

My name is Cari Crossman, I'm 35 years old and live in Llanelli. I'm a mother of two boys, Osian aged 9 and Dylan aged 7, and we have a pet canary named Tweety. I love spending time with my boys and going on adventures visiting different places with them. I'm quite a bubbly person that loves to have a laugh and a banter.

I left school with 4 GCSE's of C's and above in Maths, Child Development, Textiles and Geography, even though I wasn't trying much in school as I started drinking and partying at a young age. I then went on to do Health and Social care for a couple of weeks before moving to a Child care course, which I only did for a couple of months, as I continued partying.

I was in a bad place in my teens and twenties abusing substances which led to some criminal activity including a conviction for taking a vehicle without consent and a couple of cautions for public order and shoplifting. Despite this I did manage to complete my hairdressing qualifications over these years also.

At the age of 25 I made the decision to get my life back on track for good, which I did, I turned my life around and started a family. I had my two boys and passed my driving test. I later left the relationship with the boy's father as I was suffering from domestic abuse which has severely knocked my confidence and I now battle with anxiety. I left him 6 years ago and ever since he has been trying to emotionally manipulate me, and we are now currently going through our 5th court case.

Since having my boys I have continued to try and better myself, as I want to be the best role model I can be to them and make them proud. I did a cutting course and a hair extension course before lockdown to refresh my hairdressing skills, and I was looking to go into employment doing hairdressing when Dylan had started in full time school but then lockdown happened. Through the extent that lockdown had on people's mental health and my own personal experiences I decided I wanted to become a mental health nurse, so I went on to do the pre access to further education and then continued on to the access to Nursing course in the Graig where I have gained skills, and also made friends which has helped me also as I do struggle with my confidence and with trusting people. I know I'm an intelligent person but I need to bring that confidence out and I think that this course will do this for me. I think succeeding at this course will help me do and feel better for myself and my boys, and give me the opportunity to progress closer to my end goal of helping and supporting individuals that may have been through similar experiences and suffered crises the way I have.

I find it hard talking about my past as I fear being judged, and I don't want it to hold me back, but I feel like it is important that I am honest and hopefully I can inspire people in the future by having the confidence to speak about it, and apply my experiences on helping others, as I do feel that it is important to have someone that can relate to help people get through their own personal struggles.