wanted to be. That I would be able to see I'm not an abject failure. Not a monster. That I do have value and worth.

I've been told there are no guarantees and I have to put work in. It stands to reason, no one else, nothing else can fix me. I can be helped and I can be guided. But I have a lot of effort to put in. The people are there to support me pointing out qualities I never realise I had. Without that kind of support and help I don't know where I'd be. At the moment I see the potential for long term investment from me in the Recovery College. It's actually something I'd like to be more involved in. Which I didn't think I'd ever say about it when this started it wasn't on my mind. But it is now."