

Project: **'Reflections of trauma, challenges, and healing: An oral history'**
 Respondent: Mary Smith
 Year of Birth:
 Age: 74
 Connection to project: Respondent
 Date of Interview: 26th of May 2022
 Interviewer: Judith Gaertner
 Recording Agreement: Yes
 Information & Consent: No
 Photographic Images: No
 Length of Interview: 1 hr 5 mins and 51 seconds-written only.
 Location of Interview: East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action
 Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.49	Interviewer asks the respondent where she was born.	
	"I was born in Fort William in the highlands and I grew up there and I went to school there and I spent the first seventeen years of my life in Fort William. I went nursing in Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin. Then I got pregnant and became an unmarried mother and went back to Fort William."	0.51-1.14
1.31	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has any distinct childhood memories.	
	"Oh, lots of memories. I grew up in a small cottage in a glen. My father was a gardener. He loved gardening and we had a beautiful garden. And I love gardening as well. He was also a water bailey (?). He used to catch lots of fish. Salmon fish. My mother was a lollipop lady. She used to take kids across the road. That was what she did. She was a very bright woman. A very clever woman. They then acquired the field and ran a camping site, which gave them quite a lot of money. So, I grew up there with one brother. I have a brother Donald who when he was seventeen didn't get a job in Fort William so he went to Canada working for the Hudson Bay Company. And married an Inuit woman and is still over there. So, that's my family. My mother was English she was from Lancashire. My father was from Kintallon, Ballachulish. There was a war on and they met in Blackpool they tell me. Yes, that's it. That's the romance."	1.40-2.49
2.51	Interviewer asks the respondent what brought her to the Glasgow area and when.	
	"We came to Glasgow. Moved to Lennoxtown. Oh, I think it must have been about forty years ago. It was my husband's job. So, that's what brought us to Glasgow. And, also, I came down and I got a job as well. I was working down here in Glasgow. I was working at the epilepsy centre over at quarries homes for many years. Then decided to get myself a qualification so I got myself a CQSW (Certificate of Qualification in Social Work) The social work qualification. And mainly I worked in Glasgow. Yes, it was predominantly in Glasgow. Somewhere along the line I got an honours degree at Paisley Tech and a careers guidance diploma. In between all that."	2.57-3.41

3.48	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has a job at the moment.	
	"I've retired ten years and loving it. But when I did retire I did some voluntary work for the care foundation and for the holiday fund. And now I do work for the Lowland Canal Association. Because I'm interested in canals. So, I do the chairperson in the Lowland Canal Association and help with the ramblers. Leading some walks for the Strathkelvin Ramblers. And that keeps me busy."	3.50-4.19
4.28	Interviewer asks the respondent how long she was a social worker for.	
	"More than I can remember. I think I qualified in 1988 and worked since then as a social worker. Well, we started off in social work generic. That meant you covered everything. So, you'd do the granny's assessment. You'd do dad's prison report and you'd do mum's pre-birth. Then shortly after that they went into specialisms. So I did some work in the intake team which just specialised in things coming in. Then I moved to the child protection team and family team and that's where I worked for most of my years."	4.34-5.05
5.08	Interviewer asks the respondent when she retired.	
	"Ten years ago. Yeah, sixty five. It was getting to the stage where the people that I'd done a pre-birth on were now coming with their children. Teenage mums. And I thought-It's time to get out. But I did enjoy my work in social work. I was a shop steward. So, I did a lot of representing of people through Unison and disciplines and things. So, that was very good. And I was the safety rep, so I was able to do other things to help people. So, I did other things that were interesting within the job. I also got lots of training that I enjoyed."	5.10-5.50
5.58	Interviewer asks the respondent to tell her what defines who she is.	
	"Well, I imagine what defines me is my cultural upbringing. My parents. Whether I'm healthy or not. And I would say my life experiences. I suppose those four make up what generates your values and interests. I've probably missed something but that's about the gen of it."	6.06-6.24
6.38	Interviewer asks the respondent what her understanding of the word trauma is.	
	"That's a difficult one. Cause, often a trauma can mean...It's like a crisis. Similarly it can mean different things to different people. A woman who has no money and loses her purse. That's a crisis. A trauma is usually a kind of experience that's out with your normal experience. So, very difficult for you to cope with. And certainly in my work. If I removed a child or a baby from a mother. It would be a traumatic experience for the mother. I've had traumatic experience in my own life. So, can identify with how it affects people. So, traumatic experience can be any experience out with your normal range of experience. Like it could be a threat of violence. It could be somebody with a gun. It could be a war-torn situation. It could be anything that affects you incredibly negatively and you find it very, very hard to cope with. It's a broad spectrum. But, it, basically, impacts seriously on people's ability to cope with their everyday life I would think. Well. I know that's the case. "	6.44-7.54
7.59	Interviewer asks the respondent how she thinks that trauma affects people in the long-term.	
	"Well my personal...It affected me. For a whole week I couldn't eat. Then I was numb for a fortnight. Then the feelings came in and I couldn't cope with everyday life. For four months I was off work. So, it, kind of, impacts with your whole ability to deal with day to day effects. It impacts on closing down a lot of your emotions. It also opens up a lot of things. So, a	8.06-8.44

	complete range of things but, basically, it's your inability to cope with everyday things. And you need help. You can't do it on your own. You really can't."	
8.45	Interviewer asks the respondent if she wants to talk at all about her trauma.	
	"Well, if it helps. Yes, that's fine. Yes I had a beautiful daughter. She had an honours degree. She married a nice French man. She had a lovely flat. She had a job she liked doing. She wanted the world to be perfect. It wasn't perfect. She didn't take drugs. She didn't take alcohol. She left a lovely little note and she threw herself out a high rise flat and killed herself. So that's my traumatic experience."	8.54-9.18
9.20	Interviewer asks the respondent when that happened.	
	"Fifteen years ago."	9.21-9.22
9.41	Interviewer asks the respondent to tell her about what has happened since then.	
	"So, since then...After that happened I didn't know what to do. So my husband took me to the doctor. The doctor said. No, actually what happened was the social work department said-we can get you a counsellor. It was almost immediately. The social work department had a counselling service. They put me in touch with the counselling service. The woman that I spoke to said. 'You're very lucky that you got a letter from your daughter.' And I said. 'I'm terminating this interview because I did not consider this a lucky matter. I don't think you're able to counsel properly.' And I'd also...prior to all this I'd done the trauma counselling myself. So, I was a recognised trauma counsellor. I did ordinary counselling for people with HIV and things. But I also did traumatic counselling. So, it was the triggers that you hit. The senses and things and I just said-'you're not qualified to do this.' So, I didn't...I just said to my boss-'I don't want this.' So the next thing was I saw the doctor (GP) and he said-'Well, do you want me to put you on medication?' And he said-'I can give you some sleeping tablets for two nights.' And so just numb, nothing's there. And he said-'I'm not putting you on any tranquillisers or anything because at the end of the day you still have to face what's happened.' I thought he was a heartless bastard at the time. But now I think he was absolutely spot on. He was absolutely right. What he was saying was-'I'm not putting you on tranquillisers and sedatives because that will only numb what is going to happen. You will still have to face...You have to go through the whole process. And I can numb you down and dumb you down as long as you like. But at the end of the day you have to deal with it. So, I then went to the doctor. Actually, I didn't do any of this. My husband took me to these places. And I went to the doctor and he said-'Well, I can put you in touch with Cruse but they don't usually take you until after six months.' However, the doctor said. Well, he knew the family. He knew my daughter. He knew me. And he said-'I can get somebody now. To deal with what you're feeling just now .So, I went to Cruse. There was a really good counsellor in Cruse in the High Street in Kirkintilloch and she specialised in suicides and she'd lost her brother. So I was able to talk to her about it. So I got counselling there for I can't remember how long. Because when things like that hit you. Time doesn't mean anything. You know, just time's not there. So, I don't know how long that went on. And then I listened to thousands of comments that people were saying. I went to the library. I got every book on death and dying. Read every book on death and dying. Cause I wanted to try and understand where we were and why this had all happened. So I was	9.44-15.03

	<p>trying to get an understanding of it. Actually, when I put the car into the garage and I met my mechanic and I was talking to him and his son had been found hanging in the bedroom. He'd taken drugs and hung himself a few years before. And I hadn't been aware of this. I was just talking to him and he said-'Is Abi bringing her car in?' and I said 'No, Abi's dead.' and he said 'Oh, I'm sorry 'and, you know, people say these things. And, so, I started talking and he said to me-'Whatever they tell you. Time will not make this go way. Nothing will make this any better unless...The only way that you can cope is that you learn to cope with living with it. That's how it works and anybody that tells you it will be fine in two years' time or anything like that. It's mince. It's not going to work. He said 'You're hard to deal with it now. Coping with it is the only way it will work. He said 'Coping with it. You'll go ten days and everything is fine. And you'll see a girl that looks like Abigail and you'll burst into tears. You'll hear a bit of music. There'll be something. So, my garage mechanic gave me the best advice anybody had given me because he said that's what I have to do. He'd been there he'd gone through it all. And I still get my cars done there. Even now. He and his wife yeah. I go over with wee presents every time I get the cars in. 'Hullo!' So, we shared, and he was the one that was down to earth. Cause lots of people come out with the most absurd things. And you think-that's crazy. Why say that? Somebody said-'Oh, I thought it was your other daughter. She's a bit highly strung.' I mean you've no idea some of the silly things people said. So, that is how I coped with it. "</p> <p>"I then have a big board in the house all about her. Pictures from her babyhood up. Just to celebrate her life. So, I've got one of those in the office. I scattered her ashes up in Ben A'an and I've got some of her ashes in the garden. And I've always got flowers beside that. And I wrote a story and dedicated it to her. A story that I thought she'd like."</p>	15.06-15.33
15.35	Interviewer asks the respondent if she said she had other children. She also asks the respondent if the priest helped her.	
	"I have another two daughters. I had three daughters altogether. One's in Australia. Well, she's coming back next month. I just paid for her flights today."	15.36-15.51
	<p>"So, I suppose, really, it's not been a case of how you deal with it. It's a case of...Oh, and I've gone to a priest. And my friend up in Fort William said come up and I went up to see my friend that I've had since school days, Norma. Went to see her and she took me round to see a priest. And we talked it out with the priest. I'm not a Catholic. I'm not a Protestant. Well. Yes, he kind of amused me in some ways. He said-'Yes, the thing about this, if I do any good god gets the credit. If I do anything wrong I get the blame.'" I said (laughs)-'That's very much like being in social work. Not really, because organised religion does not really have a lot of hold over me. For example, my husband's brother is a minister in a church. It's one of these English churches like the Calvin church. And when I phoned him and he said-'Oh, you need to look on god as a foster carer that's looking after your daughter till you get there.' And I said-'Thanks very much. I've place kids in foster care and they've been abused.' Which was pretty sharp and nasty of me but I thought at the time it was a silly comment to make. But they had no children. But as I said the person that helped me most was the garage guy. Cause he sat there and said-It will not go away. It will not get better. It's how you learn to cope with it."</p>	15.54-17.19

	Interviewer asks the respondent how long after what happened she talked to the garage mechanic. She also asks how things developed over time with her grief.	
	<p>"It was at least nine months."</p> <p>"Well, for the first four months I was completely unaware of a lot of things. I can honestly say I was off my head and I should have been locked up in a loony bin. Cause I couldn't cope with anything."</p>	<p>17.24-17.25</p> <p>17.33-17.43</p>
17.44	Interviewer asks the respondent if everything seemed unreal-meaning the rest of the world.	
	<p>"Unfortunately, it was very real. The realness was the worst part of it. Well, the rest of the world. Well, as I said, I didn't eat for a week. So, my husband was pushing me to eat. Then, I would just sit and cry all the time. Cry, cry cry, Then you have the funeral. You have to do...all the things that take place there. So, you go through that process. But it's...I can honestly say for about the first five months I was unable to cope with generally just life. Then I went back to work and people didn't know what to say but they gradually phased me in. And I liked the people that just gave me a wee touch and said-'missed you'. And that was the best. You know, I didn't want a dollop of sympathy. So, as the years went by a lot of people have forgotten all about it. And people, generally, if I meet new people and they don't know about it. They treat me like I'm an ordinary person. But, if people know about it or I say anything about it. They kind of look at you as if they're really sorry for you. And I don't like that. So, I don't tell people about it. Or sometimes people ask and they say-how many kids have you got?' and I say-I've had three. But yes I won't deny that I've had her. And they'll-what happened and I'll say 'she died' and they'll say-'how did she die?' and I'll say. 'Why did you need to know that?' And that shuts them up. Cause people-Oh, wait a minute, that's insensitive. So, I don't deny it but I don't discuss it. And generally I don't...I talk to my family about it and we celebrate her birthday, we celebrate her death day. We celebrate lots of things about her. But, we... It's just the family. We don't make it anything bigger than that."</p>	17.48-19.41
19.46	Interviewer asks the respondent about the effects on her family.	
	<p>"Oh, devastating. Yeah, devastating. Well, my husband isn't the father of this child. I've been married twice. So, that's why he was able to be much more supportive. But her father. He and I were both completely destroyed. She was the apple of our eye. She was wonderful. And the girls. The other two girls were completely gutted. Completely shocked. I couldn't offer them any help. They were ten years older cause I'd had them by my first husband and Abigail was by my second. So, the way that panned out. That's the way it worked. So, they were completely gutted and I couldn't do much to help them. I mean there's nothing you can do to make it better. There's nothing you can do to change it. It's just the way it is."</p> <p>I think you try and seek answers. Could I have done anything different? Was there any signs there? Was it an impulsive thing? You look for something. At the end of the day that you can't bring her back. And she knew what she was doing she was very well organised. A bit like myself. She's too well organised. So she left a note. She had all her clothes clean. She had everything laid out. Where it was going to go. What was going to happen. She had her will all written out. It wasn't an impulsive thing. She'd thought this through very, very carefully. And I knew there was something wrong. And I kept saying-'You've lost your sparkle,' And she</p>	<p>19.47-20.44</p> <p>20.56-22.36</p>

	<p>kept saying. 'But I'm anaemic Mum. It's my periods.' And I'd give her the iron tablets and say-'there you go that'll help things.' But it's because it's such a horrendous thing you don't see it. I mean if it was a client I might of seen it. I might of seen something coming. It's very different when it's your family. Cause you're almost too close to the mirror. You can't really see. So you just deal with it as best you can and take what positives you can out of it. So, if I meet anybody that's had this kind of experience. I find it easy to...Not tell them about mine because that wouldn't be why I would be there. But to say to somebody, you know. Ask the right questions. Not say something stupid. Cause a lot of people say stupid things. Like-Oh, you'll get over this and you'll do this. You, know they come up with some silly ideas. Cause they've not had it. They haven't had the experience. You can't start...People all start at different places and they all end up at different places. So that's... that's it."</p>	
22.40	Interviewer asks the respondent about support from friends	-
	<p>"Oh yeah. Friends and colleagues were wonderful. One of the most amazing...And this is one of the most humbling things I've ever experienced in my life. I have friends Jimmy and Joyce from Dumfries. He was best man at both weddings which just shows how long I've known them. And Joyce had a kidney and liver transplant. So she's had a lot of health problems. So, when this happened she turned up at my house to look after me. With her, you know, the kidney machine. Just to come up and look after me. And that was one of the most humbling things anybody has ever done. I couldn't...I still can't get over that. I'm still very moved by that gesture of what they did. They turned up and they said-'No, we were at the wedding, and we are going to be here for you and we're going to stay for a week. And what they did. And I didn't organise it. My husband organised it. It was a rota of people that were staying. Because there was...I didn't think I was feeling suicidal. I thought I just wanted to go after Abigail and look after her. Because in my mind that's what I was seeing. I shall go after her and look after her. But other people were seeing that as-she's thinking of killing herself. I wasn't... Yes, I wasn't actually planning how to kill myself. I just thought-I need to go and look after her. I've looked after her all her life. So, there was a long list of friends and relatives that appeared at the door and I was glad to see the back of them really because I just wanted to be on my own quite a lot of the time to try and make sense of some of it. And then when I went back to work people were very, very good. Boss was fine. He said - 'do as much work as you can.' He said-'Is there anything you can't do. I said-'I cannot go up in a lift. I can't go in a high rise flat. I just can't do that.' People at work were very, very good. And of course Neil's work sent big bouquets of flowers. Lots of bouquets of flowers. Lots of cards and things. But they didn't really mean much. They were nice and they were thoughtful and they were kind. But it didn't actually help you feel that much better. It was nice to hear people say they knew her and what they thought of her. So from that respect it was nice. So, people are really helpful and kind. Or, they were in my case. I was lucky."</p>	22.44-25.10
25.12	Interviewer asks the respondent if she feels that some people helped her more than others.	
	<p>"The garage mechanic. Best of the whole lot, Sat down and told me-this is what I felt. And that's what you'll feel and this is how long it will last. And at the end of the day-That's it."</p> <p>"But it was nice... Friends and family, It was nice that they helped. And as I said Jimmy and Joyce. I was incredibly moved by their action. I've never</p>	<p>25.19-25.29</p> <p>25.40-26.28</p>

	<p>heard of anybody being that kind. Cause when she was in Edinburgh getting her kidney and liver transplant. She was a poor soul and I thought she was going to die. She had like a jaundice appearance. Obviously with her liver. And her skin was all drawn in and I wouldn't have given much for her chances. Six months later she's a new woman. She's come through a major operation. And then they're away back down in Dumfries and when they heard about this they came up to look after me. So, I was very, very moved by that gesture. But other people were incredibly kind as well. But, I also got stupid comments from other people."</p>	
26.32	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent if she feels that relationships with friends changed.</p>	
	<p>"Not really. I don't think they have."</p>	26.35-26.38
26.40	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent if people would avoid her because they didn't know what to say.</p>	
	<p>"Yes, I think there were a couple of people that were like that. I'm trying to think. Let me think. People who would normally come and say-hello, how are you, would kind of body swerve you. But nobody within, what I would call, my inner circle of friends and my inner circle of family ever did that. But there were some people who were uncomfortable about it. And they were clearly uncomfortable. But I just, you know... The people that were like that were not people that were important in my life. So it didn't matter. My friends and family were all incredibly supportive. And that's the ones you want. The ones that are closest to you. And my husband didn't know what to do. As he said-'I didn't know what to do. I was just there and gave you your dinner. And just waited and waited until things improved. And then, there's no point in saying at what point did the change...I don't know. But at some point, one day I thought-wait a minute, I feel slightly happy today. Then, next week, I feel happy all morning. And then something made me happy. And then gradually over I don't know how long a period of time. But it took a long time before I kind of adopted the-life has really got a lot to offer. And there's a lot of things in life that are wonderful and I'm not going to define myself by Abi's decision. She said it was the right thing for her. She said it's what she wanted to do. I must respect that even if I don't agree with it. And I thought how ironic it was cause I did the mental health ticket. Didn't pass that one. But when it came to the suicide bit, before she killed herself. I used to say-Well; I think people have the right to do that. You have the right to self-determine. And I was giving them social work jargon. What a load of bloody mince. Because when it happens it's not like that at all. But I remember saying-No, people have the right to that. If they want to do that that's their right."</p>	26.50-28.36
28.37	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent if she felt people had the right to commit suicide when it happened in her family.</p>	
	<p>"No, certainly not. But at the time that's...When you're doing the mental health ticket that's what comes up. And I mean it might be right for some people. It was obviously right for her. I just thought it was quite ironic. There's a certain irony there that I'm getting trained to say-you have the right to commit suicide and then when it happens to my family I go-well., wait a minute it's not right. Because when you're hearing something theoretically you don't see all the intended and unintended consequences of somebody's action when they commit suicide. Because it's like a pebble in a pond. The ripples go out. I wasn't aware of just how</p>	28.38-29.52

	<p>badly the other two girls were suffering until much later. Because you just. You get into a wee...Like a little bubble. Lock yourself away. Close yourself down. Keep yourself safe. Away from it all. So, I wasn't aware of that until afterwards. A long time afterwards. And they said-Mum, you know, that was the case. No, I didn't. But as I say we are all still together. And they're all still supportive."</p> <p>"I mean I needed to be told to get up and go to the toilet. Go for a drink. What I did notice was a degree of susceptibility. For example. Just a wee example was one of my friends said-'Do you want to go for a coffee.' And we met at Milngavie garden centre and went for a coffee. And we were looking at clothes and she went-'Oh that's a lovely dress, it would suit you.' And I went-'I'll buy it.' Got, it home, didn't like it. And I thought-I am very vulnerable to susceptibility. Suggestions. If people are making suggestions normally I would say no. I don't know why it was like that just I noticed that was one thing that was happening. So, after getting three articles that I didn't particularly want. I thought I'm not going shopping again. I'll go for a coffee but not go shopping. I was aware that I was susceptible to it. I never thought that would happen but it did. It was one of the things I noticed. Strange isn't it? What you remember. I think you shut down from thinking and you let other people make your decisions for you. Well, it's because you're not able to make them And also you're aware of your husband saying-'eat your dinner' and 'alright, I'll eat my dinner.' 'Do you want this?' 'I don't care?' Poor decisions. You make poor decisions. Buying the dress I was out with somebody and I thought-yeah, buy a dress, buy this. I don't even like it. Makes me look fatter than usual. But that's further down the line. At the time your head is in a very strange place."</p>	30.05-31.51
31.54	Interviewer asks the respondent if she got any professional help.	
	<p>"The doctor helped me and I got the counsellor. They were excellent yes. Some of the suggestions I got was that I should go to yoga. That was partly to do with having breathing problems. I picked up some bug in New Zealand and couldn't breathe properly. And somebody said-go and do Dru Yoga and meditation. So, I do that. Breathing and meditation. I found that helped. Quite a lot. So, that helped. So, I do that. But I still do that. Still on going. And somebody suggested you go walking and things. So, I walked before. So, I'm still doing walking. But it was...I stopped doing a lot of things I liked doing and it was getting back to that. Things that I enjoyed before. Like I used to enjoy Ceilidh dancing. I stopped dancing. And then it was slowly getting back to that. Getting back to enjoying music. Getting back to meeting people. Getting back to. I mean we now lead walks for the Strathkelvin Ramblers. So, taking out a group. It's quite a responsible thing to do. So that's...It's these kind of things. It's building positive thing into your life and trying to build your life back up again."</p> <p>"So, that's how I kind of came round to GRACE, cause I was going to the yoga on Tuesday. Nan, Nan Marshall. And Nan was brilliant. She was an absolute, real caring person. And I went and she was. Even before she left I was finding Tuesday was not a good day. And somebody says-there's one on on Friday. It was Shirley. Shirley phoned me up and said-Oh, there's a yoga on Friday. I think you'd like it. So, I thought I'll go along and that's how I went to GRACE. And then Grace said-Oh, you know there's Rikki here and he's very good at teaching computers. And I said-'Well. My husband's a pain in the arse when it comes to the</p>	31.57-33.30 33.33-34.39

	computers. Cause he keeps taking it off me and saying-‘I’ll do it.’ And it disempowers me. And I end up being totally confused. So I started...That’s how I kind of linked into here. And then Rachel came into one of the yoga classes and said she was looking for some volunteers for something. And I thought I’m happy to do that. So, that’s why I’m here.”	
34.40	Interviewer asks the respondent if she is volunteering for GRACE.	
	<p>“No, I don’t think I’m volunteering for GRACE. Nobody’s asked me to. Well I saw it as. Well, there is a girl that’s volunteering for GRACE and I had led several walks on Thursdays round Kirkintilloch and written them up. The story of the walk, where you go and how long it is. And I gave her that. So I said-‘There’s a programme of walks and there’s treasure trails round Kirkintilloch. So, I’ve given one of the volunteers several walks that are all very good and they’re all tried and tested. I’m not working as a volunteer for them no. Anyway, I gave her a list of the walks round Kirkintilloch along the canal along with the history. Cause when I led people on the walks they were older people. And we were walking along and we came to...This is where the young boys used to come and go swimming. This is the tunnel of love. This is why that house was built. This is why that tunnel...So I wrote it all up. So, you’re not putting this...This history’s going to get lost unless I write it up. So, I wrote it up. Some of it was published with photographs in the Kirky Herald. But I gave it to the girl that was saying she was doing the walking group. So these are...The history as well. Cause you lose that...And it’s older people that. Normally our Thursday leader is Jim. But Jim was in hospital and asked me if I would cover. So, for three Thursdays I would cover. Or, if he’s not well I’ll cover for him. But, I do other walks, I do walks for the...Not the A team the B team. So, I cover Jim’s walks. So, I’d written them up and given them to the girl and said-These are good walks. Tried and tested. And often, you know, I find walkers...you get the young ones who just want to race round the walk and go-‘I’ve done that! It says in the book you can do it in an hour I did it in fifty five minutes.’ Well, well done you’re very competitive. I’d rather go with the older ones and they’ll say. Do you know what happened here? And I’ll sit and listen to their stories. The history comes to life and it’s much, much more interesting. So I do that a bit. So you might even have read about my walks. The treasure trail is very good as well. Cause it’s only a fiver to buy the treasure trail. And I gave her a copy of it. And you start at the church and you go right round Kirkintilloch looking for clues. And you come back. It really is worth doing.”</p>	34.41-37.27
37.33	Interviewer asks the respondent who she gave the information about the walks to.	
	<p>“I canny mind. Is her name Carol? Someone called Carol. I don’t know she’s got short hair. Well, she does. She was leading the kilt walk. It’s one of the girl’s that comes to the yoga. And she says she does a walking group and she said-‘do I want to do the kilt walk?’ I said-‘ No. I do other walks. I’m afraid not.’ I’m not sure. But the treasure trail’s really good. You start at the church. You go down past the monument and it’s all about clues there and you work your way right round.”</p> <p>“That’s one of the things that I do as a volunteer myself. I just go and do the gardens down there. I do the Irish boy’s garden and I do the monument garden. Treasure trail is worth doing cause it’s really, really interesting and takes you round Kirkintilloch. And you see things that you would never normally look for. And it’s about an hour and a half’s walk. And you have to, kind of, break it into clues and at the end of it you can</p>	<p>37.34-38.29</p> <p>38.30-39.37</p>

	<p>get the answer and you can break it into teams. That's what we did is we broke it into teams. A competition or an evening. It's something you can do in an evening if people are working. Or, during the day if they're not working. So, very good fun. It's called treasure trails and it's a fiver to buy and I gave her my copy. Well. I gave her a copy of the treasure trail and I gave her a copy of the three or four walks I've done around Kirky and round the area. So, that's fine. Ok, so that's the walking. Make a note of that. "</p>	
39.38	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent if she ever had to go to hospital.</p>	
	<p>"I should have been locked up. I was completely off my head with grief. But I didn't. My husband could easily have got the doctor in and got me certified and locked up. Easily. Cause I was just crying all the time. Miserable. But he didn't he just waited it out. So, no I didn't get... It was lucky. As he said he didn't know what to do. He just kind of fed and watered me and waited for things to become different. So, no I didn't end up in a mental health institute and I didn't have a mental health nurse and I didn't have any...I refused to accept the fact-people said- You're depressed. I said-'I'm not depressed I'm grieving.' So, I made a distinction at that point that I am not physically depressed. I am grieving. I'm deeply grieving for my daughter. But I am not depressed. So, therefore I was not self-labelling myself as an illness. I was just saying I was going through a grief process. And I did have at the back of mind, there's no doubt social work training tells you. Four years you go through the grief process. You go through the various stages. It's a guideline. It's not a tablet of stone. Sometimes they come at different times (the phases) Sometimes they don't come at all. It's useful as a guideline to see that there's a theory. And it's useful in terms of-there is a light at the end of the tunnel. That you can feel that there's a winding down of a situation and a reflecting and taking stock of where I am now, where I was six months ago and where I was a year ago. So, yes. I hate to say it but the guy that helped me most was the garage mechanic and my husband. "</p>	39.45-41.39
41.40	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent if she has been able to tell the garage mechanic and her husband about this.</p>	
	<p>"Oh yes, I tell them. I'm very open with people that know me. I don't tell people about the suicide. I find it effects the way they look at me. Everyone thinks I'm a very competent, independent great person and all the rest of it. But if I say what's really happened they look at you differently like they feel sorry for you."</p>	41.41-42.17
42.18	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent how she feels about the mental health system in this country from her professional perspective.</p>	
	<p>"I never really had much to do with it. What I did find if I referred a client there. What I found incredibly frustrating is there'd be a waiting list. And by the time the person got the help that they needed the situation had deteriorated. And I felt there should have been some input earlier on. So, I was...I don't know what the mental health system is like because I wasn't part of it because I would just put referrals through. But I used to find that it was very, very depressing that you used to have to wait ages before anyone got any help. So, that bit I found quite frustrating. Just the waiting list. And I suppose a lot of the mental issues link to alcohol and drug use. Because there's clearly a very strong link between the two. And drugs do make you depressed and you get depressed you get into mental health issues and it's the same with drinking. I found there wasn't enough support for people who had drug and alcohol issues. There's not enough support. A lot of the support tended to be- officially you're on the list. And I felt a lot of what they needed was a kind of...almost a</p>	42.40-45.00

	<p>befriending situation. I felt that would have helped at the first stop. When I started in social work they used to have something. Absolute little gems-they're called home makers. And they would get into the house. They loved the homemakers and anything thing they did was fantastic. So they were amazingly supportive of any crisis that you were going through. So, I suppose I really don't have a lot of experience in the mental health area. Because I've never been in the hospital. I just put in referrals and got so frustrated it was so long and people getting the help that they got. And then I would get feedback saying- Oh, they were useless or some of them were good, some of them were cynical. They were a mixed bag. And there is a kind of feeling that they just stick you on tranquillisers to keep you quiet. "</p>	
45.04	Interviewer asks the respondent if she refused medication.	
	"No, I got two sleeping tablets."	45.10-45.13
45.17	Interviewer asks the respondent about alternative methods for the relief of grief.	
	<p>"That was later on. Later on after I had the counselling at Cruse which my doctor said I shouldn't have got but he put in a plea for me and she agreed to take me. And they said they don't like to take you until it's six months down the line. And he was able to get me in straight away. I can't remember how long because I was out my head at the time. So I can't remember how long but I know I used to go every week for quite a while. Oh that definitely helped but it had to be the right person because the counsellor from the social work department when she said-'Oh, you're lucky getting the letter.' That just shut me down. There's nothing I would have said to her again. I said-'That's the end of this interview.' And it was finished. And so, Cruse and suggestions of self-help, you know, get yourself out do yoga. Come swimming. Come and do these things. Friends taking you out to do things. Friends and family helped more that they realised. Cause forcing you to do normal everyday things certainly helped."</p>	45.25-46.37
46.38	Interviewer asked the respondent about help from the wider community.	
	<p>"No I can't say I found them very helpful. Cause I went to the gym on one occasion and one of my neighbours actually body swerved me as if I had the plague. And I thought-She's not comfortable talking about this. So, no, neighbours were putting notes through the door saying-really sorry to hear about it. And, you know, at that time I probably just wanted somebody to give me a hug. I don't think people are comfortable talking about death and certainly not suicide. So, it's easier just to write a nice wee card and stick it through your door. Even just a touch...Because when I went back to work there was a couple of people and they didn't know what to do. And it was clear they didn't know what to do. And they just touched me and they said- I'm glad to see you. That meant a lot. Some of them just touched me and some said-It's good to see you back. It's nice to see you. Because it validated that I was the person that I was before this happened. So things like that. Little things meant a hell of a lot more than, you know big gestures. My house was full of flowers. People were always sending big bouquets of flowers. People were always sending bouquets of flowers and things. And that was lovely but it didn't mean anything. The human touch. The human contact. And that's why I don't think I would have...I would not be as able as I am nowadays if I'd gone on medication. I'm quite certain of that. Because it would be too easy just to keep taking these tablets and be zonked out. It was hard coming through it without medication but it certainly paid off in the</p>	46.42-48.24

	end.”	
48.35	Interviewer asks the respondent what her first impressions of GRACE were.	
	<p>“Well, it was exactly the same as the yoga on Tuesday. So, there was no real big difference. Liz is a really good person she sort of talks about interesting wee things. So, I just felt I transferred from one yoga class... My Tuesday class had become my Friday class. And the quite funny thing is my husband now goes to the Tuesday class cause he says I won’t let him come to the Friday class. And I won’t. I said-‘You’re not coming to the same class as me.’ Well, he is the only man in the Tuesday class. But he met up with Maree, who’s one of the social workers that I used to work with. And so she...they go for a coffee and there’s a few of them go. And he goes...Cause he’s got back problems, so he finds that the yoga actually helps his back. It’s in the same place (the yoga) and it’s Tuesday. It’s an hour and a half and it’s exactly the same as GRACE. And I’d seen the GRACE posters, you know, when you go there on the Tuesday. And as I said there was a few things on on a Tuesday and I thought-Well, I don’t want to miss it so I’ll go to the Friday class. So Shirley said-‘Come to the Friday class it’s very good and you don’t have to pay. I said, look, I’m going to pay. I don’t believe in...If I can pay I will pay.’ So she said-‘Oh, you can do that.’ So, I went and Shirley was there. And so I knew Shirley from the rambling club. She was fine. And then Rena goes. She’s from the rambling club as well. And Mary. So, Mary, I’m not going to give second names but Mary’s there and she’s from the rambling club. And there’s Sheila. So, there’s about four people from the rambling club over the last six months that have gradually drifted into the Friday club. ”</p>	48.45-50.35
50.36	Interviewer asks the respondent about the digital literacy class in GRACE.	
	<p>“Well. It was Liz that said that. Because I wasn’t even. I wasn’t thinking computer classes. I think we were having a coffee after. I think it was a coffee. And, I kind of enquired and said-‘What’s this computer class like?’ And Liz said-‘Rikki is very, very patient. And I said-‘Well, he’d need to be because I’m really thick as mince. I’m not stupid I’m just not computer competent.’ And what I’ve found over the years. Because my husband’s always-‘I’ll do, I’ll take it and I’ll do it.’ He’s undermined anything and I’ve said-‘You’re disempowering me.’ And I’ll sit there and he’ll.’Ok, well, you do that and you do that and you do that.’ And he’s kind of. He’s like a budgie that perches on your shoulders and (shreaks) he’s got me like this and I’m kind of dead nervous. And so I said I’m going to Rikki’s class. And so I went and he’s very easy going and he’s very good at teaching. And then my husband was going-‘I’m fed up with this computer; there’s ads and ads ads...’ You know the way they do. ‘And I’m fed up with all these adverts.’ And I went-‘Well. You want to get one of those bear blockers. And he goes- ‘What?!’ I was quite pleased to do that one because he was quite floored and he’s now a bit more respectful when it comes to the computer.“</p>	50.41-52.02
52.05	Interviewer asks the respondent if she will do more activities at GRACE.	
	<p>“Well. Rachel asked if, you know, something about the oral history. And because I feel strongly that you lose history if you don’t talk about it. Liz did say-‘Do you want to do our garden?’ It was demolished. So I wrote up two pages of stuff and said-this is what we could do to make the garden right.”</p>	52.19-52.39
52.40	Interviewer asks the respondent if she’s interested in gardening.	
	<p>“I love gardening. I do the monument garden. I do the Irish Boy’s garden.</p>	52.41.52.51

	That and I do my own garden and my father was a gardener. I love gardening. I'm as happy as a pig in shit in the garden."	
52.52	Interviewer asks the respondent if she's written a proposal for the GRACE garden.	
	<p>"Yes, I've written it out and given it to Liz. Just before we went off to Knockengoroch. So, I've sat and written it up and if she gives me approval I'll do my best to get that all sorted. Well, the thing was I started doing the monument garden last year. It's just as you go over the bridge down towards Eastside. It's the monument to a seventeen year old boy that rescued a two year old child. Or tried to rescue a child and they both drowned. It's a sad, sad story. It's near the river Luggie It's not at the canal .The Luggie meets another river. I'm trying to think where we are. You've probably driven past it and you'll see the big obelisk. Well, during the lockdown I got ...The first lockdown my husband and I were as close as two coats of paint. We did all sorts of things. The second lockdown we were getting on each other's nerves so I thought-I'm going to do something positive. So, I started doing the garden and I would go over at seven in the morning. And spend time doing all the things in the garden. And this lassie came up and she said- 'You're a gorilla gardener aren't you?' And I thought-What's a gorilla gardener? So, she said. 'You're on Facebook. You're the gorilla gardener.' And I said-'Well. I wouldn't know that. I'm not on Facebook. I'm computer incompetent.' And she says – 'Yes you are.' So, that was fine. Then I noticed the councillor woman came by. Susan Murray came by and she sort of stopped and I chatted to her. And people got talking to you all the time. So, the first year I cleared all the stuff out and there's actually stones all the way round that were covered. And there's cobble stones that were also covered with weeds. So, I cleared all that last year. Last year. So, this year I also then took plants from various gardens. And people are very good with gardens and giving you plants. So, I got free buddleias. And one of the girls in the walking club. She went off and went to the shops-'can I have some plants?' So, she got plants and other people. I get plants for free. More than I know what to do with. And then two of my friends Mary and Grace. They come down on a Wednesday and usually they do a wee bit gardening there and keep it tidy. Marjory comes down on a Sunday and picks up the litter and leaves it looking really nice. It's a beautiful garden and people just come when they want to come and do the garden. And they keep saying-Does nobody pull up the plants? I say-'No'. We put in a wishing tree so you can tie ribbons to it. We've got a wee plaque saying-The Wishing Tree. I put in a rowan tree. I put in three buddleias. I took some hebe out my garden. Plants are in; you know the white angel leaf plants. They're in and I thought when I put them all in last year-I've just stuck them in quickly they might not survive. The only things that didn't survive were two heathers. Every other plant I put in... I call them pom pom plants. But they're like primroses that come up and they're purple. Like pom poms. Go and have a look at the garden you'll be surprised. And I do the Irish Boy's garden and that's very sad."</p>	52.52-56.08
56.20	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has found the gardening healing.	
	"It makes me feel I am doing something for my daughter and for all the young deaths that have gone...Yes, It gives me that sort of purpose. It's part of...I enjoy doing the garden. I am keeping that seventeen year old	56.30-1.00.04

	<p>and that two year old alive. One of the girls in the rambling club was able...I asked her if I could get the history of the boy. And the Irish one. That is a particularly sad story. Cause I was going to go to Achill Island. There's a main street in Kirky called Achill Road. And somebody said to me-'Do you know about the Irish boys' and I said-'No, I don't know much.' Well, I do know a lot but I don't know everything. And she said-'There used to be Irish people that came over here just after the starvation times and they would work her in tattie picking and doing the farms. And there was a great deal of prejudice against them from the Protestant community when they came over. Because it was-Oh, we're going to be taken over by Catholics. There's nothing worse than a religion to cause such friction wherever you go. So, this is an absolute true event. There was about...A huge crowd of them came over here. They were tattie picking. Working in the farms. They were swimming in the canal. I can even show you the wee fairy bit where they were swimming. Cause somebody told me that. And one night when they were in the bothy the door got locked and set alight and about twelve of the boys burnt to death. And there was a couple of twins and the youngest boy was thirteen. There's a little plaque on the wall just as you come at that roundabout going towards Kilsyth. If you stop there there's a little plastic plaque. No bigger than that. And it's got their names on it. And, I thought, it's all tatty and overgrown. I can't have that. It's a memorial to somebody. And somebody's kids. A young death. Lots of sort of young deaths. And people come and talk to you. It's great. Amazing the number of people that talk to you. And one guy came over and said-'Do you know it was the minister that set fire to these boys and killed them?' Because it was against the fact that they were Catholics. And I'd already heard that from two other people. One of the girls Cathy, who's a rambler. She'd said her mother had told her it was common knowledge it was the minister. And later on somebody came over and said they actually did a radio programme about it and named the minister. But he was long dead by then. So, I said well I'm not interested in that bit. I'm just going to keep this garden nice. So, I keep that garden nice as well. Two of these projects. And now a third. Well, if she says yes I'll get on with that one as well. The serenity aye. I did think when I looked at the rope. You could replace the rope but the pillars are away. And the chairs are rotting so they're useless as well. Well I've sent her a letter. I've said you've got all these options cause there's lots of options for what you could do. I just laid out two pages of stuff. It's not an email it's a letter. I'm a letter writer. So I dropped that off to Liz's before I went off to Knockengorroch. She'll give it to the committee or whatever. So my passion is gardening. I love working with living things. And I use these two places cause it's likely to keep their memories alive."</p>	
	<p>Interviewer asks the respondent about the gardening process itself.</p>	<p>1.00.05</p>
	<p>"Fun. It's great. I love it. I love to see things growing. I love to have like a seasonal change of plants. I love daffodils and snowdrops in the spring. I like to have roses. I like to have different things. And a garden will tell you what it wants. You'll look at a garden and you'll get a feeling of what's in there. What should be in there. What likes to have loads of light. And I've got three buddleias growing against the fence. And I've cleared all down beside the fence. And that'll bring butterflies in. And I've hung up a big heart and I've hung up a couple of little reindeer. So if the kids are in they can look. Go in. Go past and have a wee look at it. And it's one of the clues in the treasure hunt. And there's another clue that's on the bridge going over the River Luggie. As you come down the hill you</p>	<p>1.00.06- 1.02.07</p>

	<p>go over the bridge and one of the clues is there and the other clue's in on the monument itself. Because it was quite ironic. There was a family coming down. And I think it was a granny cause she had a wee girl about three. And they were looking for the clue and she couldn't get it. And she was going-'oh, I've no idea where this is...' She says 'I don't suppose you know where the clue is?' And I say-'Yes, let me tell you that's the bit you're looking for. And she says, oh yeah, I never saw that.' So, it was quite fun for somebody to say... And I thought-That's nice to see somebody doing the treasure trail. Cause it shows you bits of Kirky you wouldn't normally have seen. Well, no, you buy this treasure trail. I gave it to the girl. She's got a copy of it. Ask her to look for it. They do it for all over the place and if you get the one for Kirky. It's up to date. Cause we did one on Byres Road and the pub had changed. It wasn't Whistler's Mother. But the clue was Whistler's Mother but the name of the pub had changed. But it's good fun to do and people would enjoy doing it. And the Puffer's always a nice place to stop at the end of it for a coffee. So that's my passion. Gardening's my passion."</p>	
1.02.32	<p>Interviewer ask the respondent what lessons has she learned that you'd like to pass on to those who hear this interview.</p>	
	<p>"I suppose just taking one day at a time. And knowing that one day maybe five minutes in that day it's going to be good. And the next week it's going to be ten minutes in that day. And also getting the right help. Having the right people around you. And not to take medication. Not to take any kind. Cause the medication doesn't help you. I don't think it would do anything to help you. At the end of the day you still have to face what's happened. And all you're doing is putting it off. And also I think the other message is. Nurture yourself. Look after yourself. Go and take yoga. Go and do meditation. Do things that make you feel good. And don't blame yourself. And appreciate the positives that have come out of it. That you have learnt how to deal with an incredibly difficult situation. And therefore you'll be able to understand if it happens to somebody else. You've got an insight. Yeah, that's about it. And take up gardening. It's always good. Gardening and walking. Get you out in the fresh air. Get you out and seeing the way the world is. And just believe. Have a positive attitude that the world is not as bad as everybody makes it look. There's a lot of good people in the world. There's a lot of good things happen in the world. You just have to find them. And I suppose look at your...what you put into your body. What you physically put into your body means quite a lot. Whether it's over eating or whether it's alcohol. And also what you put in your mind is much more important. If you sit and watch the BBC news. You'll get depressed in no time at all. So, it's about saying to yourself-What am I going to put in my mind? Look at nice things. If you have a religion, fall back on that. Just believe the world's going to be a lot better and there's good people. Good people. Just find them. But you don't hear about them because all you hear about is negative stuff in the news. So, I suppose, go and get some good books. Read nice books and poetry. Read nice things. Go and watch good movies. Anything that makes you feel good. So, be careful what you put in your body. Be careful what you put in your mind."</p>	103.03-105.27
	<p>Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for sharing her memories with the project.</p>	

**Group Recovery Aftercare Community Enterprise is a registered Scottish charitable organisation
SCO043551**