

FROM ISOLATION TO ADVOCACY: GAIL'S JOURNEY IN FAMILY SUPPORT

For the first time, Gail, one of Recovery Cymru's dedicated Trustees, has decided to share her deeply personal story. Her journey, marked by love, loss, and resilience, underscores the importance of family support services for those affected by alcohol and other drugs.

The Beginning of a Personal Struggle

"I haven't shared my story before, mainly out of respect for my first mother-in-law, but as she is no longer with us, it is not an issue now," Gail begins. Her narrative takes us back to her first marriage, where she was married to someone struggling with alcohol use. "I got married at age 19 and was widowed at age 27. He was 33 when he died, as a direct result of alcohol use."

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The Absence of Support

During this tumultuous period, Gail found herself alone and without support. "There was literally nowhere to get any support, which is why I am excited about Recovery Cymru delivering family support work," she explains. At the time, she was working in Blaenau Gwent, setting up a Young Persons project. The isolation and helplessness she felt drove her to channel her anger and frustration into something positive.

Healing Through Helping Others

The work not only allowed Gail to support others but also helped her cope with her own struggles. "This work helped me deal with my own struggles and I was so proud that family support work was embedded within the Team."



Advocacy for Family Support Services

This experience was the catalyst for her lifelong advocacy for family support services. Together with Sue Stone and Dr. Zelda Summers, Gail helped set up the first Home Detox Team for opiate and alcohol users in Wales. "I was the Family Support Worker in this team – I didn't want families to go through the treatment feeling so alone and helpless like I did."

Becoming a Trustee

Gail admits that talking about her lived experiences isn't easy, but she recognises the power of sharing her story. Her journey from feeling isolated and helpless to becoming a beacon of support for others is a proof of the life-changing power of family support.

A Powerful Message

"I didn't want families to go through the treatment feeling so alone and helpless like I did," Gail's words resonate deeply, highlighting the profound impact of compassionate support on both individuals and families.

Gail's story is a powerful reminder of why family and friends support is essential and how lived experiences can drive positive change. Recovery Cymru is proud to have her as part of our team, advocating for and implementing the very support she once needed.

Explore our Family and Friends Peer Support:

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