

Confidence

When Angela first came to Workwise in 2007, she was quite a different person. She had difficulty making or maintaining eye-contact and insisted on bringing a support person to do most of her talking. Tim, Angela's employment consultant, said it was evident Angela had a wicked sense of humour. But she often used it to deflect compliments and shield herself if she felt challenged or threatened. "Angela later told me she used humour to keep people from getting too close to her and to avoid hurtful criticism from family members" says Tim.

Angela had been referred to Workwise by her Work and Income PATHS programme co-ordinator. Initially Angela didn't know what kind of job she wanted to do. Her only previous employment experience had been negative and she had found this demoralizing. Angela eventually decided that telephone-based customer service and night shift work appealed to her.

"To achieve her goal of gaining employment and to give herself the opportunity to be the best she could be, Angela needed to let her guard down at least a little" says Tim. "To do this, she needed to step outside her comfort zone."

While applying for jobs, Angela and Tim spent a lot of time preparing for possible interviews. "We did most of this through role playing" says Tim. Angela felt that role playing was definitely outside her comfort zone but she agreed to give it a go. This went well and Angela even insisted she swapped between the interviewer and interviewee roles from time to time. This helped her gain a good understanding of both sides of the interview process.

Angela began to grow in confidence. She started to see she could be of value to an employer. After five months of numerous interviews, a few close calls and many ups and downs, Angela secured a part-time job as a night shift call centre operator at an alarm monitoring business.

Through her job, Angela developed professionally and her self esteem started to build. Within three months she increased her hours. Soon positive feedback from her employer added to her own acknowledgement of her skills and abilities. This assisted Angela to increase her hours enough to move off the sickness benefit. Six months later she had moved out of home and ceased support from Workwise.

Angela didn't initially believe she had any skills or abilities. Nor did she feel she deserved to be successful or happy in a job. However, she truly wanted her employment goal to become a reality and was willing to step out of her comfort zone to do it.

"Angela nourished her goal with persistence and patience. As a result, she gave herself the opportunity to be the best she could be" says Tim. Angela continues to do this today.

Success story