TESTIMONIAL

ONE WOMEN'S JOURNEY

THE FOLLOWING TESTIMONIAL WAS WRITTEN AND SUBMITTED TO RCT BY A LADY WHO WE SUPPORTED AND WHO WANTED TO LET US KNOW THE DIFFERENCE THAT SUPPORT MADE FOR HER

The below is in the lady's own voice and is unchanged apart from removing the name of the counsellor for privacy reasons.

When I first came to Rochdale Connections Trust (RCT), I was at one of the lowest points in my life. I had experienced domestic abuse and was trying to come to terms with everything that had happened. There were police reports, safeguarding processes, and the overwhelming emotional impact that comes with rebuilding your life after abuse. At the time, I felt emotionally drained, anxious, and uncertain about what the future would look like for me and my two daughters.

Being referred to RCT was one of the most important steps in my healing journey.

One of the first programmes I attended was the **Free From Harm** course, and I can honestly say it was incredibly insightful and life-changing. The programme helped me understand domestic abuse in ways I had never considered before. Topics such as the Cycle of Violence, Childhood Experiences and how they shape us, Understanding Trauma, Coercive Control, Digital Abuse, Jealousy and Obsession, and recognising unhealthy relationship patterns gave me knowledge that I believe every woman should have. It helped me realise that many behaviours I had experienced were forms of abuse that I had not previously recognised.

The sessions were delivered in a safe and supportive environment where I never felt judged. Instead, I felt listened to, understood, and empowered. For the first time in a long time, I realised that I was not alone.

Another memorable part of the programme was the family residential that I attended with my two daughters. Spending time with other families who had experienced similar challenges reminded us that healing can happen in community. It gave us the opportunity to relax, reflect, laugh again, and create positive memories together. It was a valuable experience for all three of us and helped strengthen our bond as a family.

Perhaps the greatest gift RCT gave me was assigning <name removed> as my counsellor.

When I first started counselling, I honestly didn't think I would be able to open up to someone I had never met before. However, <name removed> created such a safe, compassionate, and non-judgemental space that, week after week, I found myself sharing parts of my life that I had kept hidden for years.

One of the most powerful aspects of our sessions was reflecting on my childhood, documenting my life journey, and exploring the experiences that had shaped me. Those exercises helped me understand myself on a much deeper level. They allowed me to recognise patterns, appreciate my resilience, and begin to see my experiences not only through the lens of pain but also through the lessons they had taught me.

<name removed> had a remarkable way of asking the right questions without ever making me feel pressured. She helped me make sense of my thoughts and emotions, challenged me gently when I needed

it, and encouraged me to believe in myself again. Our sessions became a space where I could pause, reflect, heal, and gradually rebuild my confidence.

Although my counselling sessions have now ended, the lessons I learned continue to guide me every day.

Today, I feel stronger, more self-aware, and more hopeful about the future. While healing is an ongoing journey, I now have the confidence, knowledge, and emotional tools to keep moving forward.

I will always be grateful to the entire team at Rochdale Connections Trust for believing in me, supporting me without judgement, and walking alongside me during a time when I needed it most.

Their work changes lives, and I am proud to be one of the many women whose life has been positively transformed because of their care, compassion, and dedication.