

Project: 'Reflections of trauma, challenges, and healing: An oral history'

Respondent: Amanda

Year of Birth: 1997

Age: xxx

Connection to project: Respondent

Date of Interview: The 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2022

Interviewer: Indira Pole

Recording Agreement: Yes

Information & Consent: Yes

Photographic Images: No

Length of Interview: 21 minutes and 31 seconds

Location of Interview: Kirkintilloch

Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)





Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.27	Interviewer asks the respondent where she was born, year of birth, where she grew up.	
0.41	Respondent replies that she was born in 1997 in Bellshill but has always lived in Kirkintilloch.	
1.09	Interviewer asks the respondent to relate any childhood memories to her.	
1.18-	Respondent talks about her teddy bear Ted that went everywhere with her.	
2.47	Interviewer asks the respondent if there is anything else she would like to say about her childhood.	
2.51	Respondent replies that she was a very quiet child and that she didn't have many friends and that she struggled a bit socially. She says that her relationship was ok with her parents in the early years. That they could stress her out sometimes but they were obviously just doing it out of love.	
3.35	Interviewer asks the respondent about school friends and teachers.	
3.42	Respondent replies that she didn't really have any school friends until she was older. She says her teachers were ok. She says that as a teenager she got more friends but was never super social.	
	"I threw myself into...I think because I was quite quiet, I think when I reached secondary school I just threw myself into, like, studying, because that was just my way of like coping with things."	4.24-4.39
4.45	Interviewer asks the respondent about going to university.	
	"University...this is going to sound a bit geeky. But, actually, I got a lot from going to university. I studied immunology and pharmacology and I was really interested in that sort of thing. I also finally made some really good friends who...I would say they were actually quite close friends. And they know...and we have a lot more in common. So, sometimes, we would, you know, after lectures we would meet up, go for dinner or we'd go to the union and play pool. So, that was a nicer part of it. Although uni is always stressful. And there was challenges, you know, because I struggle with my mental health and I had to go from full-time to a part-time student. But I still got there in the end and it gave me a sense of	5.02-5.50

	purpose.”	
5.51	Interviewer asks the respondent what qualifications she achieved.	
	“Well, I actually can’t believe it. I wasn’t intending to do this well but I ended up getting a first class Honours degree. So, that was just...I guess that was nice to feel that I’ve actually worked really hard.”	5.57-6.10
6.11	Interviewer asks the respondent if she thinks this is going to help her build confidence for her future life.	
	“Definitely, I will be honest I do lack a lot of confidence and self-esteem. If I, for example, every time I thought I’d failed at something. I wouldn’t be as far as I am. So, I do still need to remind myself of what I have achieved. Yeah, things may be tough but I need to use my success at uni and remind myself that I can do things even when I don’t think I can. Yeah, in honest truth I wouldn’t say it’s all positive and I still have really negative times but I know that I need to try and remind myself of that a little bit more than what I do.”	6.20-7.01
7.02	Interviewer asks the respondent about her success.	
	“Well, successful on the outside I guess. But there was a lot that was going on that people didn’t know, if you know what I mean. It was hard.”	7.14-7.21
7.25	Interviewer asks if the suffering inside the respondent’s mind was trauma in her opinion.	
7.44	Respondent replies that there was a lot that went on that she doesn’t feel comfortable sharing the specifics of and that being quiet probably made her more of a target. She says she didn’t realise that she had been through traumatic experiences as a child until she was an adult as she just thought what she went through was normal.	
8.38	Interviewer asks the respondent if there is any particular trauma that affected her.	
	“I’ll be blatantly honest and say I’ve really struggled to be an adult and I’ve ended up struggling really badly with my mental health. And, you know, getting involved in services. And I think it’s a cumulative thing. It’s very hard because I’ve had lots of little things happen. But over time that’s just kind of built up and made me who I am today. And, obviously, my mental health led me to some very dark places that actually caused additional trauma on top of that as well. So, that probably didn’t help either. I would just say that without being too descriptive, I’ve been in some pretty dark places with my mental health. And I’ve had some difficult experiences with... Not all health care workers but a few have said things. I’ve had traumatic experiences with being in A&E and things like that. And that’s been quite hard in itself to be honest with you.”	9.27-10.47
10.51	Interviewer asks the respondent how her trauma has affected her health.	
	“Obviously, I’ve described that I do have a mental health condition. And I do see mental health services for that. But I will be honest my mental health will have had an effect on my physical health. Because as I’ve described certain circumstances due to my mental health can cause physical health repercussions. Additionally, I do tend to experience minor symptoms quite a lot. Such as headaches, tiredness. I think it’s, you know, I get quite bad anxiety. I get palpitations a lot. So, it does kind of affect me physically as well. But, I know that it’s, obviously, stemming from mental health related reasons.”	11.01-11.44
11.45	Interviewer asks the respondent if her physical symptoms stop her from socialising.	
	“Yeah, it does because you already don’t have enough reason to get up and do things when you’re low. But when you’ve also got a really bad	11.58-12.17

	headache, or something, for example. Then it's just more reason to just like hide away rather than go out there."	
12.18	Interviewer asks the respondent about what support she has from health professionals and other support that she has.	
	"I have a CPN, Community Psychiatric Nurse and a psychiatrist. That's my professional kind of side. And...But additionally I have more of a social support system at this charity called GRACE."	12.35-12.52
12.55	Interviewer asks the respondent if her main support comes from the NHS.	
13.01	Respondent says she would say so but that she also gets a lot of support from GRACE as well.	
13.07	Interviewer asks the respondent about GRACE.	
	"I don't even know how to explain. Like, I wouldn't know where I would be now without it. Things are still tough but they could be a lot tougher if I didn't have GRACE."	13.12-13.26
13.27	Interviewer asks the respondent about the first time she came to GRACE.	
	"Actually, it's a bit of a strange story. I was initially looking for voluntary work to try and keep my mind occupied. Like giving myself something to keep my mental health going but at the same time not overloading me. So, I went to East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action. But obviously explained when I went that I might have certain limitations. Cause I've got a lot going on with my mental health. And it was actually them that suggested that I come to GRACE. And I remember the first time I came to GRACE. I'd actually arranged to meet somebody. A lady at EDVA. So, she met me outside GRACE and we went in together. I wouldn't of known that would be the start of my GRACE journey but that was."	13.32-14.13
14.15	Interviewer asks the respondent what age she was at that time.	
14.16	Respondent replies that she was 19 at the time.	
14.29	Interviewer asks the respondent what her memory of the first few days at GRACE was like.	
	"I'll be honest. It was very scary at first. I think it was made a bit easier by the fact that people were really nice and came to me. Cos I struggle to...I struggle to initiate with people. But when people come to you, which obviously is GRACE... When a new member comes, everyone...Like, not everyone but there's always somebody that comes and gets to know you a wee bit. And it makes it a bit easier. Like...And it's just a sort of...It's a gradual process. It wasn't. sort of overnight. But now I couldn't imagine life without it."	14.35-15.09
15.10	Interviewer asks about the positive effects of GRACE on the respondent's life.	
	"I think there's more the one positive effect GRACE has had in various areas. For one, it's gave me a safe space to be who I am on that day. Because I'm quite a person that I'm use to hiding things and not admitting when I'm really struggling. Whereas if I come into GRACE. I didn't have to say I was struggling but I didn't have to put on this fake smile and pretend that everything was ok. So that was really good for me. It was my outlet. Also, I would be quite isolated without GRACE. Like, I wouldn't really see many people. I know I have a few friends but people have a lot on and I don't really get to see people that often. And they're kind of like a family to me. And also...It was also a sense of purpose as well. Because taking part in these activities really helped me. And it gave me something...A reason to get up in the morning. Something to, you know, at times look forward to. And it's not always doom and gloom at	15.11-16.27

	GRACE. We always have a laugh and that can be a good medicine as well. You know.”	
16.28	Interviewer asks the respondent about volunteering at GRACE.	
	“I am registered as a volunteer. At the moment I am having a slight break. But I...Initially when I started volunteering at GRACE...I didn't start volunteering until quite a while after becoming a member. I used to help set up the badminton. It was prior to Covid. I'm hoping to go back to doing more volunteering at GRACE. But, either way I'm always going to be there even as a member if not a volunteer.”	16.37-17.02
17.03	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has been at GRACE for several years.	
17.11	Respondent says that time has flown in at GRACE	
17.23	Interviewer asks the respondent if GRACE will be in her life for the future.	
	“I still need GRACE now because in honest truth things are quite tough. Also, my life's drastically changed. I'm no longer a student but I'm not stable enough for work. So, I'm in this sort of...I need something to keep me going but I'm not ready for a lot. So, GRACE, you know, It gets me out doing things. Meeting people. A lot of my frie..I have some close friends but I've hardly seen any friends. Like, not really this year. And without it I would just really be quite isolated. So, it gives me some social interaction which is obviously important for your well-being. It's also about, you know, when I have tough times I've got a safe place to go. A place that, you know...I can just go and be myself, take part. I find it a lot easier to sometimes, when I'm struggling, take part in a group setting with other people. Rather than just doing things in my own flat. So, it is a bit of a distraction. It gets me out so I'm not sitting about all the time and things.”	17.34-18.48
18.49	Interviewer asked the respondent if coming to GRACE has changed her.	
	“Yes, I would definitely say so, because, put it this way, as I mentioned earlier on I was a very, very quiet child. I'm still quite a quiet person believe it or not. Even though my fellow members might not believe that. But I'm a lot more...I'm not entirely confident and I'm not always socially confident. But I'm a lot more sociable now that I've been in GRACE. It's really...It's helped me get to...It's helped me learn a lot of the things that maybe I couldn't learn...I should of learned when I was younger.”	18.54-19.30
19.31	Interviewer asks the respondent if she believes that confidence is an important tool for building a future.	
	“Definitely, I wouldn't say I'm entirely confident now. But I do believe that because without it my anxiety would get really bad and I would just avoid situations which has been a theme for myself. So, I do believe it's important otherwise I wouldn't...You know, and confidence is really important. Because it's not just about your mental health. It's also about people...I know I'm not ready for a job...How you go out and get a job. You have to have confidence in yourself. You get up in the morning. It just affects everything.”	19.51-20.29
20.30	Interviewer asks the respondent if she believes that she is more confident than she was when she was younger.	
	“Definitely, As I said, I wouldn't say I'm super confident now but if you met me when I was a child you'd probably see a big difference. (laughs).”	20.35-20.46
20.47	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has hope of her confidence improving in time.	
	“As I said, it's sometimes hard to see. And I guess I'm still focused on the near future. I'm still not able to look too far ahead, but in the near future	21.05-21.28

	I do hope that that will improve with the help of various things. And particularly GRACE.”	
	Interviewer thanks the respondent for her contribution to the project.	
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