

Our Transition Stories



Sean Rawlings (CSM)

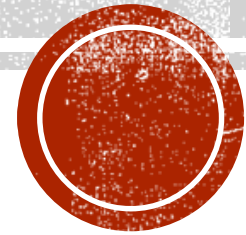
Phoebe Grandfield (CSS)

Liz Dempsey (CSAD)



MY TRANSITION STORY

SEAN RAWLINGS



A LITTLE BIT OF BACKGROUND



- I had a very stressful (unmanaged) Transition from Primary to Comprehensive School.
- I spent my entire Comprehensive Education in a state of high anxiety which resulted in me becoming a **selective mute**.
- I did not have a diagnosis and nobody offered me any helpful support, in fact I was bullied by both fellow pupils and teachers.
- Towards the end of year 10 I went on a work placement. Here the Manager immediately identified a communication difficulty and helped me to get my **Asperger's diagnosis**.



TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY AGE 18

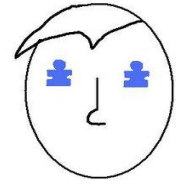


- I was accepted by UWE, on my application I disclosed my Asperger diagnoses.
- Initially Student Services were helpful and supported me to apply for and secure Disabled Student Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.
- Following this I had one more meeting with Student Services and that was the end of my support/transition planning
- Things very quickly went down hill after that: I went home for Christmas break, came back to University and became completely **isolated**.....



MY ISOLATION:

You don't hear
me but...I
have a voice.
Why don't you
listen?



- I felt very alone, I had not made any friendships either in my flat or on my course
- I stopped attending lectures – nobody noticed....
- I did go to Student Services to seek help, but that interaction seemed to be very general and **didn't ask** about how I was coping. Being on the Spectrum I didn't volunteer this information, I didn't know how.
- I began to self harm...and did attempt suicide
- I did not return to year 2 of my degree
- I returned home developed Agoraphobia and spend the next **8 years in my room** gaming online.
- I felt trapped and was in an emotional turmoil, I became suicidal again.





- I attended the **Transition Event** – this experience really helped me prepare for those first few days in a new environment
- I was put in a really friendly flat, with access to a warden. This made me feel part of the student community
- Foundation Year team were incredibly approachable and helpful
- Student Services provided a safe place for me to come when I needed to vent or process information
- At the end of my foundation year I felt I had been well supported to gain many important life skills. I felt very settled and was feeling quite excited for the beginning of my Degree course.

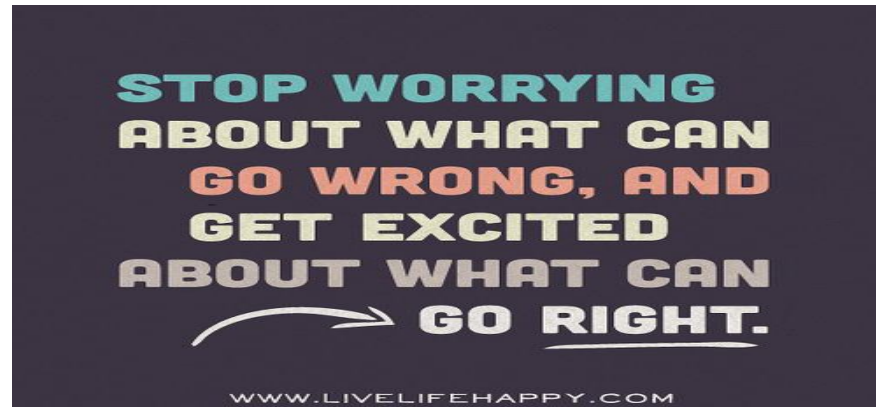


**DECIDE.
COMMIT.
SUCCEED.**

I returned to University feeling very determined, I set myself many challenges all of which I achieved:

- I became a Course Rep
- I signed up for the Cardiff Met Award and achieved it
- I created a society called Travel Language and Culture Society
- I applied for and won a Scholarship to learn Spanish in Barcelona
- I applied for Erasmus + and am hoping to go to Indonesia in October
- I am a student Ambassador
- I became an Ambassador for the Transition Event run by Student Services





- Feeling supported has helped me to continue with a very positive mind set, and become a very successful student.
- Although I still experience negative thoughts, and high levels of anxiety, I know how where I can to get help to manage these feelings.
- I am strong enough to be more independent and fulfil my ambition of travelling through out Europe and very soon Internationally.
- I have been to the darkest place and don't want to go back there, I want to help other people to also change their mind-set and get the skills to help manage their own anxiety/fear.



**IT IS MY PLAN TO CONTINUE TO BECOME MORE
INDEPENDENT, AND MEET NEW AND INTERESTING
PEOPLE THROUGH TRAVEL.
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING**

