

MIND MATTERS

I found the group meetings at the Weight Management Service were 100 times more beneficial to me than the zoom meetings I now attend. The interaction of the “live” meeting was easier to follow, and I was better able to focus on the discussion. If I wanted to join in or ask a question I could do so easily. I’m a bit of a technophobe and not used to computers, I was less comfortable with the virtual meetings. Either way the Compassion Focus meetings were very important to me.



Laurence Hoey

I attended almost every week for many months. When something works for you, you want to avail of every opportunity. For this reason, the weekly journey from Co Louth to Loughlinstown in South Dublin seemed short for the long-term benefits. There is a saying “The road to a friend’s house is never long” the clinic was my friend. You get out of things what you put in. People are willing to go that extra bit to help you in return.

The numbers in attendance varied from week to week. Some people would come two or three times and then maybe miss some weeks. But there were always the regular faces. Some may have not known enough about it to attend but also it may not have been right for them. Some people don’t like to talk about personal things. It’s too hard. When I started to go first, I would bite my tongue and not want to talk. Now I will talk, and if one other person gets help from it that is good. There was no agenda to be followed each week.

The discussion was led by those in attendance on the day. You could pick up where you left off or not.

There were more females than men attending. The men were more likely to hold back or not attend as frequently. There are people who can attend these things regularly but then there are those who turn up only when things are bad or they realise they need help. These meetings helped me realise where I was, and at least by attending I'm hoping that I'm not going back there to where I was.

There was some meditation involved and it was up to you how deep you went into it. The first couple of times I went in I thought this wasn't for me, but then I got used to it after a few sessions and it was good. In the beginning my mind might be wandering off to other things like what the traffic would be like on the way home. My head used to be getting ahead of me. But then I learnt to slow down. The relaxation made it easier to approach problems and deal with them better in my head.

The problem still needed to be sorted of course but it put it into perspective.

Some people had tears at different stages. Some wouldn't say what made them cry. They would be talking the same as you at the start, but you got the sense they were full, and the talking was doing them good. It was an outlet. They had no other place to turn. They didn't need to say why they had tears. They knew what was said in that room was kept in that room. The class tapped into feelings and emotions. A lot of emotion which sometimes took a while for it to get released.

It didn't make me feel nervous about what might be brought up at the meeting. I never felt uncomfortable. There was a point that I brought something up but , if we think about it, there is always something that can get into our heads to upset us. If someone mentioned their problem, it might not be my problem, but it helped you think of how to deal with a similar situation you did have. We could have different problems, affecting us in different ways or the same problem in different ways but hearing someone else discuss it would help put it into perspective. Someone could mention something going on for them and I wouldn't even have to say anything, but I could be going through the same thing and have

a moment of realising that and learning from their perspective.

On the journey home I would think about things that had been said, or for that matter I might put on the radio. But I would come back to it again. It could take several sessions before something might kick in at a later stage, but it does eventually click.

I used to take to the fridge and eat when upset and didn't care less what was in there, I ate it. The preparation for surgery forced my hand to start thinking right but I had to continue it. I know after bariatric surgery I can't eat certain foods, but it took a long time to get my head where I wanted it to be. Now I'm very conscious of what I eat. I changed plate size etc. I still go to slimming world every week and it helps keep me focused. I need a focus. And that's what the Compassion Focus classes did but in a different way. I would go back and attend again in Loughlinstown if I feel the need. It's not just a once off, I'd be first man through the door.

Sometimes I would not let my left hand know what my right hand was doing, probably from being hurt in the past a few times. Now I cope a wee bit better, but I do need to keep at it. And when there are things happening it's easier to see how to cope, I wouldn't have known how to cope with it before. These are skills I learned through the meetings.

If life was going to be easy someone else would be doing it.

Laurance Sheils

Compassionate Therapy Group changed my view and attitude towards food and myself. I now have more Compassion and Patience with my choices and not condemning my bad days

- Marion Bagnall Hare