

This story was filmed and recorded during early February 2006 for ‘Hear all about it!’

This campaign is a wonderful selection of inspiring adult learning stories told by the learners themselves. The highlights from Tracey’s interview which can be watched and read; this is the transcript of the whole interview. The on-line learning champions would be delighted if Her stories were used to promote learning in your organisation, college or charity. You can link you webpage to the West Midlands Learning Directory – Hear all about it! page www.wmld.org/pages/hear_all_about_it/.



Tracey’s story -

“I’m working fulltime now. I’m an administration Assistant at British Home Stores. I finished fulltime education, I think it was in 1986 and I did a year of college after that, but unfortunately theory-wise I’m not brilliant, so I went and got a job. And since then I’ve been bringing up my son. So that was basically my education.

I went to college for 5 years and studied catering and I’ve also done computers, so I’m now computer literate. And I was doing woodwork as well, and I’ve done a few summer courses for catering as well, which was really good.

I’ve suffered with depression for a long time and it was through the mental health trust that I got back in to education because I’d become very isolated with life in general. They suggested it would be a good move for me to go back to education. And that’s how I started, and I ended up stopping there for 5 years, which was really good. I did enjoy it; I’ve got to be honest.

I’m not studying at the moment, because unfortunately with the job that I’ve got now, (which I didn’t think I would ever get) by the time I get back home I’m just so tired. But I do really miss it and I would consider doing more.

The computers is probably what is standing me in good stead at the moment, but my job previous to this was actually in the college where I was learning – I got a job in the kitchen, because catering is what I wanted to do and that was my main focus in the end. And it was only due to unfortunately having an operation I’ve had to have on my wrists that I’m unable to do the catering side of it now. But overall I got out of it, confidence, which I was really lacking, so I think that was the main factor for me the confidence side of it. Because I couldn’t hold a decent conversation with somebody, my head was always down. And now it’s not, I can hold my own.

At the moment I’ve moved up in to the admin department. I started off in services, which I really did enjoy but I’ve requested an interest in the admin side of it, especially payroll. So I’m looking now to see what courses are available to help me in that role because again I would like to progress further and go in to management, if possible. So there’s got to be a course out there somewhere.

I didn’t have any of the confidence or any self-esteem and I don’t think without the college and the environment there that I would have done it at all. The

training itself gave me a good basis for going back in to the workplace, which has been fantastic, because I'd actually got the job at the college whilst I was still doing the college courses as well. So doing it hand in hand was very beneficial. Again the confidence side of it and the self-esteem because I didn't think I'd ever be able to do it. And that's mainly it really. It's just a big morale boost and I'd recommend it to anybody.

My mum had actually seen the job advertised, and I used to work there years ago, and she gave me the number and I phoned them and they asked me for an interview the following day. I got offered the job straight away, which was quite shocking but really pleasing. I'd been there 8 weeks and I got promoted to Supervisor and now, like I said, I've progressed up to the Admin. So overall, it's been a very good learning curve for me, A very, very good learning curve.

I would like to go in to the management side of it if possible. They do the opportunity for it where I am at the moment. At the moment I'm still lacking that little bit of confidence to go for it. Although I'm confident enough in myself now, I can communicate with people very well, but it's just that little extra push which will come in time and I will go for it.

This project was managed by jo.knight@niace.org.uk - who can be contracted for more information. She works for NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education). Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council funded the project.

