

Dotty's Story

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“This year has been one of pushing boundaries and growing in confidence for me. Without Feathers Futures, I wouldn't have accomplished all I have done, and I certainly wouldn't be in the positive position I find myself in today.

“I moved to Gorleston two and a half years ago, completely alone, without knowing anyone. In an attempt to connect, I joined a local Facebook group, but instead of finding friendships, I felt bullied by a number of people. This experience was devastating—it knocked my confidence down to almost nothing, and I felt utterly alone. With no one to turn to, my mental health took a severe hit.

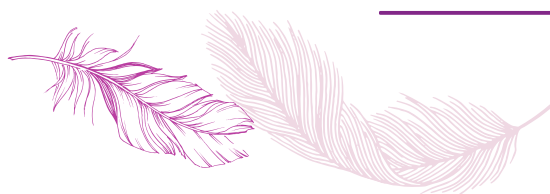
“Desperate for help, I went to see a doctor, and it was there that a mental health nurse recommended Feathers Futures to me. I remember emailing the Feathers Futures team, feeling incredibly anxious and nervous. Walking into that first drop-in session was one of the hardest things I've done for a while. I was still very upset and unsure of what to expect.

“But I quickly realised that Feathers Futures was different. The small groups and the diverse range of ages made me feel comfortable. The volunteers were so welcoming—they made me feel assured and safe. I had a brief one-to-one with Jo, who helped me work through my trust issues. Over time, I began to rebuild that trust, and when I left the centre after that first session, I felt something I hadn't felt in a long time: energised. I wasn't alone anymore. I had found a safe space, a place where I could go for a cuppa and feel supported.

“My connection with Feathers Futures grew from there. I visited again on International Women's Day—what better place to celebrate such an occasion? I brought cupcakes to show my appreciation, a small gesture for the enormous impact they had on me.

“A year later, I joined the "All About Me" course, which taught me how to cope better. Even though I still felt vulnerable and fragile, I began to understand that it was time to focus on myself. For too long, I had put myself to one side, always prioritising others over my own well-being.

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“Through Feathers Futures, I gained the confidence to get out there and learned how to assess my feelings. I reaffirmed the fact that it’s okay to experience both positive and negative emotions and that it’s normal to feel things—whether emotional or physical. They taught me that anyone can change, from positive to negative and vice versa. The key is knowing how to make those changes. I realised that I matter, that I am likeable. Feathers Futures taught me the importance of self-love, self-esteem, and self-confidence. They equipped me with tactics and tools that I use daily, empowering me to control and change my thoughts.

“I also joined their art groups, which became another source of strength for me. If I could describe Feathers Futures in one word, it would be “supportive.” It’s a wonderful, inclusive place where women can reach out when they need help. Everyone there is lovely and welcoming, and no one is made to feel out of place. There are so many different women, each with their own stories and experiences, and I’ve learned that I, too, have knowledge to share.

“I would tell other women not to be afraid to take that first step. Don’t worry, don’t be anxious—Feathers Futures supports you. They understand how it feels to be stressed and anxious, and they help you find hobbies or activities that can ease that stress. They have counsellors, women’s products, and a community where everyone talks to each other, so no one feels alone. I even participated in an art class and made a “Worry Box.” That experience alone boosted my confidence so much.

“Before Feathers Futures, I felt like a waste of space, like I should just disappear. I was so low, but they helped me understand that there will always be bumps in the road. What matters is how we deal with them, and thanks to Feathers Futures, I now feel equipped to handle whatever life throws my way. They encouraged me to seek therapy, which was life-changing and helped me take steps that have completely redirected my life.

“Feathers Futures was the catalyst for so many positive changes in my life, and now I’m using what I’ve learned to support others. Recently, I helped a lady who was at the seafront in tears, contemplating life. I shared with her three steps she could do to help her feel better and reassured her that help is available.

“Without Feathers Futures, I wouldn’t be where I am today. They gave me the tools, the confidence, and the support I needed to not only change my own life but to help others change theirs too. Thank you!”

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