

Case Study

Sharon was diagnosed with ADHD when she was 6 and Asperger's Syndrome when she was 13 years old. She is now 16 years old and attends high school.

Nursery through to secondary school was fraught with difficulty for Sharon as she struggled to cope with being in a formal learning environment. Sharon has mostly formed relationships with other young people who themselves have difficult or troubled lives. These relationships tend to be very intense and all-consuming for Sharon. Friendships have consistently ended in rancour, leaving Sharon feeling angry, bitter and unwilling to be in classes with her ex-friends. When she was in second year Sharon and her mother requested a move to another high school as they felt that Sharon would benefit from a fresh start with a new peer group.

Sharon has experienced and indulged in cyber bullying. She enjoys using social media but this has often resulted in confrontation with her peers which carried on into school and led to Sharon refusing to attend. Sharon's mental health and emotional well-being suffered greatly during a particularly bad period of arguments with others on the internet.

Since attending high school Sharon has had intensive individual input from a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services nurse and an autism specialist teacher. She also attended a group for girls on the autism spectrum run by these two workers. Specialist input has mainly focused on building Sharon's social awareness and understanding and her ability to recognise and handle her thoughts and emotions.

Strategies were given to Sharon's teachers to support her in class and to help them recognise and respond to her signs of stress and anxiety. For the past year Sharon has had work experience at a local nursery and has thrived in this environment. She is now on a reduced timetable at school and receives in-class support from a learning assistant and out-of-class individual support from the principal teacher pupil support. Sharon has developed a very good relationship with the principal teacher pupil support and she enjoys the sanctuary of the pupil support base. She passed several standard grades and is now on course to achieving additional qualifications.