

PRRT - A CLIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Over the years at PRRT the various departments have written articles for police publications in order to raise awareness of the services we provide. We have highlighted the range and effectiveness of the three main services and told you about their impact and benefit to our clients. A few months ago I approached a client who was a regular attendee at our Tai Chi courses and had told me that, as well as attending our physiotherapy department, he had used the other departments at PRRT. I asked if he would consider writing something about his experiences as a client of PRRT, entirely from his perspective. I suppose I wanted to see if we really did what we thought we did and what we have described over the years. After reassurance that he did not need to include any personal or specific details at all, he agreed to give it a go with the proviso that nothing would be published without his prior agreement. This is what he wrote:

“ Apart from various useful aspects of retraining in the early days of my retirement from the Police Service, my experience of the services provided by PRRT was somewhat limited.

Five years into an active retirement I was stricken by the rapid onset of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Overnight I went from being rational and in control of my life, to a wreck! This was triggered by a simple event that put me mentally and physically in a place where I did not want to be.

My GP, after diagnosis, suggested Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with the recommendation that I follow a private route. After exploring various options I arrived at the door of PRRT. Not least of my considerations was security! I was assessed and started a series of therapy sessions.

At the beginning I hated going. I did not want to be seen there. I had the idea in my head that I would be looked down on by my peers and could be held to ridicule. These silly things only serve to show how erratically my brain was behaving at that time. It took until about my fourth session when it started to dawn on me that I was gratified to be there. I was proud of myself for facing up to and recognising that I needed the help that I was getting. Most importantly I realised I was not alone. With this newfound feeling of improved well-being came a determination to “stay the course”. This combined with the understanding that what had happened to me was not my fault. I was only human and years of onslaught that had led to my condition were, again, not my fault. I finished the sessions and found myself in much better mind place.

To say I was cured would not be right. I was helped. I was taught how to rationalise my thoughts and therefore how to cope. PTSD does not disappear; it's always there to varying

degrees. That was nearly ten years ago. Like many I have been through some more of life's difficulties but when these arise they are met with the tools taught to me at PRRT. For which I will be forever grateful.

Some years later I ran into a medical problem of a physical nature.

My knees and then my shoulders seized up. I had to keep a walking stick in car, as there were occasions when I could not have moved about without one. Such infirmity while painfully limiting mobility can also cause a detrimental effect on your self-esteem and confidence.

After receiving a referral from my GP, I looked around for a treatment centre. I felt that I needed to be somewhere that would allow me to feel relaxed and in a secure environment. Somewhere that did not hold any apprehensions of enquiries as to previous employment etc. Having been comfortable with my earlier experience, I thought I would give PRRT a try.

This proved to be a good decision. Generally you are assessed and treated by the same Physiotherapist. Their training is to a very high standard and they continually keep abreast of new developments. A wide range of treatment is available, including Acupuncture and Ultrasound. After some weeks I found myself in a much-improved state. This in itself was good but things did not stop there. My Therapist suggested that my general health and well-being could benefit if I attended some of the fitness classes held at PRRT.

To cut a long story short I opted for the Tai Chi course. It's less than an hour a week and currently has both beginners and advanced classes. The craic is also mighty. That's not to say that it's not taken seriously, it is, but in a convivial, enjoyable and friendly way. Three forms of modern/modified Tai Chi are taught. They cover a wide range of gentle movement and help, in my opinion, to retain and improve flexibility pain management and balance. It not only helps the body, it is also very good for the mind and concentration. It has certainly made a big difference in my life.

I still take an active part in my sport and compete at a respectable level. I don't believe that this would be possible without the help I have received from PRRT and its very professional Staff. ”

I have to say that when I received this account I was very moved. I have worked for PRRT for 15 years and I know how committed our teams are to helping our clients achieve their best outcome. I know what we do and that we do it well, however hearing it from this client's personal perspective helps validate the effort all our staff put in on a daily basis to meet the needs of our client group.

PRRT is based at Maryfield, Holywood and provides psychology, physiotherapy, personal development and training to the retired and serving police population. PSNI employees can access our healthcare services via referrals from PSNI occupational health. Serving officers can access personal development and training directly. For further information or to make an appointment please call 028 9042 7788 or email: servicesadmin@prrt.org.



For further information on all PRRT services please visit www.prrt.org.