MY EXPERIENCE OF EIT
(AND BEYOND)

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Co-produced with Lauren Cox
Today I am here to talk about me and my journey through mental health services.

I am a 29 year old mum of two from the Warrington area.

I live with my two children Logan (4) and Jessica (2).

I have worked as a nursery nurse and have had my own shop, working as a medium.
Up and down - abuse from family and friends (emotional, physical, neglect)

Seen a lot of things, bullied for being different and because of my family

Loved swimming, couldn’t do it due to physical problem, got into drugs.

Job aged 14 to pay for drugs

Experience of training course, childcare

Met my ex partner, engaged 21, stopped using drugs

Had my first baby (Logan), everything was going well
SPIRITUALITY AND WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

- Spirituality; big part of my life. I see it as a gift and I use it to help others
- Lots of my family have spiritual experiences
- Seen my first spirit age 4
- Age 18 I went to spiritualist church and was told to develop my gift
- Age 21 started doing reiki & crystal healing & opened my shop
- Ex partner didn’t want spiritualist stuff around children
- Closed shop; angry I couldn’t do something I loved
- Became pregnant with Jessica and started spiritual healing again
HAVING MY SECOND BABY

- Found out I was pregnant for the second time when I had gallstones!
- Had to move my baby twice
- Conflicting opinions with ex-partner
- Multiple procedures which could have harmed the baby - x-ray, cameras internally to remove gallstones. 16 weeks pregnant removed my gallbladder
- Away from my son
- Traumatic birth... breach, caesarian
- What happened next...?
MY MIRACLE BABY!

She arrived perfect. I was overwhelmed! I felt unbelievably happy—I had my kingdom; king, queen, princess and prince. I was back on the ward within an hour breastfeeding her against all odds. Buzzing and overwhelmed!
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...

Argued about abortion again

Feeling elated - partner refusing to go along with my fantasy which seemed like reality

Came home after having Jessica - Lack of sleep, effects of morphine

Seeing things, full of rage. Threatened to kill ex-partner with a knife

Phoned auntie Joan - took me to the GP, assessment team. Social worker & crisis team came, section 2, taken to the Mother and Baby Unit.
POSTPARTUM PSYCHOSIS

MBU - infections in my water and breast milk

Symptoms; mixing people up, people talking through me, confused, information overload

Most horrific experience but the feeling was amazing; thought I was a goddess!

11 week admission; positive experience, learnt a lot.

Accessed lots of activists. Ward groups weren’t great - I was different to the other mums (chatty, energetic)

Meds - olanzapine & zopiclone & Lorazepam - still no sleep!

Perinatal team worked with me on the ward (EIT joint worked my case after discharge)
Met with a psychologist and participated in; IMAGINE — Feasibility study of Triple P for Baby Positive Parenting Programme for Mothers with Serious Mental Health Difficulties

I finished the whole workbook in 2 hours!

After discharge I received phone-calls for 12 weeks from my psychologist after being in the study.
Jessica turned 1 and my care was transferred to EIT. Visits every week (emotional & practical support) and access to 24 hour support if needed. A care plan was developed with me and I had copies.
AFTER HOSPITAL & MY SECOND EPISODE OF PSYCHOSIS

- Things improved, but not realised all the other things impacting upon me

- Came off Olanzapine & everything came crashing - bomb had gone off in my brain!

- Went to a festival, lots to drink. Rowed with ex and rage resurfaced. Hadn’t been taking my medication properly, poor sleep, arguing with family

- Contacted out of hours services: Section 2 (9 weeks) - rows with other patients, limited activities, took me ages to come down (high)

- Took a while to get my meds right

- Back out of hospital, it was my time for CBT
I was helped with my anxiety, understanding psychosis and learned to plan and problem solve

I made a list of goals I wanted to achieve and we worked through these one by one

1. Understand psychosis better overall - are experiences psychosis or the spirit world?
2. Be more in the ‘here and now’ without worrying so much about the past and future
3. Learn to be honest about my experiences
WORKING ON GOAL 1 - MY INITIAL THEORIES ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES

1. It is a mental illness (50%)

2. It is a chemical imbalance in my brain due to stress/difficult emotions & anxiety (50%)

3. It is the evil side of the spirit world trying to communicate with me (70%)

4. I have been possessed (100%)

5. I have been cursed by the devil because I am a witch (100%)
MY FORMULATION

What Happens?
- Traumatic birth
- Lack of support from partner
- Doing too much
- Strange experiences at the festival
- Nightmares about grim reaper trying to kill me (witch hunter trying to get me)

How I make sense of it
- He doesn’t love me anymore
- I wanted the perfect family life - ruined
- They have come from Mount Everest
  - I am an alien
- The devil is coming for me, he wants my soul

Beliefs about myself & others
- I am cursed
- I am alone
- Others can’t be trusted (especially men)

What I do
- Keep it to myself
- Carry on as normal
- Overthink/ruminate
- Think the worst
- Blame self
- Compare self to others
- Read about protection spells

How it makes me feel
- Angry
- Exhausted
- Depressed
- Scared
- Anxious
- High/powerful/strong

Life Experiences
- Violence from mum
- Sister (attempted kidnap)
- Forced to grow up and look after me and my siblings
- Trouble at school (set a fire, expelled)
- Regret & hatred towards mum - Wished I hadn’t been born
- Felt Dad chose drugs over us
- Fears the devil wanted me
- Depressed when having Logan, hid it due to fears he would be taken

Appraisals & behaviours were key targets for interventions
HELPFUL CBT STRATEGIES LINKED TO MY PROBLEMS AND GOALS

Psycho-education & normalisation (limited understanding, learnt of impacts of stress)

Cognitive: Reviewing the evidence; challenge and review; What would Auntie Joan say/do?

Use of maintenance cycles; pinpoint difficult emotion, stopping and understanding reasons, reacting differently

Problem Solving – 6 step approach

Graded exposure
CBT HOMEWORK

worry log, worry challenges, positive counterbalancing thoughts to worry
MY NEW THEORIES ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES

1. It is a mental illness (100%) – went through trauma, sleep deprivation. Mind and body both under pressure triggered symptoms

2. It is a chemical imbalance in my brain due to stress/difficult emotions & anxiety (100%)

3. It is the evil side of the spirit world trying to communicate with me (0%)

4. I have been possessed (0%)

5. I have been cursed by the devil because I am a witch (0%)
HOW CBT HELPED

CBT HELPED ME 'UNSUPRESS' MY EMOTIONS – DIDN'T REALISE HOW MUCH I HAD AVOIDED THROUGH NOT DEALING WITH STRESS AND USING DRUGS

CBT HELPED GIVE ME A CLEAR MIND, HELPED ME UNDERSTAND PSYCHOSIS, PRIORITISE THINGS I ENJOY & MAKE TIME FOR ME. HELPED ME UNDERSTAND ANXIETY AND MY TRIGGERS

I KNOW WHAT EXISTS AND WHAT DOESN'T BUT I STILL TAKE TIME TO QUESTION EXPERIENCES – BREAK IT DOWN AND BRUSH IT OFF!
Relapse Prevention Plan

Early Psychosis Intervention Program

Client Name: Tonya Rocha
Clinician Name: Telephone Number:

Listed below are some of the more common warning signs of relapse.

With your EPI Clinician:
- Write in additional warning signs that you noticed when the psychosis was developing (your EPI Clinician will help you determine whether they are strong warning signs or not).
- Develop a plan of action outlining what to do if warning signs are present. You should also consult with your psychiatrist to see if they would recommend any medication strategies (e.g., raising the dose, using an additional medication to help with sleep, etc.) in response to the presence of certain signs.

Remember: sometimes warning signs will be the same as they were before the first episode, however, sometimes these warning signs can be completely different. Therefore, be alert to all early warning signs.

The following symptoms are very strong warning signs:
- Hallucinations
- Stress
- Delusions
- Paranoia
- Disorganization of thoughts
- Changes in sleep patterns (too much or too little)
- Feelings of anxiety
- Agitation

The following symptoms may be normal reactions to stress or they may be early warning signs of relapse. Evaluate their duration, severity, and how much they are impairing functioning.
- Feeling refreshed after almost no sleep for several days
- Feeling tired or irritable
- Tiredness

Action Plan:
1. Get some rest
2. Ask family and friends for help
3. Phone Hayley

Warrington Home Treatment Team
Working hours: Mon-Sun 8am-8pm
01925 664000

Night Practitioner
Working hours: Mon-Sun 8pm-8am
01925 664000

If in an emergency, you can attend Warrington A&E department.

RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN & THERAPY BLUEPRINT
WHERE I AM NOW & MY BELIEFS ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES

- New belief; ‘I am a spiritual person with a very open mind which makes me sensitive. When I have a lot of stress it might make me vulnerable to experiencing psychotic symptoms.’

- I also believe psychosis is an emotional imbalance due to a lack of sleep, stress and anxiety.

- What I would say to others; do what you love, enjoy life & sleep well!

- I still have high and low days – I just know how to manage my stress/anger now

- I am back to confident ‘Tan’. Illness has changed me for the better; I can understand and deal with others
WHATS NEXT?

- I have moved house away from my grandma’s and developed a routine with the kids
- I’m currently writing a book and am starting to do my own meditation classes
- I have been involved in other events within the NHS i.e. mental health awareness day, perinatal research event
- I want to start support work and possibly train in psychology! In order to help others like me and to spread light
QUESTIONS PLEASE