

**Sue Le Marquand**

**Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling**

About five or six years ago, I was made aware of three people, reasonably close to me, who had been suffering with their Mental Health but who had hidden it extremely well. These three had sadly taken their own lives, leaving behind a myriad of questions and incredulity of how we, as a society, could not have noticed how bad their distress was. After this I approached a few charities involved with Mental Health and volunteered at all of them while gaining valuable knowledge and insight into the huge issue that Mental Health presented.

My interest piqued and I realised I wanted to be proactive in supporting people to manage their symptoms before helplessness and desperation took over. I became curious about what might be involved in training as a counsellor and initially signed up for the 10-week introduction course, never imagining that counselling would very soon take over my life in the way that it has done.

The courses at Highlands have been second to none in my opinion. From the very first introductory session right through Levels 2,3 and 4, I have been supported, encouraged, guided, and kept highly motivated throughout. Every single tutor I have had, has been filled with a passion for this vocation which has subsequently rubbed off on me. I have lived, worked, and breathed these years as a direct result of the huge range of knowledge and incredible experiences of the tutors I've been lucky enough to have teach me. No matter is too small to query or too large to be managed and dealt with in an appropriate manner.

All tutors in my experience have been highly professional and adhered strictly to policy and procedures, while also making themselves available for all idiosyncrasies of the wealth of students who apply. I can't thank them enough for teaching me in a way that has been suitable for me individually and allowing me an insight into the huge range of possibilities for work and further education.

I feel extremely sad as I reach the end of my diploma. While covering many years, it feels as though it's gone by in a flash, and I just want to keep on absorbing more and more of the tutor's knowledge as I know we have barely scraped the surface. I will

continue to work in the Mental Health arena and hope to gain work as a counsellor at the very least or go on to develop my own private practice alongside some fellow students. I hope to continue learning and benefiting from the higher education offered at Highlands by applying for the Level 5 course planned for the new year. As an older student, accepted and encouraged just the same as my younger peers, I really don't want this journey to end.

Highlands, for me, was an obvious choice. I liked the fact that it has always been in the background offering courses to adults who, for whatever reasons, feel they would like to continue learning and discovering new aspects of themselves. It is convenient being in town and offers wide open rooms to study in, with outside green space to sit outside when breaking for lunch. It also has the added benefit of substantial parking areas. Mostly I chose Highlands because of the tutors and the ample support always available, which isn't necessarily true of other venues. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have managed to obtain places on these courses when I was ready to access them, but still believe if I had had to wait for a Highlands Counselling course, I would rather wait than look at the competition.

My advice to anyone thinking of embarking on a counselling course would be, take it. Do it. No question in my mind. Even if you are not sure you want to be an actual counsellor, the skills learnt, and the reflections made involving your own self-awareness will be invaluable for all that life has to throw at you. The insights into individualistic behaviour and what may lie beneath the initial judgement we lay on someone will open your eyes and encourage you to be more understanding of society as a whole. No matter your age or career/life stage, these courses will be hugely beneficial to everyone.

### ***Links to courses below***

[Level 2 Certificate in Counselling](#)

[All counselling courses](#)