

## Case Study: Jazmin

**Jazmin was supported with substance use by CGL The Place in Nottingham. Now in recovery, Jazmin is volunteering to support CGL with events and activities and is training to become a peer mentor to support other people struggling with substance use.**

My substance use started when I was really young, about 15 years old. I was mainly around lots of bad influences; I had friends who were very reckless and who were very heavy substance users. It was mainly cannabis. So, because I was around those sorts of people, I got lots of peer pressure to indulge in that kind of behaviour. There was pressure on me to do it too – and that's how I got into it.



I had a point where I went to get substances from someone and I was taken advantage of and so the next time I was in college I went to my wellbeing mentor and I told them what had happened and how I was feeling and she put me through to the CGL service.

CGL were great. I was introduced to some amazing people. They really helped me and they were really understanding of my situation. They were compassionate and really understood me as a person.

It was mainly in-person visits on a regular basis every week. I had lots of 121s – we had very open and honest conversations. There was no judgment and it was very open-ended; there was no pressure. If you were struggling one day, then they were compassionate and very understanding.

They started by helping me to reduce my intake and to stay away from harm and the bad influences and to completely cut off the friendships that I was in at the time. That was very hard to do. The temptation at the time was absolutely huge; it was really hard – but I did it and a few years have now gone by and I have found peace with it. I completely restarted out: I started at a new college, I made some great new friends, I started making more positive choices. I do art now, so that's a way to express my feelings.

My advice to anybody who is struggling is to reach out for support. It will be a challenge, but it will help in the long term.

I know there is a stigma in reaching out for help, in saying that you have a problem. If you appear that you are using substances, then you tend to get very judgmental people... and they don't really want to know you.

I'm now helping with volunteering for CGL, mostly in events and promotions where we go to venues and promote CGL and try to help those who need support and want support so we can guide them to the next steps in order to recover.

I feel that you are able to understand another person's feelings if you have experienced it yourself because you know how hard it is, you know the struggle of trying to withdraw when you just want more. I think we can have more compassion with each other when we've both experienced it. When I was going through it, I didn't really have anyone to talk to. I didn't really want to go to my family about it and I didn't want to put my struggles on to people that were influencing me. I know how it feels to not have anyone to talk to. So, I think my motives behind joining CGL are to give a chance for people to feel heard and have that support when going through a traumatic time. It's just to hear them and understand them so you can help them the best that you can.

Ultimately, it is hard... but if you can find that inner strength and find the direction that you want to go in, I think you'll find peace and you'll feel better within yourself. If you have an outlet of where you can openly express yourself and the pain that you feel, I think it's very beneficial.

If you are feeling like there's pressure, then get help and advice. It's hard to reach out and say, 'You know what, I'm struggling with this and I'm feeling scared'. But my advice would be to face it head on. It will help you in the long term if you do seek that support.