

# Much More Than A LABEL

A Resource About Personality Disorder By People With Lived Experience



Section **07**

## Living Your Life

*'Now that I know what I'm dealing with...'*

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## Much More Than A LABEL

# Resource Overview

## Why is there a Resource?

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The resource has been developed to promote better understanding and support for people with experience of personality disorder diagnosis.

The hope is that the resource can be used in a variety of ways:

- ◆ As a basis for finding out more about personality disorder and what people who have experience of this diagnosis find helpful and unhelpful
- ◆ As a starting point for discussion and reflection amongst staff with an interest in this area
- ◆ As a collaborative tool between service users and workers to discuss their experiences and views and promote a better working relationship

## How does the resource work?

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This resource has been designed so that people using it can **pick out what is most relevant to them at the time and pick and choose what they want to look at.**

The idea is not to **read the resource from cover to cover** (unless you want to!), but to **pull out and use the section and format that is most useful to you** at the time.

The contents of the resource can be used in a variety of ways, as an **individual, in groups or as a training tool.**

Not everyone will identify with everything in the resource, but the hope is that the topics will **provide some insight into the experiences of service users** who have been given a diagnosis of personality disorder and a **starting point for open discussion and understanding.**

## Who is the resource for?

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It is for anyone who has an interest in finding out more about personality disorder, but it is especially aimed at staff who work in this area and people who have lived experience of the diagnosis and want to be able to explain their experiences to others.

## What is the resource?

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It is a collection of information and reflective exercises about the experience of personality disorder diagnosis which has been put together through consultation with people who have personal experience of living with a personality disorder diagnosis.

The resource is written from the point of view of people with lived experience of personality disorder diagnosis and throughout the resource are direct quotes from service users.

The resource has been developed to display information in a variety of ways and to encourage discussion and reflection.

There are sections on:

- ◆ *The Experience of Living with Personality Disorder*
- ◆ *Personality Disorder Diagnosis*
- ◆ *Assumptions and Language*
- ◆ *Support and Treatment*
- ◆ *Attitudes and their Impact*
- ◆ *Living Your Life*
- ◆ *Local and General Resources*

Each section contains:

- ◆ *Section Summary Sheet*
- ◆ *Overviews of Service User Views*
- ◆ *Personal Quotes from Service Users*
- ◆ *Creative Writing or Artwork Contributed by Service Users*
- ◆ *Mind Maps and Word Clouds*
- ◆ *Space to Add Your Own Views and Experiences*
- ◆ *Discussion and Reflection Section*

## SECTION 07 : LIVING YOUR LIFE

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# Section Outline

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## SECTION 07 : LIVING YOUR LIFE

# Living Your Life

This section contains quotes about people's feelings about moving forward and living their lives with a diagnosis and in spite of the issues they might face.

It has been included to show that despite negative experiences people can and do develop ways to cope and live their lives.



*Now I've got this diagnosis I need to learn to cope with it. It's not just me lying back and thinking oh I've got this diagnosis, oh that's it I'm totally screwed. It's about well look at it, look at how it affects me, what related to me and how can I change those things*

## Ruminating on Losing You

*I am still here  
and you too are here  
but also gone  
in this dark daydream of mine*

you are lost to me and to the world  
    in that obvious fleshly way,  
your body spread in particles beneath the ancient yew

but i am still here  
    in that obvious all-too-fleshly way  
my body spread across the space  
between my essence and the world

i wish that it were otherwise  
that you were here and i was gone  
    for you tread so softly  
bring such solace to those you touch

if you were here i might stay  
might find a way to tolerate  
    this cumbersome attire  
    this body that weighs me down

on waking from my daydream  
i find that i am definitely still here  
and when i turn to look for evidence  
    you too are here  
*and i am soothed  
and more content  
    to stay awhile  
    longer...*

**leti hawthorn**

March 6th 2010



*Part of my recovery process is being as open with myself and being aware of my own thought processes as possible*

*In order for me to recover I needed to know what I could do rather than just being instructed without any actual explanation of why or more to the point why is it better to act in one way than another. What I did: self harming, suicide attempts, dissociating, defensiveness and a lot of other 'behaviours' made sense to me at that point. I still believe some of the stuff about appropriate behaviour is based in an idea of normality that is pushed on to you, but the treatment has helped me too*

*I'm not looking to have it cured, I'm going to be more accepting of the really rubbish days and more accepting of the kind of happier days...When things are good it's all about learning to cope and managing*



*An absolute eureka moment for me was when the psychologist said to me, 'That's just a thought'. Because what I was doing was getting tied up with thoughts being potential deeds. And every thought had to be a potential deed and when she said 'well not every thought has to be a deed, you don't have to act on everything', and that came as kind of wow...*

*I feel there is hope if I process the many "unprocessed" emotions which seem to cause the symptoms*



*"Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it"*

*(Maya Angelou).*

**SECTION 07 : LIVING YOUR LIFE**

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# Discussion and Reflection Section

**Word Cloud**

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The following page contains a Word Cloud which gives a summary of some of the experiences that have been described in this section.

It has been included to give an alternative view of people's experiences and a visual representation of the descriptions in this section.

The Word Cloud was created by typing a jumble of words related to a specific topic. The words which are repeated most often come out in a larger font to represent their relative importance.

The Word Cloud tries to represent a cross section of the experiences of the people who took part in the project and all of them may not relate directly to everyone.

There is information in the introduction section about how to create your own Word Clouds.

knowledge  
accepting myself recovery  
knowing what to do  
processing emotions  
how can I change things  
managing open with myself  
making sense of it  
accepting  
self-awareness  
learning to cope  
understanding  
eureka moments

## How Does This Relate to Me?

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This page has been included for you to add your own views and feelings on this section, and anything else you want.

## Artwork in this Section:

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Have a look at the artwork in this section.

What do you think the creator was trying to express in the picture/poem?

How do you think the creator might have felt at the time?

Some contributors have written an explanation about their artwork.

### P1 Pure

This collage was made during a retreat. I spent some time wandering around the grounds, collecting leave, flowers etc. Then I went through magazines and cut out words and images that spoke to me. Finally I started putting them together, letting them go where they wanted to

### P2 Ruminating on Losing You

I was completing an assignment for Pastoral Care and Theology on the subject of Continuing Bonds as a model for grief. That, alongside writing my other assignment for the "Quest for the Historical Jesus" which was to write an obituary for Jesus, means that i am even more preoccupied than usual with the shadows. This poem was written for all those i love. As i wrote it, various people drifted through and influenced it:

### P3 How to Deal With Life

I've tended to over strive - part of trying to be 'good enough' and as I feel inherently worthless rely on feedback from others/pieces of paper. Going with the flow/more mindfully the way to go

### P4 Success

Another one from the 'random quotes' page, and another goal. Even before diagnosis I didn't like myself; I'd been brought up as 'not good enough' & traumas reinforced the message. That I hadn't fitted any mental health services' tick box despite my & GP's cries for help even at the point of suicide told me loud & clear I didn't deserve help. For me to be able to say that anything I did was ok or that I was ok would be a triumph

# Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



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