

The useless tree

There is more to the world than worldliness.

A man said to Chuang Tzu: 'I have a big tree that is utterly useless. Its trunk is so knotted that no carpenter can saw it; and its branches are so twisted that they cannot be turned into handles for tools. What shall I do?'

Chuang Tzu said: 'The tall, straight trees on the mountain bring about their own destruction, because they make such excellent timber. Pure fat invites itself to be used in cooking. The lacquer tree seems to be begging to be hacked and cut. Everyone knows the use of that which is useful. Does anyone know the use of the useless? Sit under your tree and rest in silence and contemplate. Enjoy its cool shade and wonder at its beauty.

Chuang Tzu

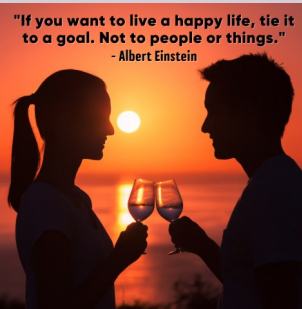


"Strengthening the mind is not done by making it move around as is done to strengthen the body, but by bringing the mind to a halt, bring it to rest."

Lankavatara Sutra

"People are as happy as they make up their minds to be."

Abraham Lincoln



"Set your heart on doing good. Do it over and over again, and you will be filled with joy."

Gautama Buddha

Spend 10 minutes plotting your energy cycles

Make yourself more efficient by figuring out how your personal energy dips and peaks throughout the day. Grab a pen and paper and write down the time of the day when you feel naturally full of energy and focus and when you feel slow and sluggish.

These times will be different for everyone. When you see where your energy peaks, you'll know to schedule demanding errands and projects during that window, instead of trying to tackle them when you feel sluggish and unfocused. This is a simple exercise that can yield huge results.

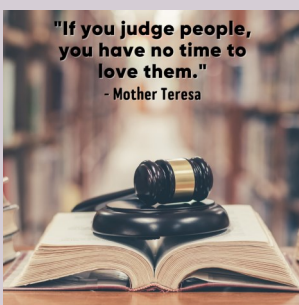
War Zone

Living with mental illness is a lot like living in a firing range. There are bullets, in the form of mood swings, anxiety, and fear being fired around and above you. Sometimes the noise of the bullets become dull and are barely discernible. This is the ceasefire we longed, hoped and prayed for. The world has become safe again. We venture into the pleasure of being alive, with our sense of alarm deactivated. It is a question that is posed with my Grow Mental Health friends often. Have I gained more from having a mental illness than I have lost? It's a difficult question to answer, and dependent on when I am asked. During the ceasefire, I can see what I have learned through my illness. I feel a peace that transcends description. This peace would not be so pronounced had I not the awfulness of depression/anxiety to compare it with. I am not Pollyanna. I experience the usual trials, tribulations, and discontents that are part of being alive but I have been strengthened by my trips to the firing range. They have made me almost immune to the small stuff. When I become unwell, when the noise of the bullets are unmistakably louder and closer my answer becomes even harder to answer. However, My Grow family remind me I am not alone in this battle. They strengthen my resolve to see this war through to the end, to dodge the bullets firing around and above me. I would not have chosen to live on this firing range, but I am the woman I am- warts and all, because of it. I like to think it has made me more empathetic, more able to reach out and understand what a person in the war zone needs to hear. Hold on to this, "You will get through this. Those bullets are dummies, and you are mistaking their noise for their danger. Take my hand, see how powerful two people together can be".

Maria

"My favorite things in life don't cost any money. It's really clear that the most precious resource we all have is time."

Steve Jobs



"Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated."

Confucius

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

Albert Einstein

Step 12– We carried Grow’s message to others in need

When we come to Grow Mental Health we are initially receivers. We may be broken, lost in the wilderness of mental suffering, with no clear direction of a pathway out. Our Grow group facilitates our journey in so many ways. We have found a safe place, where we are free to express our suffering. Knowing there will be no judgement, only understanding from others who have been there too allows us the trust to open up.

This peer support, such a foundation of the Grow Group leads us through the darkest of times. It helps us to “Endure until Cured”, and to believe in the concept of Personal Value despite our present condition. The programme gives us hope and the strength “To commit to the journey even through the tough times.” In time our recovery begins. As we become stronger we now become fully able to carry Grow’s message to others in need.

It has been said that Grow is the best kept secret. Getting the word out, in the form of leaflet distribution – for example doctors surgeries, libraries, can help bring the existence of Grow to the wider community.

We can carry Grow’s message within the Group in several ways. We all know how hard it can be to attend our first meeting. We can be that welcoming face that eases the difficulty of passing the threshold for the first timers. We want to give the message that Growers are sensitive people, attuned to how important first impressions can be.

It is important that we know The Grow Program, and are seen to follow it ourselves. In this way we become living examples of the program and its benefits. Being familiar with Grow’s Literature allows us to spread the message in our meeting. The ability to pick relevant passages for another Grower is essential for an authentic meeting.

When we take on roles as organiser/recorder we can inspire other members. Our confidence in our own ability is a testament to the transformative power of Grow, a perfect example of the maxim “ If there is hope for anyone there is hope for me”.

Contributing to the Grow Newsletter is a privileged way to carry Grow’s message further afield. We can never fully understand the impact of our efforts to follow the last step. But we can reach across the abyss to let others know. We’re here. You alone can do it, but you don’t have to do it alone.

Maria

Grow Mental Health Community Education Program

Niamh Gilmore, Grow Health & Well-Being Officer was delighted to see more than 80 participants register for this five week Program. Niamh hosted the program online introducing different key note speakers each week, all with one objective – Promotion of Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing. The program covered a variety of topics including Understanding & Promoting Positive Mental Health, Dealing with Change, Dealing with Anxiety, Healthy Mind-Set and Procrastination and Moving Forward.

If you would like to find about Niamh’s next Community Education Program or how joining Grow Mental Health can benefit you can contact Niamh on 0866063184 or niamhgilmore@grow.ie and visit grow.ie 1890 474 474



"The final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands."

Anne Frank

"Life is a challenge, meet it! Life is a dream, realize it! Life is a game, play it! Life is love, enjoy it!"

Sai Baba

"This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brains, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness."

Dalai Lama

Grow Members Out and About

A 12th step picnic in the People's Park, Dun Laoghaire was organised for Eastern Region Grow Members on 31st August. Eleven members from five different groups in the region along with Area Co-Ordinators, Clare Murphy and John Farren, met up at 2pm and enjoyed a chat over crisps, popcorn, chocolate and biscuits! The sun came out for a little while, but at 4pm the wind was a little too cold and it was time to go home for a cup of tea to warm up!

A 12th step trip to the Irish Museum of Modern Art was organised for the Eastern Region Grow Members on 28th August. 7 members from the Friday online group from far and near, Dun Laoghaire to Kerry along with John Farren, Area Co-Ordinator met up in person for the first time. An unexpected surprise was in store when they got to see the filming of Kathryn Thomas's TV Show No Place Like Home. Two enjoyable outings with many more to come.



How are we doing?

On the 17th of August a meeting was held for regional team members to meet Mary Walsh National Volunteer Coordinator and Andrea Best the National Program Coordinator. who introduced themselves and their roles. Mary would like to ask Growers the following questions. Contact Mary marywalsh@grow.ie

- What are we getting right?
- Where can we improve?
- What support do you need to carry out the role you have taken on?
- We would love to hear "A Progress Report". What's going on in your Region? Do you think it could be duplicated in other regions?
- Ideas going forward? (we may not be able to realise them but if we don't know them we definitely can't).
- Volunteer Acknowledgement– What do you think would work?

Andrea presented the online Leadership Course which is near completion. It is hoped this course will be launched on 10th Oct on International World Mental Health Day. An option to do it in paper format will also be available.

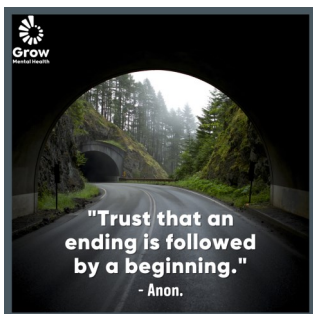
A committee is currently revising the Evaluation Form to make it more user friendly. Grow Australia has designed an app to replace the Evaluation form. This will speed up the collection of statistics, gather more accurate information and be easier to use. Grow in Ireland are eager to learn more about this development.

"An intelligent person can rationalize anything, a wise person doesn't try."

Jen Knox

"The great man is he who does not lose his child's-heart."

Mencius



"If someone offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure you can do it, say yes then learn how to do it later."

Richard Branson

Growers Poetry Denis

This poem is about my efforts to get around pain in my life rather than go through it. No prizes for guessing how that worked out...

My efforts to bubblewrap my life

Have come unstuck.

Life just wouldn't co-operate.

Sticking out at angles. Changing shape.

Now I realize I was doomed to fail.

I wanted to send myself forward post restante *

In a tidy package with a bow.

Instead I've been returned to sender

With a heaving mess of life

I barely recognize as my own.

* Post office holds post till it is collected.

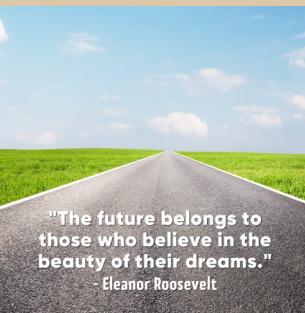
Growers Art-Cloe

My painting got me through lockdown. I have been painting flowers for the last 15 months.



"Believe you can
and you are half
way there."

Theodore
Roosevelt



What do I know about pain? I am no stranger to pain. Pain hurts. Who among us has not experienced pain of some sort? Did you, for example, ever have an earache, toothache, stomach-ache, broken mind or a fractured bone?

While I was writing this article, I became aware that September 2021 is "[Pain Awareness Month](#)" and 2022 is the "WORLD CONGRESS ON PAIN" (September 19-23). Checkout Ireland's website at the end of the newsletter.

When I am in pain, I like to remind myself that I am alive! – otherwise I tell myself I would not be feeling anything! Of course, that doesn't take away my pain. But acknowledging it does seem to make it more bearable for me. Remember, pain is the body's warning sign that there is something that needs attention.

Psychological, mental, or emotional pain are awful feelings which usually don't have a physical origin. A leading pioneer in the field – Edwin S. Shneidman – described pain as

"How much you hurt as a human being."

Most readers of the Grow Mental Health Newsletter have experience of this non-physical pain. My own experience of my group support has been hugely healing and helpful in getting me well and staying well. I have been privileged to see new people come and join the group with their pain. I have seen members commit to their weekly meeting and go on to live a more fulfilling and healthier life again. I believe it's the genuine care, love and support of the group members who have "been there "and have the "lived experience" themselves that makes the difference. I believe hope becomes alive again. I believe we are inspired by each other's story. The Grow Program and the Group Method nurture and facilitate healing. By attending regularly, we keep hope and healing from pain alive for each other and for anyone in need who enters our meeting space.

A lady, Anne (not her real name), told me how she had been knocked down in a hit and run accident. Her life was turned upside down. Anne was in so much pain she couldn't work. She became preoccupied with her pain, depressed and hard to live with. She used alcohol to self-medicate. Her sleep was disrupted terribly. She tried all sorts of medication, but she became trapped in a vicious cycle of pain, depression, alcohol, sleeplessness. She was invited to a pain management program and stayed. With the support of a multidisciplinary team, she learned more about her pain and coping mechanisms. Anne went for treatment for her AUD (Alcohol Use Disorder) [Our Step 1] She began to regain control of her life and was better able to manage her pain. She is going back to part time work in October. I told her about Grow and gave her a Grow leaflet. She thanked me for listening and went on her way. (step 12.)

What else can we do to deal with the hurt of pain?

Current research about mind and body approaches to, e.g., chronic pain, suggests that using some mind and body techniques may provide modest effects that help those dealing with pain to manage the day-to-day changes in their chronic pain symptoms. Modern pain treatment usually has an individualized plan that may include both drug/medication such as, prescription drugs, painkillers, and therapies plus NSAIDs (Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) and nonpharmacologic interventions (these do not involve the use of medications to treat pain) e.g., cognitive-behavioural therapy, talk therapy, body awareness practices, tai chi, qi gong, yoga, acupuncture, mindfulness, and biofeedback which have helped relieve some painful symptoms.

See www.chronicpain.ie for Ireland's "Pain Awareness Month" of events, talks and workshops.

If you are experiencing pain please consider consulting your medical professional.

“Failure is not the opposite of success, its part of it.”

Anon

“How much does he lack himself who must have many things?”

Sen No Rikyu

“It is a big world out there, it would be a shame not to experience it.”

J.D. Andrews

“The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.”

Michelangelo

Eastern Regional Team News

- New Grow Mental Health information leaflets and posters to be distributed to Growers over the coming weeks. Contact your Area Coordinator.
- Izabela has taken extended Maternity leave and will be back March next year. Wishing Izabela and baby Grace all the best in love, life and happiness.
- Arklow, Tallaght, Wicklow, Knocklyn , Balbriggan, Trim Newbridge have gone back to face to face meetings. It is hoped to reopen more face to face groups in the coming weeks depending on the availability of venues. In the meantime all are welcome to join the online groups which will continue. Check Grow.ie.
- Our thanks to Mr Sandeep Kumar, India’s Ambassador to Ireland, for hosting a Charity Sale of his paintings in aid Aslam and Grow. €16000 was raised for Grow. All the best Mr Kumar in your future endeavors.
- The work when completed by the Roles and Responsibilities Committee will be the basis of a new Regional Team Handbook. This will support the work of the Regional teams and give clarity around roles. A training day was held in Athlone on the 25th Sept in Radisson Blu Hotel to progress the work being done.

Group News

Some groups are being run on Zoom for the foreseeable future due to Covid 19. For links contact Area Coordinators. Some groups have reopened of face to face. Refer to the Grow website, www.grow.ie for further updates.

- Monday, Arklow, Bridge Christian Community Centre–10.00am Face to Face
- Monday, Balbriggan Community Centre– 2.00pm Face to Face
- Monday, Tallaght Village, Priory–7.00pm Face to Face
- Monday coffee morning, all welcome–11.00am Zoom
- Tuesday, new group 1–7.00pm Zoom
- Tuesday, North Dublin, North East–7.00pm Zoom
- Tuesday, Art Therapy, Face to Face - 4.30 to 6.00pm. Aisling : 0871011566.
- Wednesday, Study session of new program book– 11.00 am. Zoom
- Wednesday, Wicklow Town, Del La Salle Pastoral Centre–2.30pm Face to Face
- Wednesday, Blackrock, Dun Laoghaire –7.00pm Zoom
- Wednesday, Knocklyon, Iona Centre–7.00pm Face to Face
- Wednesday, Trim, Family Resource Centre–1.00pm Face to Face.
- Thursday, Ballyfermot/Mt Argus/Aungier Str–7.00pm Zoom
- Thursday, North Dublin, North East–7.00pm Zoom
- Friday, new group 2–7.00pm Zoom
- Bray and Clane in recess.



"If today was the last day of your life, would you want to do what you are about to do today."

Steve Jobs

"Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."

Mark Twain

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Martin Luther King

The Family Gathering by Grower Paul Dormer

Jimmy Burrows sits nervously in the corner going over what he'll say to his uncle, Larry. Six months before, Jimmy reluctantly gave Larry a copy of his favourite movie: 'Chinatown' and now he wants it back. He could have asked his uncle anytime over the last six months, but the thought of talking to an uncle he never talks to and the pressure that comes with it was too much, so he choose Larry's 40th to make the move. To help with the awkwardness of talking to anyone in the family, Jimmy bought along Cal.

"They don't have anything vegetarian," Cal says as he approaches Jimmy.

"So?"

"So, I haven't eaten since 12. I think I saw a chipper around the corner."

"You're not going anywhere."

Silence ensues as Jimmy surveys the room for his uncle.

"I don't see him anywhere," Jimmy says

"Why is it so important to you anyway? It's just a DVD."

"Just a DVD? It's a special edition of a classic film, okay. Very rare thing to have."

"There he is."

"Oh God," Jimmy exclaims. "I'm not cut-out for this. I'm too nervous."

"Oh stop being a drama queen," Cal replies. "Go over; make a little small talk, then mention the DVD."

"Yeah, because it's that easy. Right, you come over with me; it's less awkward with three people."

"Oh hi," Larry Says. "Thanks for coming."

"I've been looking forward to it all day," Jimmy responds.

"I don't mean to interrupt, but I have to pop out," Cal says to the utter displeasure of Jimmy. A dreadful awkward silence ensues. Both think of something to say, but the more they think, and the longer the silence, the more painful it is. It feels like Jimmy is being tortured for information, but he doesn't know what to say. Only forty seconds have passed but it feels like forty hours. Finally.

"Em, did you, have you, did you eh DVD the like; like the DVD?"

"What?"

"Chinatown."

"Oh, your DVD. I loved it. I still have that. Hold on there and I'll get it for you."

Jimmy gets the DVD and runs out the door. Cal returns holding a bag of chips: "Thanks for that. You're a real pal," Jimmy says. Cal sneezes causing Jimmy to fumble the DVD. It falls and breaks into pieces.

O&R and Leadership Meetings

- O&R Friday 5th Nov and Friday 17th Dec at 7.00pm.
- Leadership Meetings every 2nd week, Wednesday 11.00am.

Check with Area Co-ordinator for further details .

Midlands & Eastern Regions Regional Weekend

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid."

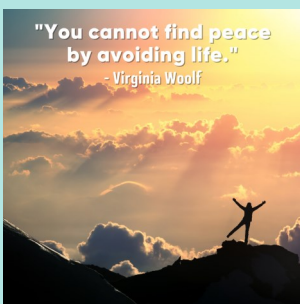
Albert Einstein

"However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at."

Steven Hawkins

"Strive not to be a success, but rather be of value.."

Albert Einstein



On Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th of July members from the Midlands and Eastern region came together for their Annual Regional weekend. This year due to Covid restrictions this event took place on Zoom. Attendance for both days was excellent and a great participation from the members that attended. It was great to meet everyone from both regions and for the first time this year to meet new members who have joined Grow Mental Health online.

The weekend began on Friday evening with an opening address from our regional manager Ruairi Powell and the Eastern region chairperson Gerry Farrell. This was followed by a very inspiring testimony from Rebecca a relatively new member from one of the Midland region on line groups.

Niamh Gilmore Grow's Health & Wellbeing officer brought us through a very interactive visualisation experience on Self-Love and Reconnection which was very well received and enjoyed by everyone. Niamh encouraged each one of us to allow ourselves to be seen in the same way as those who love us see us. Thank you Niamh for inspiring all of us to look for the personal value in each one of us.

Friday evening was concluded by a very uplifting music session led by the Crevan family and was accompanied by Gerry Farrell on the ukulele. A most enjoyable evening was had by all and this was plain to see as most members sang along and we also had the pleasure of some members singing solo.

Doors opened on Saturday 24th at 10.15am and the day's events started at 10.30am. John Farren and Assumpta Lyons Area Coordinators from the Eastern Region and Midland Region respectively delivered an opening address and set the tone for the morning. This opening address was to be delivered by Tim Murphy Chairperson of the Midland Regional team but unfortunately Tim is unwell in hospital and we all send our good wishes to Tim for a speedy recovery. Jonathon a member of Grow in the Eastern Region for a number of years shared his testimony with us on how Grow has supported him in different times throughout his life.

Elaine Browne from Prospective Ireland provided us with some practical daily tips on how to manage our mental health and also how to develop self-compassion in our lives. Elaine's talk was on Peer Support, Recovery in the Community & Self-compassion. Again we all brought away with us some practical advice on self-care which hopefully each one of us will implement in our daily lives.

The morning concluded with a poem from Clare Murphy Area Coordinator in the Eastern Region which summed up the theme of the weekend perfectly. The poem is titled " **Start where you stand** "

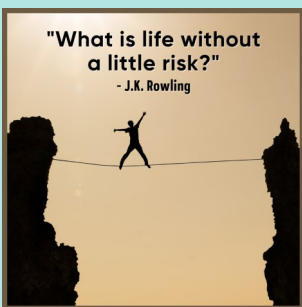
Start where you stand by Berton Baley

"Opportunity is missed by most people, because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

Thomas Edison

"It is not the years in your life that count, it is the life in your years."

Abraham Lincoln



"Carry out random acts of kindness with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you."

Princess Diana

**Start where you stand and never mind the past
The past won't help you in beginning new,
If you have left it all behind at last
Why, that's enough, you're done with it, you're through
This is another chapter in the book,
This is another race that you have planned,
Don't give the vanished days a backward look,
Start where you stand.**

**The world won't care about your old defeats
If you can start anew and win success,
The future is your time, and time is fleet
And there is much of work and strain and stress
Forget the buried woes and dead despairs
Here is a brand new trial right at hand,
The future is for him who does and dares
Start where you stand**

**Old failures will not halt, old triumphs aid,
Today's the thing, tomorrow soon will be,
Get in the fight and face it unafraid
And leave the past to ancient history,
What has been, has been, yesterday is dead
And by it you are neither blessed nor banned,
Take courage, be brave and drive ahead,
Start where you stand.**

Thank you Clare for sharing this incisive poem with us

The Grow program states "Recovery is living a life of one's choosing, having dreams and ambitions with or without the presence of mental health challenges, and regardless of the severity of those challenges. (Grow program page 74.)"

The Midland and Eastern Region would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who attended or participated in the weekend. A most enjoyable and enlightened weekend was had by all and many thanks to everyone involved.

Orla's Testimony

My name is Orla, and I have a medical condition called paranoid schizophrenia, which I have to take special medication for and an injection every two weeks. This keeps me stable.

I have always been different even from an early age of my childhood. I remember sitting alone in the classroom and not playing or talking to other children in the classroom. I was always a loner. I remember I used to go to my bedroom and read alone for hours. I found this to be very pleasurable. I was creative too and I used to love making painted patterns of natural things. I was very slow at math and science, which I tried hard to learn and understand, but I did not have the capacity to learn. But I was good at art and I worked hard at it in school. I hoped to go to the College of Art at seventeen years of age. I applied to get in but I was not accepted. At the age of seventeen, I began to get symptoms of schizophrenia, paranoid feelings, that people did not like me and wanted to harm me, and were being bad and nasty to me. I suspect the illness was caused by my lonely childhood and experiences of being bullied by the girls in school. I remember sitting alone in the school yard eating my lunch all alone. I felt the girls did not bother or care much for me. I was a shy child and found it very difficult to stand up for myself without getting really upset, and having temper tantrums.

My parents did not really get on and they were always fighting. This created a stressful environment for me growing up. My father often drank too much and would be nasty to me and my mother. I remember my mother was going to bed crying. I had one older brother who was really bright and I was always trying to keep up with him, trying to be brilliant, when I was just a good average. When I discovered that I was just a good average, and could work to improve myself slowly, a huge weight of stress was taken from me. 'I was me, I did not try to be a genius.' Age of seventeen, I tried to run away from home, and this time my problems were great.

My parents were going to get a separation and my goal of getting into the college of art was failed. I ran away to the Phoenix Park and spent a night in an old abandoned car. The next morning I opened the car boot and found some money. I took the bus home. My parents were in an awful state, and the police were also out looking for me. It was a very silly thing to do. Also, I went walking around the road with my head down. If I met a very nasty person I thought I had met a devil then I thought I met someone very good, I later learned that it was hallucinations. I felt the devil wanted to harm me and murder me. I also felt like a sword was piercing my heart. This was very frightening. But I know my soul is good and stronger than evil. I was eating a lot of food, putting weight up, not sleeping well. Getting up in the middle of the night and listening to rock music very loud in my bedroom. At this time I was hallucinating out of control. So my parents were very worried about me and brought me to the psychiatrist in Saint Vincent's hospital. They made me stay in the hospital. At this time, I was also very highly elated and needed to take medication to control me. I took it even though I did not want to. I also spent some time in Saint John of God Hospital. I was in the lock up ward there, which was really scary. I did not talk to anyone and kept myself to myself till I was discharged. How am I after all this? I am becoming stable now with my medication, friends, and specially with the help of my self-help group, Grow Mental Health. Because of Covid-19, we cannot meet in person so we have zoom meetings once a week. In the group meetings, we share our problems, and get help from our self-help books, we are given readings from the books to help us with our problems.

My progress is slow and steady, but I persevere to get results. I hope to get more and more balanced, to work more on my self-confidence, temper, emotions, reactions and relationships. I am also a hyper sensitive which is negative for me. But I learn in Grow, that feelings are not facts. And that is nice to be important but it is more important to be nice. I say thank you Grow for all this insight into my problems.