

Suzanne Constable

West Sussex Fire and Rescue

“Obviously I am still distraught about losing my husband, but thanks to the Charity, panic attacks are no longer getting in the way of my grief”



When Suzanne Constable's husband, Simon, died unexpectedly of a stroke in April, her world fell apart. They had been together for 33 years, after getting married at 16. And suddenly she had to learn who she was without her childhood sweetheart in her life.

“I was struggling, there's no two ways about it,” says Suzanne. “Everything had been slung up in the air. I didn't know how to be me without him. Also, I was having panic attacks with increased frequency that were absolutely ruining my life and getting in the way of my grief, I couldn't think about anything else.”

Suzanne was invited to spend a week at Marine Court, our centre in Littlehampton: “I thought it would either be the best thing in the world, or the worst,” she says. “I just thought, ‘if you hate it, you can just give them some money and go home’. But it turned out to be the very best thing in the world, and exactly what I needed.”

It was the panic attacks in particular that Suzanne wanted to overcome: “I needed to take back control over something that seemed uncontrollable. I'd gone from having them every now and then to every other day. Not knowing why I was getting them or how to stop them was driving me insane. The team taught me relaxation techniques and showed me how to do a mindful body scan, looking at my feelings in different ways to how I ever had. I don't know what voodoo magic they worked on me, but I haven't had a panic attack since. They also encouraged me to get back into the gym, which has always been my happy place.”

“Obviously, I am still completely distraught about losing my husband, there's nothing anyone can do about that. But now I'm in charge of my body again, and it's thanks to the Charity. I don't know what the future holds at the moment, but I'm not scared of it anymore. Bring it on. We can do this.”

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/suzanne-constable

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