

Project: **'Reflections of trauma, challenges, and healing: An oral history'**
 Respondent: Lynn
 Year of Birth: 1967
 Age:
 Connection to project: Respondent
 Date of Interview: The 24th of May 2022
 Interviewer: Elaine Watt
 Recording Agreement: Yes
 Information & Consent: Yes
 Photographic Images: No (Number of: 0)
 Length of Interview: 33 minutes and 36 seconds.
 Location of Interview: Kirkintilloch, Scotland
 Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.30	Interviewer asks the respondent where she was born and where she grew up and where she lives now	
0.32-0.43	Respondent states that she was born in Glasgow and grew up in Kirkintilloch. She says she is now back living in Kirkintilloch.	
0.45	Interviewer asks the respondent to tell her a little bit about her life before she experienced trauma and distinct childhood memories.	
0.50-1.57	Respondent describes a little about her family and her childhood.	
1.59	Interviewer asks what the respondent's current occupation is and what other jobs she has held.	
2.02-2.59	Respondent says she is a volunteer administration worker for GRACE. She says she has also worked in a motorbike shop as she used to ride a motorbike. She worked as an auxiliary in Woodilee Hospital looking after elderly women. Then she went to college to get her HND and she then worked in two or three printers as a MAC operator.	
3.05	Interviewer asks the respondent what defines who she is.	
3.09	"That's a hard one, because I've been living with anxiety and depression for so long I'm not quite sure where I am...who I am...where I am sometimes. I would say I'm defined by my role in GRACE and my role as a mother and a grandmother."	3.09-3.23
3.25	Interviewer asks the respondent about her understanding of the term trauma.	
3.29	"My understanding of trauma is an event, or a series of events, that even once it's over, has an effect on you that carries on in your life whether you like it or not"	3.29-3.48
3.49	Interviewer asks what, in the opinion of the respondent, are the main causes of mental illness.	
3.54-4.44	She replies that there are probably as many causes as there are people. She mentions the effects of being a carer for a long time. And that alcohol and drugs can leave a lot of people with long term mental health problems. She states that some people are just born with them and that she was born with anxiety. She concludes that there are many different causes for mental illness.	
4.46	Interviewer asks the respondent to please provide as much or as little detail as she is comfortable with in answer to the next question. She then	

	asks the respondent if she would like to share for her, her own experiences of trauma. If yes, please proceed.	
5.03	“One of...One of my traumas was when my son was five and I was pregnant I was taken into the hospital because they wanted to keep an eye on me. I was nearly eight months pregnant as the time. And I woke up in the hospital one morning and I thought-I’ve had the best sleep I’ve had for months. And then it dawned on me that’s because I hadn’t felt the baby moving. Of course it was too late. I told them I needed to see a doctor. Eventually I saw a doctor. They couldn’t find the heartbeat. And obviously it being... I was nearly full term. So, I had to go through labour and childbirth which wasn’t very nice. And that experience completely changed my life forever.”	5.03-6.03
6.06	Interviewer asks what the respondent’s immediate reaction was to her trauma.	
6.10-6.37	Respondent replies that she took a step back from everything and went into silent mode and that communication broke down.	
6.40	Interviewer asks if the respondent feels that her life changed after that	
6.40-7.14	Respondent states that it changed everything. That communication broke down with her husband who was in pain as well. Her marriage broke up and she then had to bring up her autistic (as she later found out) son on her own.	
7.16	Interviewer asks the respondent to please talk her through her mental health since she experienced the trauma.	
7.21	“Well, as I said, I had always had anxiety. And I had always, kind of... the depression had sort of come and gone but it really, really got its nails into me after that. I didn’t want to get out my bed. The only help I had was...- ‘Do you have someone to talk to’ And I said yes, but I didn’t talk to my family. So, yes, depression hit me hard since then. And it’s not let go since”	7.21-8.02
8.03	Interviewer asks the respondent what sort of support she received from family and friends.	
8.10-8.23	Respondent replies that her family looked after her basic needs but she wasn’t willing to talk to them so they couldn’t talk to her. She states that they wouldn’t of had anything to say anyway as they lacked her experiences of the trauma.	
8.26	Interviewer asks the respondent if she got professional support for this trauma.	
8.30	“No I didn’t. I wasn’t in any fit state to seek professional support and nobody...Nobody suggested it to me.”	8.30-8.38
8.39	Interviewer asks if the respondent has experienced poor mental health as a result of the trauma.	
8.50	“Well, the anxiety and depression were there at the still birth. But after my husband left there was just me and my son who was five at the time. He had a lot of problems because he was undiagnosed. So, nobody was treating him properly. They were treating him as if he were a naughty child instead of an autistic child. I was getting labelled as a bad parent. We had meetings, right, left and centre. I ended up having to give up...I had gone back to work but I ended up having to give up work to look after my son. And as anybody who’s been a carer knows, your world shrinks. Till there was just the flat, my son and myself. Friends kind of fade away because you’re not able to go...If you’re caring for a child on the spectrum you’re not able to say-‘Yes, we’ll just go to a party’ Because if your child isn’t having a good day that day then that’s the day over. And people get uncomfortable and fed up asking you. So they stop asking you and you end up on your own”	8.50-10.03

10.04	Interviewer asks the respondent what types of professional treatment she has experienced.	
10.09-10.49	Respondent says she had a break down in 2015, half way through her degree. She was crying in the car on the way home. She went to the doctor and was prescribed anti-depressants.	
10.53	Interviewer asks the respondent which treatments or activities were helpful for her.	
11.01	"The anti-depressant tablets were quite helpful. Because I noticed a difference almost straight away. I wasn't on the right ones so I had to try a couple of them. But they quietened my mind enough so that I could focus on what I needed to do. So, I mean a lot of people...I had friends saying to me-'oh yes, I was prescribed anti-depressants but I didn't take them I just decided to do it for myself' Well, good for you. But folk shouldn't say that because some people need...If you've got a chemical imbalance in your brain it needs to be balanced by medication. Full stop."	11.01-11.46
11.48	Interviewer asks the respondent what treatments or activities did not work for her.	
11.51	"Ah, I was sent...Along with getting my anti-depressants I was sent for six weeks, one hour a week CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy). At that stage my tablets hadn't kicked in. I didn't know which way was up or down. And somebody trying to retrain my thoughts and behaviour, I wasn't even on the same planet as that. I think they offer it far too soon. They need to wait till you're stable on tablets before they give it. Because that was worse than not offering it at all. Because it failed I felt as if I had failed."	11.51-12.34
12.36	Interviewer asks the respondent if she is still receiving professional support.	
12.40	"Apart from my GP phoning me once very few months, no not really. But I know when to phone her now. I know when things are working and when they aren't. GRACE has helped with my...The charity I volunteer for has helped me with my self-awareness. And that's been far more helpful than any professional help I've been offered."	12.40-13.08
13.08	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has ever felt stigmatised for her mental health trauma.	
13.17-13.23	Respondent replies that she hasn't personally experienced that but that she can understand how that would be devastating for people who have.	
13.24	Interviewer asks the respondent if she thinks people of different backgrounds e.g gender, race, ethnicity are treated differently.	
13.32-13.54	The respondent replies that she doesn't have the experience to say. She imagines it might be in some places. She wasn't part of any groups. She went along for CBT and they took her straight away. She didn't get to see anybody else.	
13.57	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has ever experienced any discrimination in her contact with mental health or addiction services.	
14.04-14.06	The respondent says no. Not that she has noticed.	
14.07	Interviewer asks the respondent what she thinks of the mental health system in this country.	
14.13	"I think it could be better. I'm glad we've got the NHS. They've been banging on for year about joined up services. Which we still don't have. If someone has an addiction problem which has caused mental health issues. They go to two different services in two different buildings usually with two different people. And there's none of this holistic, joined up, working together stuff which would...Because you can't really treat one without the other in a lot of these circumstances. So, I would say that that's got a lot of work still to go. But, yeah, I think the NHS is brilliant	14.13-15.02

	what they do. The rest of it is brilliant. It's just mental health. I think they've got a bit to go."	
15.03	Interviewer asks the respondent did she seek other support from the community before coming to GRACE.	
15.13	"No, I didn't actually because I wasn't...I didn't actually come to GRACE looking for support. I came to GRACE looking for a volunteering role. But it wasn't until I actually joined GRACE and saw what went on that I realised I needed the support from GRACE. So, at that point I wasn't at all self-aware. I didn't think I needed it. I didn't there would be anything that anybody could help me with."	15.13-15.41
15.42	The interviewer asks the respondent how she first learned about GRACE.	
15.45	"It was East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action. That's where I went to find out about volunteering roles. And one of the ladies in there...I told her I had an IT degree and that I'd done admin in the past. That I worked in a printer's and we did all sorts of publications. And she said, 'Oh, I've got a job for you' and she said-'Robert' (laughs). And I went and I met Robert who is the founder of GRACE. And that's how I came into GRACE. Through the back door. Through the volunteering in the office. And then I got into the activities after that."	15.45-16.27
16.28	Interviewer asks the respondent what her first impressions of GRACE were.	
16.32	"Welcoming (GRACE). Not as scary as I thought it was going to be. There was all sorts of people with all sorts of personalities. All sorts of problems. But they all got on well with each other. And I thought I wonder if this is somewhere where I could fit in. Because I've never really fitted in anywhere all my life. And it looked to me as if it was inclusive enough to take me on too. "	16.32-17.08
17.10	Interviewer asks the respondent which activities have helped her and in what way.	
17.18	"The art has helped me. Because that's really good for mindfulness. Because when I'm drawing or painting, I'm not thinking of anything else. I'm concentrating on what I'm doing. And the same for the Pins and Needles. I've sat in with them on quite a few occasions knitting things for my granddaughter. And because I'm not a great knitter I need to concentrate on what I'm doing. So, the mindfulness, yes, that was great." "There was self-awareness in GRACE which I spoke about before. That has been great. I now have an idea what's going on in my head. Instead of it being this scary place full of brain fog. And then GRACE brought in counsellors and I had access to that. And they were a revelation. They were absolutely fantastic."	17.18-18.23
18.24	Interviewer asks the respondent which activities did not work for her at GRACE.	
18.31	"In GRACE? I don't think any activities didn't work for me. Because it didn't really matter what you were doing It just mattered that you were getting out the house, you were coming to GRACE and you were getting on with things. And the simplest thing like making a cup of tea is important in GRACE. Because you're taking ownership. Taking responsibility. And that's what takes you out of your own head instead of it all being about poor wee me. You start appreciating other people again., which is brilliant."	18.31-19.07
19.09	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has learned anything about herself whilst being a member of GRACE.	

19.15-	"Oh, yes. I've realised I'm a lot of hard work (laughs). I have learned a lot of my flaws. And I've learned how to try and cope with them. Because I'm not a great people person. Although I like them I don't really know how to be around them. But GRACE flung me in at the deep end and I've made a lot of friends there."	19.15-19.50
19.53	Interviewer asks the respondent if she feels comfortable sharing her experiences with other GRACE members.	
19.58	"Yes, because it's a family atmosphere. They feel comfortable sharing with you so you feel comfortable sharing back. I wouldn't say...A lot of things... like the trauma that I've spoken about today I don't share very much. Because it's not something that's in my mind very much. And it's not something I want to be in my mind very much. But when it comes up, yes I feel able to share."	19.58-20.19
20.21	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has made new friends at GRACE.	
	"Oh yes, I've made friends for life at GRACE."	20.23-20.26
20.28	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has learned any new skills at GRACE.	
20.33	"Yes, lots of them. But I don't know if I could actually put my finger on...Certainly speaking to large groups of people I found very difficult. So I've taken on the Sharing Time meetings that are held once a month. That's a network in East Dunbartonshire for organisations in the recovery community. And I've gone from hiding outside the door and picking up their registration sheets at the end of it. To pretty much running it. Especially through the pandemic the people... The professionals that attend sharing time. I got to see their vulnerable sides because everybody was struggling. So, that's taken away a lot of my...I had this thing in my head that these were professional people that I didn't have anything in common with. That they were superior to me. And now I realise no their not. Their just people. So, people are less scary to me now thanks to GRACE."	20.33-20.46
20.47	Interviewer asks the respondent if her mental health has changed.	
20.51	"Yes, I still have a lot of problems with my mental health. But I know that if I don't keep coming to GRACE that I suffer. I know that after the Christmas holidays when GRACE is shut. I know that I have a lot of problems getting back into the swing of things. That I know that I'm not...Even though I like being on my own, that it's not a good thing for me. And I have to keep opening my front door and coming to GRACE."	20.51-22.23
22.26	Interviewer asks the respondent how, overall, she would describe her experiences at GRACE.	
22.32-23.13	Respondent replies that it was life changing. When she was first alone with her son she was very isolated. Now she walks down the street and hears her name called by one of her GRACE family. She says she now has friends although she does have loyal long-term friends from the past too. She concludes that to be part of a community is really special.	
23.15	Would you recommend GRACE to other people who have experienced trauma?	
23.18	"I would recommend GRACE to anybody at the drop of a hat. In fact I do so on a regular basis to anybody that will listen. This morning I had a group of young people in from one of the local schools wanting to learn about GRACE. And I didn't stop talking for about three quarters of an hour and at the end of it one of the teachers said- 'Well, you certainly have a passion. And that's it in a nutshell. I have...I've gained a passion for GRACE. And it's well deserved because it helps so many people."	23.18-23.55

24.00	Interviewer asks about the long term impact of the respondent's trauma.	
24.00-24.39	Respondent replies that the depression is always there. Every day she has to have an argument with herself about getting out of bed. Once she is out it's not so bad but it's a fight every day and she can't see it never being a fight. She would like to but that's just the way it is and she just needs to get on with it.	
24.41	Interviewer asks the respondent if her friends and family members are were affected by her experiences with the mental health system.	
24.48-25.28	Respondent replies that she didn't have many experiences with that system. That she thinks they were a bit frustrated that the CBT was not a good experience for her. Talks a bit more about CBT.	
25.28	Interviewer asks if the respondent's relationship with family and friends has changed since then.	
25.34-26.20	Respondent replies that everyone thinks they need to look after her which she thinks is lovely but she says that she needs to look after herself. Talks about how she feels her family treats her differently than they used to in terms of not trusting her advice as they used to do. She feels that they don't think of her as a responsible person anymore.	
26.23	Interviewer asks the respondent who her support system consist of.	
	Respondent replies that it is GRACE and her tablets from her GP.	
26.35	Interviewer asks the respondent who the people who have helped her to cope with her mental health experiences and why.	
26.45	"The counsellor that I accessed through GRACE was absolutely fantastic. She made me realise that I...My anxiety had come from when I was five when I was hit on a regular basis by my primary one teacher who was later sacked half way through the school year. But it was never...Because I was only five no one had ever discussed it with me. What had happened, why it happened and the fact that it wasn't my fault. So, the counsellor that I accessed through GRACE helped me see that it wasn't my fault. How could it be my fault? It can't...Anything that happens to a five year old is definitely not their fault. So, that was a big eye opener to me. And I wouldn't of had access to that counselling through the NHS. Only through GRACE"	26.45-27.42
27.44	Interviewer asks the respondent if she believes that there is a cure for mental illness.	
27.48-28.10	Respondent says she believes if there is it's due to hard work. She doesn't think there are any easy fixes. The people she knows who have come out the other end of their mental issues did it that way. Battling it every day until you master it.	
28.12	Interviewer asks the respondent what lessons she has learned that she would like to pass on to those who hear this interview.	
28.19	"If you are struggling and you think you are losing your mind. Go and see your GP. Everybody seems to be struggling post-pandemic. I've had a few friends that have tried to just battle on with it. And they didn't realise that they were having mental health issues. That is a part of depression is that you don't know. You don't realise what's happening. So, I've learned to look out for it in friends. And tell them, by the way, I'm noticing things that I noticed in myself. I think you should maybe give your GP a call."	28.19-29.05
29.07	Interviewer asks the respondent if there is anything important about the mental health system or herself that she hasn't already touched on.	
29.16-29.32	Respondent reiterates that offering CBT too early is not a good thing and could do harm and could actually put people off in her opinion.	
29.34	Interviewer asks the respondent if there are any objects which remind her of her mental health experience.	

29.45-30.13	Respondent talks about a stuffed hippo that connects her to the past and the trauma she described in the interview.	
30.15	Interviewer asks the respondent if there are any songs which remind her of her experience with mental illness.	
30.22-30.41	Respondent mentions a popular song for this called The Reason by Hoobistank. That makes her think of her son who she says is the only reason she got through the darkest years. Because having a child with additional needs you have to put yourself aside and you have to get on with it.	
30.42	Interviewer asks the respondent if she has any photographs which remind her of her mental health experience.	
	Respondent says she doesn't because she doesn't allow photographs to be taken of her when she is at her darkest.	30.47-30.52
30.55	Interviewer asks what word the respondent would use to describe her experience with her mental health.	
31.01-	"Struggle. Because it's always a struggle. It's there when you open your eyes in the morning. It's there when you go to sleep at night. And you have to battle yourself. You're not battling anybody else. You're battling yourself and that's a hard one."	31.01-31.17
31.18	Interviewer asks the respondent what activities she pursues for personal enjoyment.	
31.23-31.51	The respondent says she is a real movie buff. She loves book but the brain fog that has come with her depression makes it really, really difficult to read a book. She says that like everyone else through the pandemic Netflix has been her saviour.	
31.52	Interviewer asks the respondent how she would sum up her life now.	
31.59	"Content. I have GRACE and my volunteering role to give me purpose. I have my granddaughter who is the light of my life. She is the one that's pretty much...Up and till she was born I couldn't...If anybody that I knew had a baby. Somebody else had to go and buy the gift for them. Because I couldn't go in a shop that had children's clothes. Because the last time I was in a shop that had children's clothes I was buying my daughter's clothes for her funeral. But my granddaughter changed all that. And she's made babies back to being what they should be in your life, which is something wonderful."	31.59-32.47
32.49	Interviewer asks the respondent what her hopes for the future are.	
32.52	"That I can escape the struggle. I can get over it. And it's not something I think of practically every moment of every day. That would be great."	32.52-33.02
	Interviewer thanks the respondent for sharing her memories with the project.	



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