

The Collaborative Approach - Reducing Anxiety

Susan's Story

"Losing face-to-face contact with people can feel stressful and might be worrying, frightening or even unbearable. Not getting enough contact can leave us feeling lonely and alone with our problems."

Mental Health Foundation

Initially, Susan's case was first referred to Jo, Age UK Cornwall Community Coach, by our Community Helpline in March 2020.

Susan's neighbour expressed concerns regarding Susan's health & wellbeing. Susan, who has severe dyslexia, had become increasingly anxious and felt like she had no external support. Susan was struggling to manage many aspects of her life.

This is Susan's Story.

The First Discussion

Jo called Susan, who said that she has been struggling with a lack of sleep due to her deepening anxieties regarding COVID-19.

With Susan's agreement, we identified a local volunteer (Brian) who would call her regularly for a few weeks - until Susan felt less anxious about the pandemic. Susan also felt able to speak to her family should she need additional support.

Susan asked if Brian would be able to support her with her housing situation - currently, Susan was renting an old, damp caravan which was causing further stress and her health to deteriorate. Susan reported that there was black mould throughout the caravan.

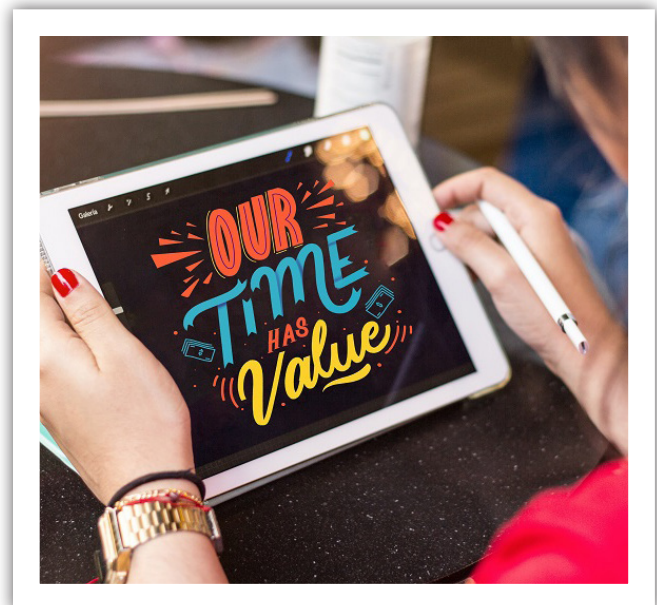
Following those first discussions, Jo and Brian tried to contact Susan to offer support and left several messages. Finally, we received a text in September 2020 to say that Susan had been in hospital with heart problems. Susan asked Jo to close her referral.

Following up

Susan was re-referred to Jo in May 2021. This was during a follow-up call to seek feedback on previous discussions.

Susan's primary concern was her housing situation. Jo called Susan, who explained that she had been on the housing list for a Council property, but tragically, her laptop had been stolen - this made bidding for properties extremely difficult.

Susan agreed that we could make a referral to a local agency - that could support this process and allocate a staff member to provide a helping hand. Jo contacted Age UK Cornwall's IT Department - who were able to source an iPad for Susan. We received the iPad from Digital Inclusion Cornwall. Jo asked if she could drop off the iPad in person, hoping to have a face 2 face conversation with Susan.



The Collaborative Approach - Reducing Anxiety

Susan's Story



Following up

In July 2021, Jo sat down with Susan, however, it became clear that Susan's severe dyslexia meant that she would need additional training and assistance to best utilise the iPad we provided. The agency support worker was made aware of this. Jo also tried to identify someone who could provide training and help Susan on a one to one basis. Unfortunately, several support groups were unable to help as they did not have volunteers in her area. Jo and Susan agreed to prioritise her housing situation and made a plan to revisit iPad training solutions at a later date.

Unfortunately, the housing agency contacted Jo in August 2021. They informed us that they were struggling to maintain contact with Susan. By the end of the month, they had no option but to close the referral.

After several phone calls, we were able to reach Susan, who explained that she had become increasingly stressed with the fact that the agency could not provide face to face consultations (due to the pandemic).

Jo worked with the Housing Support Manager to find a solution for Susan. After many conversations, they offered to allocate a new support worker who could visit Susan in person. Sadly, when Jo offered this to Susan, she said she no longer wanted their support.

Not Giving Up is Key

During a conversation in November 2021, Susan mentioned that a bungalow was coming up for rent in the village she lived, she could not recall the name of the housing association but said she would try to find out.

After investigation, Susan said that she still did not know the name but thought the company had 'North' or 'Coast' in the name. Jo took a chance on calling Coastline Housing.

On Susan's behalf, Jo spoke to a wonderful person from Coastline, who confirmed that the property was part of the Coastline Group.



A Great Result

After a few conversations with staff at Coastline - Jo managed to get Susan registered on Home Hunt. Within fifteen days, we received the great news that Susan could view the bungalow in her village. By January 2022 she had moved in!

The Lettings Coordinator at Coastline and Jo worked together to discuss additional support for Susan. We offered to help source furniture and white goods, however, the Lettings Coordinator at Coastline managed to source funding for these items. Susan is now also receiving additional support from their welfare team, who help her with the financial aspects of running her home and ensure that she has the correct benefit support in place.

Susan is over the moon to be in her new home but she is taking time to adjust -worrying about meeting costs and maintaining her tenancy. Jo continues to reassure Susan that the welfare team are there to help with her concerns - not forgetting that, Age UK and Jo are also on hand to help, should she need it.