



University with an eating disorder.

Laura

History Graduate, 2016

Starting university was an exciting new adventure. But it was also extremely overwhelming.

Surrounded by hundreds – if not thousands – of new people, I didn't feel good enough. I was comparing myself to others and always came up short. I felt like a very small fish in a very big pond.

I was also missing the structure that school had always given me. I was used to having a different lesson every hour, dedicated break and lunch times, and having fun after school once the clock hit 3:30 pm. But now, my structure had disappeared. I had around six lectures a week. The rest of the time was mine to do what I wanted. But what was I supposed to do? How was I supposed to spend my time?

I believe that these complex emotions contributed to the development of my anorexia. First year suddenly became very difficult, frightening and lonely. I'm not ashamed to say that I struggled, and considered dropping out.

But I recognised that I was unwell, and I got the help I needed – from the people I loved, and from medical professionals. It wasn't easy, but I worked incredibly hard to recognise and address my issues. I moved home and commuted to university so that I could focus on my mental health issues as well as my studies.

I'm very happy to say that I recovered from anorexia and completed my degree, earning a 2:1 in History.

During university, I learnt more than just what I needed to pass exams. I learnt about myself, my strength and my determination. I learnt about how to overcome challenges – even when they feel impossible – and achieve your goals. I learnt to be proud of myself.