

The Recovery Range

I am presenting a picture I have put together. It is a collage, with paper and pens and different colours and patterns to reflect my recovery journey.

This is a picture called the Recovery Range. It is a series of mountains. Each peak has a different aspect of my recovery, so there is family, volunteering, the NHS, friends and hobbies.

I love mountains and I love hiking, so this was a nice thing for me to draw on.

My recovery has been a challenge. Since a very young age, I always struggled in school. There was always anxiety, and I was always behind in class. I was always daydreaming.

I had an experience with a teacher at a parents' evening. She said, "Lisa works very hard, but she is not very bright." This really stuck with me.

I always struggled in school to concentrate and I always had to work really, really hard, so I always struggled with stress and burnout. But I kept persevering.

Then I ended up doing a PhD at Durham University, and I found out halfway through my PhD that I had dyslexia.

I didn't let this stop me. I continued, I got through it and I passed. Then I went on to do a postdoc in Austria, in Salzburg.

That is another interesting theme for me, as I had a beautiful view of the Alps from my bedroom every morning. I could see the snow-capped mountains.

Since then, I struggled again. After the pandemic, I had a nervous breakdown, a psychotic breakdown. This was a result of just doing too much. I just had burnout.

I got screened for ADHD, which came through as positive, and I just really struggled to focus and be productive and efficient.

I am now on medicine, and this really helps me and supports me. But I am also keen to learn more about how women in society mask ADHD and dyslexia, because I was always quiet and never really made a fuss.

I just quietly got on with things.

But this picture is a picture of how I think the future looks. Very positive. There is a train of compassion. We are all on the train together, going through the mountains on our way to our new destination, a new chapter.

Here you see the river of opportunities. We should all have equal opportunities. There is a little girl fishing for opportunities, and there is a 'Be Yourself' boat, just to remind ourselves that we should be ourselves and appreciate our unique qualities.

Obviously, the sun reflects self-care, light and energy.

This picture is just here to make people smile and to think more positively about their experiences, and how we can grow and come together to make a difference in the world.

Thank you.