



## JANE'S STORY

### Building my health, confidence, and resilience

I call myself a 'retired Army wife', because my husband and I weren't together when he was serving. He left the Army seven years ago, then 6.5 years ago he was sent to prison.

At that time, I didn't know where to turn for help. I posted on The Ripple Pond Members Facebook group about my husband having PTSD and being in prison, and members responded straight away, to say 'we're here for you' and 'what can we do for you?'.

Two members even called me, with one talking to me until 2am, and staying in touch with me afterwards. She was the person who set me the challenge of finding three positives every day – without using the same one twice in a week – and asked me to send them to her in a message. This was absolutely a saving grace for me.

What also helped was the fact that I was never asked why my husband was in prison, and nobody ever told me to walk away from him. They just understood, and they supported me. At a time when all other support was focused on my husband, The Ripple Pond supporting me as an individual made a big difference.

After I'd shared my story with the community, a dozen other members shared that they were – or had been - in a similar situation to mine. Those conversations helped me because they made me feel useful, and they gave me the chance to show other people the light at the end of the tunnel. The community, and having the support of The Ripple Pond, even got me to a point where I was able to do a lot of advocacy for my husband whilst he was in prison.

Funnily enough, it had actually been my husband who suggested that I join The Ripple Pond in the first place, to give me a private outlet where I could relate to people in similar positions.

The fact that it's grown so much in such a short space of time shows how much The Ripple Pond is needed. I like that there's never any set commitment or pressure with The Ripple Pond. The services and support are there when you want it and help is always at hand. Members don't have regular free time, so the fact that The Ripple Pond can fit around our lives, or we can drop in and out, is really important. Nobody thinks twice if a member posts for support after having been quiet for 6 months – we just give the support that's needed, without question.

There's no judgement, and everyone is willing to be there for each other. We share our common ground and our own experiences, to help answer each other's questions. That lived experience is so important, because it's a real person saying 'this has worked for us', or 'that didn't work for us'. Our knowledge grows as the number of members grows. Thank you The Ripple Pond

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