

CASE STUDY

Jola (21) - young adult carer at university

Jola found out about life coaching from Positive Realities on the student portal (Intranet) at her university and referred herself to the service. She chose a coach and worked with him to set a goal, which was to get a new part-time job outside of university, but following the first couple of meetings her grandparent died, and she withdrew from all activities.

After a while, she contacted her coach and resumed the coaching. At this point she was still not attending university and had left her job as a result of the bereavement. Her coach helped motivate her to return to university and to make a plan to get back on track, as she was two months behind the other students at this point. He also encouraged her to see a careers advisor and suggested writing a covering letter when sending in a CV as she had not done this previously.

Jola also cares for her boyfriend who has Multiple Sclerosis (MS). As this is a progressive illness, she found it difficult to think positively about the future. She found this mentally exhausting as he was not getting better and was refusing to accept support from professionals. Previously he had thought he could care for himself, which made it hard for Jola who thought 'I can't help him if he won't help himself'. She found herself constantly worrying he wasn't getting enough support.

Her goal was to accompany her boyfriend to the MS therapy centre, which he had always refused to attend. In total, it took her a year to persuade him to go. Since then, he has been more accepting of support and has tried new therapies. She also said it was 'overwhelming' when he experienced his first relapse for eight years during the coaching sessions, as she had to do more housework than usual alongside her studies and work. However, this was offset by the fact that by this stage he was attending the therapy centre.

Jola began to be offered second interviews, and found this anxiety provoking as she had no experience of this type of interview. Her coach worked with her to alleviate her concerns and she grew in confidence. She was successful in completing her coursework by the end of the university year and also found suitable part-time employment. She is less worried about the future with her boyfriend, knowing that he is more willing to accept support when he needs it, which takes pressure off her.

"The opportunity coaching has provided is to allow a young adult who has been completely consumed by their day to day obligation to a loved one, the time and space to consider themselves. This has been done in a safe, trusting, non-judgemental interaction where they aren't being advised how they can improve their lives and domestic situation. The impact of this has been securing part time employment and focused application to their higher education whilst maintain a comfortable level of care and consideration for their loved ones." (Coach)