

· Glasgow City Carers Partnership ·

Carer Service Name – Case Study	
Care Group Referral Pathway Carer Cared For	Mental Health Self referral Self Mary Laura
Background	
<p>Mary is the main carer for her 20-year-old daughter Laura who has a diagnosis of Psychosis and Asperger Syndrome. Laura has been in hospital since 2013 and will not be discharged before she gets a supported accommodation as she is not willing to return to the family home. There had been some dispute around Laura's diagnosis as she has been diagnosed with PTSD previously and the family feel this would explain Laura's behaviours better. Laura absconds from hospital and is found walking along the Clydeside on a regular basis, during one of these incidents Laura disclosed to the Police that she was sexually abused by a neighbour when she was a child; her parents were unaware of this happening at the time and experience tremendous guilt surrounding this.</p> <p>The initial assessment was carried out over 2 sessions due to Mary's high level of distress, it was obvious that she was struggling to cope with the demands of her caring role, she was tearful, extremely anxious, and she was also overcome with feelings of guilt as she blamed herself for not knowing what had happened to Laura. She was having panic attacks on a daily basis which were impacting on her own health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Mary explained that she usually visits her daughter in the hospital twice a day to take her out for a walk and bring her food as Laura did not like the hospital food. Mary admitted that this was time consuming and she was feeling extremely stressed and tired. Mary disclosed that she was sleeping less than 3 hours per night and this exhaustion coupled with her guilt was threatening to overwhelm her. Mary's caring role has had a huge impact on her relationships with others, she had no time for herself, she had become increasingly isolated, lost friendships and rarely spent any time with her husband and other daughter as caring and worrying for Laura took up all of her time. Mary had lost all sense of self and her confidence and self-esteem were at rock bottom and although she knew she needed to make changes in her life she didn't know how to begin or where to turn to for support.</p> <p>Mary informed us that she felt she needed to learn more about Laura's condition and the symptoms as she struggled to understand Laura's actions and behaviours, she wanted to understand her daughter better so she was more able to help her, we talked about training with Mary that was applicable to her needs and Mary felt she was now in a place where she was ready to receive help and support and take the information and advice on board.</p>	
Output: (can list core service/s here eg Info & Advice, Short Break)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to Calm Project for complementary therapies to for relaxation and stress relief • Information and Advice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on My Time Project -on mental health problems and the recovery model • Individual support to discuss boundaries and build resilience within caring role • Emotional Support to encourage taking time for herself/ promote positive wellbeing • Referral to Lifelink for counselling 	

· Glasgow City Carers Partnership ·

- Mental Health First Aid Training
-to inform and be better equipped to care
- Advance Statement Training
- Rights, Recovery and Confidentiality Training
- Coping Skills Group
- Mindfulness Course
- Carers Privilege Card

Outcomes:

- Feeling informed and equipped
- Positive relationships with the cared for and others
- Choices in caring (including limits of caring)
- Satisfaction in caring
- Better quality of life for carer
- Improved health and wellbeing
- A life of her own
- Better sleep and improved health
- Positive relationships with practitioners
- Feeling valued as a partner in care
- Improved skills, confidence and self-esteem
- Reduction in social Isolation

Impact

Mary received 6 weeks of complementary therapies through the Calm Project and chose to have full body massage; she reported a reduction in tension, felt more relaxed and said that she was sleeping much better and without interruption after the 6 week course. As this had had such a positive impact on Mary's health and wellbeing she was given information on the 'My Time' Project within GAMH so that she could continue to purchase the therapies privately. Mary also purchased these sessions for her husband and conveyed that her' sleep and mood have significantly improved'.

Mary was given information on our training calendar and after discussion decided to attend Scottish Mental Health First Aid, Advanced Statement and Rights, Recovery and Confidentiality. Mary said that these were 'excellent, interesting and educational' as well as 'informative and very useful'. Mary now feels more informed about her daughter's condition and feels that this makes a huge difference in the way she communicates with Laura, reacts to Laura and how she feels when Laura's mental health fluctuates. She stated that her own attitude to mental health has now changed as she has a different perspective and level of understanding. Mary also feels that she can have more positive relationship with the hospital staff as she feels more confident in expressing her opinions and concerns but also is aware of the limitations of confidentiality. Training has allowed Mary to gain confidence in her caring and doing the training with other mental health carers has let her feel more positive about herself and has reduced her sense of isolation.

· Glasgow City Carers Partnership ·

As Mary had benefitted from the peer support within training she was encouraged to join our Coping Skills group so she could meet new people and get different points of view on how to cope with the various challenging elements of mental health caring. This has had a positive impact on Mary as it gave her an opportunity to meet other people in similar caring roles and share experiences in what she described 'as supportive and non-judgemental environment' adding that she had learned new coping strategies within caring. She said she now felt less isolated as she now knows she isn't alone in struggling with Laura's condition.

Mary received individual support designed around building her resilience to the emotional impact of caring and promoting her own wellbeing. Due to this Mary now has put boundaries in place in regards to how much time she spends at the hospital and her husband and other daughter take turns with Mary to allow her time for herself without feeling guilt. This has allowed them to adopt a whole family approach in supporting Laura instead of all of the pressure being on Mary and has resulted in better relationships between all of them.

Mary completed our 8 week course in Mindfulness and has expressed the hugely positive effect this has had on her life. She particularly felt that the self affirming chant was extremely powerful in helping her to change the way she feels about herself and her perspective on life, Mary uses the skills she learned in the course every day and this has helped her get her panic attacks under control without the aid of medication and her quality of sleep is much better. Mary has said 'she is now smiling' where she had been unable to see the positives in her life she can now appreciate the good things, however small.

Reflective learning from the case that could inform service development.

Attending mental health carers group has had a positive impact on Mary's life she has made friends and she feels less isolated. She has something to look forward to, and this has helped her to cope better with her caring role. She has found a place where she can learn new things and share experiences openly without feeling judged'. There is still a social stigma surrounding mental health, meeting other carers in similar caring situation can make a difference. 'I think I waited too long to join this kind of group'