

## *Original Paper*

# Depression in Schizophrenia

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Received: May 1, 2023

Accepted: May 24, 2023

Online Published: June 12, 2023

doi:10.22158/sshsr.v4n2p87

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sshsr.v4n2p87>

Depression and schizophrenia often go together as the psychoses can be very frightening and emotionally painful. To tackle the depression when the psychoses is particularly severe you first need to calm down with the fear and pain it causes. Then the coping strategies for depression stand more chance. This account first details ways of dealing with the schizophrenia and then with the depression.

### **The Onset of Depression**

At age 22 you feel like you have your whole life in front of you and you are happy with the prospect of things like jobs, marriage and children. There was nothing to be depressed about. It never really occurs to you something could go seriously wrong, but they can.

Then something did. Many things happened at once including a bankruptcy, relationship break up and loss of home. This was depressing but I still had my dreams. These problems remain with schizophrenia, but time can heal them. Yet it takes some getting back to where you were before the illness. During this the schizophrenia induced depression was much worse.

This was acutely true of the depression that schizophrenia caused me, even when life has healed the original extra problems. Yet sometimes you cannot get over what has been lost in life even with the help of the mental health system. So often the depression cannot be completely cured.

Schizophrenia is thought to be stress induced but nothing in my life had prepared for what was going to happen. I felt on my own with this through the stigma and so got the full force of the symptoms. I simply wasn't strong enough to deal with it. This made me alienated and depressed with the social exclusion. Going to day centres got me through this part.

The onset of the schizophrenia was very gradual, and I could see that I was getting progressively more and more paranoid. I had insight during the time I between episodes, but this felt like I was slowly going mad. All of this was in turn causing more low mood.

It was progressively shutting down my frontal lobes so I could not concentrate on my research studies to take my mind off things. This made the depression acutely worse as I had to give up study and nothing else came to fill the gap. I had to get back to this but that meant confronting the schizophrenia.

As the symptoms developed the fear became more severe and I wasn't simply able to distract myself with study. They became more frequent and longer as the symptoms developed and had to give up study as I could concentrate any more. Study was the only interest I had in life and without it the depression deepened.

Eventually I began thinking about causing 9/11 and that the CIA were going to torture me, so study was the last thing on my mind. I couldn't get these thoughts out of my head so focusing on something else was very difficult. The psychoses causing the depression could not be stopped.

That delusion was much more depressing even than what I had already been through, and it became particularly severe. It prompted a nervous breakdown which again had a depressing effect on me as I could no longer cope with the high pressure of doing research.

There are ways of dealing with schizophrenia but what I have found was that to make distraction work you had to calm down a lot first. Then the fear is not so overwhelming, and you can concentrate more. To do this and to be able to study you have to confront it.

Schizophrenia as the name suggests is absolutely terrifying so this coping easier is said than done. When I got the first symptoms, I had to tackle them on my own, because of the stigma. I learned later that you need help with this and that is where the mental health system came in very useful.

Being put on some medication was very enlightening and because of the stigma as I had no idea it was the result of a chemical imbalance. The drugs inspired much hope as they can cure a third of people and in my case, I wasn't cured but stabilised. That helped tackle some of the worst things with the depression holding me back.

This too allowed some further chance of calming down by using the confronting and distracting approaches. Schizophrenia can be so overwhelming that you need to cure the extremities of it before taking on the depression stands some chance.

The problem with thinking the neighbours were spying on me had a twist in that I thought they were informants and passing information back to the CIA. Staying in the house with voices on my own made the depression progressively worse and I slowly stopped functioning with life.

I had to hide from everybody but staying at home concentrated my mind on the voices. Yet the consequences of going out could have been even more serious as I might get identified and caught. That cut me off from a lot of social contact so there was nothing to cheer me up.

The answer to this was to have some insight so I could contemplate coming into direct contact with the fear. That again calmed things down to be distracted when out and about. So, I didn't feel confined with the voices. This then helped with keeping busy at home.

All the same it took more than insight to measure up to things and I needed someone to go out with me. A support worker was put in place. She was able to stay with me when I was frightened so I could coexist with the fear instead of running from it. This allowed some hope.

At this point I was able to practise breathing exercises and safe place imagery and with her reassurances and was more able to sit out the danger until it wore off. Instead of the fight flight response I learned a different way of reacting by being able to relax.

This graded supported exposure approach proved very important for the depression as I was still left on my own for long periods. This in the same way as when I first got the illness. So, I still had to practice it on my own. I began to realise that study which had helped at the outset could be applied again later with the illness when it was reduced to it more milder forms.

The problem at this point was that once the constant terror wears off and there are long periods without it then problems with depression came more to the fore. I was left for these times in between episodes feeling unmotivated and with nothing much to do.

That is where the distraction techniques came in as I was able to keep busy around the house despite the confines. so, I got some further rest from the fear instead of having to confront it all the time. Then i felt a bit more able to overcome it. That allowed some more chance for the distraction.

The trick with being distracted was you have to find something you are interested in and in my case, what attracted me before the illness still motivated me during it. The trick was never to give up hope so this thirst for knowledge stayed with me. All the same I had to rekindle it.

I was lucky here in that many people are very depressed with life with schizophrenia and so lose their interest in things. They need ways of cheering up which can be difficult with all the suffering. The problem is that they abandon hope and getting it back is a slow process.

Depression with schizophrenia is very serious and can make you suicidal. Depression is a common enough experience when things in life go wrong but with schizophrenia there are many other problems which will make it particular severe. If you cannot cure them you need to learn to live with them and that needs help as it is not easy.

### **Coping Strategies**

Depression can happen in a number of different ways with psychoses and altogether this quite a list. If you have all these problems at the same time this will be about as bad as the illness gets. My psychiatrist classified my symptoms as particularly, so they are all worth recounting.

One problem is that you will have to give up your job and lose the material side of life. This is very stressful and will worsen the low mood you have with the illness. This in particular if you lose your house which again is one of the most stressful things you can do.

The stigma may cut you off from friends and family. As a result nothing is really going to fill the gap here though you can find some emotional contact at day centres. If you lose your family relations making new friends may not be an answer to this.

You may hear voices criticising you this causes emotional pain as well depression. You may feel terrible about yourself especially if the criticisms you are hearing have some truth in them. The voices can also be frightening and will add to the fear experienced with paranoid delusions.

You may have delusional beliefs like being responsible for 9/11 which carries a terrible emotional responsibility, and the voices may reinforce this by criticism. Again, this involves a lot more emotional pain, at the same time the voices are causing the same.

You live in fear with paranoia as in my case the CIA will torture you. The constant anxiety can easily get you feeling down as well. This on its own is terrifying and would be serve enough to cause severe depression but it is also combined with the rest to make it even worse.

There may be social isolation even within the mental health system and you are left on your own for long periods. You need something to fill the time in and to have a plan of different things to do each day. Sometimes it is best to live in sheltered accommodation which is a 24/7 social environment.

When the depression is ongoing and acute you will need a lot of input to take your mind off things. This will be harder if you live on your own so you need a long list of things that will take your mind off it until you cheer up. The mental health system can do this for you.

Depression like schizophrenia can seem like a huge mountain you have to climb. The two together makes each seem worse. You need cheering up and calming down consecutively and to hold out with the depression as the progress of each is gradual.

One of the problems with depression is when the fear starts to reach new heights and here there is need for some Valium. Often this is not prescribed because it has severe withdrawal symptoms. In my case it was allowed because the terror came in episodes, and I only took when it was needed.

Depression at this point can be so severe that inspirational figures are unlikely to be enough to motivate you to tackle it. It needs teaching how to cope as we cannot deal with it on our own. This is where the mental health system comes in.

It may seem what the system has to offer won't make any difference with acute depression. As doing course and having a chat will not change the situation and circumstances with the causes. We have got to see the light here that life can be healed.

One main problem with depression is that there has been a loss of things in life that cannot be replaced. The message is that your whole life can still change for the better and your dreams and goals might still be achievable. It needs to be explained how all this is possible to believe it.

The main message in that the mental health system can help with what you want and can provide a holistic approach to care. Then if many areas of your life seem to have problems each can be dealt with at the same time. So, things will gradually improve in many areas at once.

Curing things with depression takes a lot of things working together and we need a variety of approaches. With depression it needs explaining it is not the end of the world which is the way it seems and that you can heal your life. Then as you can tackle it you will be a stronger person.

The first problem is that you cannot even keep busy with essential things like housework. People let themselves go and end up just wanting to sleep all the time. That turns a house into a slum which makes you feel more depressed. The answer might need a cleaner but that is expensive.

At this point a lifestyle coach will be put in place to help with housework. Crucially this is the first step to keeping busy and ending the slum will cheer you up a lot. Being at home will be more pleasurable and this can be complimented by being trained how to wash and cook for yourself.

Housework takes some physical effort, and it might prepare you for getting some exercise. This is very good for depression though again some might have to come with you. Also, the thought is that going out is not safe needs to be dealt with here. Then once done it will release some endorphins.

Being able to get out of the house was a breath of fresh air and its initial effect was striking. Having hidden away indoors for so long avoiding the neighbours I had forgotten what this was like. Then I started to enjoy the nature and scenery whilst engaging in some interesting conversation.

The exercise was particularly helpful for passing the time as I eventually could do it once per day. I could build it into my routine of things to do each day. Exercise is a good cure for depression and left me feeling I was a bit more motivated to look after myself and socialise.

It was the conversations I was having with the housework and exercise which persuaded me to go to the day centre. Eventually the social support for housework and exercise stopped when it was thought I could do it without help, so that made the day centre very important.

This then has a two-fold benefit as you will realise keeping busy can be used for the depression as well as the frightening schizophrenia. The people I met and the conversations I had were very interesting as well as soothing. This all combined to be very therapeutic.

I was persuaded to do a course at the day centre. After the engaging conversation I then got an interest in other things. It helped that when learning at the computer there was till social contact, and you could talk while studying. This helped to keep you interested in the subject matter.

The illness can seem to make you isolated and withdrawn so someone engaging you in conversational can help bring you out of this. The right social atmosphere of the day centre will be needed here, and the friendly environment will rub off on you.

Taking on a course can be challenging and strenuous especially if you have been vegetating for a long and have become rusty. So, you need to remind yourself how you felt when you first took on the housework and how the exercise was supported by the conversation and socialising at the same time.

The interesting thing here is that when at day centres you can meet people who have been through the same or worse with the depression and see first-hand that there have coped with it so far. Then instead of having an insurmountable problem you can see a way forward.

Having conversations with other service users will allow empathy and emotional support. This will also have a soothing effect in that you will be able to share each other's problems. You will learn how others have been able to deal with them and you won't be on your own with things again.

At this point you begin to believe more in inspirational people like John Nash who have had difficult lives and coped with them without giving in. If people can cope with severe schizophrenia, they might cope with severe depression which is just as difficult.

To tackle the depression, you need to challenge the schizophrenia and tell yourself that during episodes of it that it will pass. You need a list of all your positives in life and to focus on that when the symptoms start. The list might distract you from the voices as you focus on the good things you have.

You need to hang in there until it does end but when it is severe this is much less possible. You may end up living in fear of the next episode. When they are milder and you can get through them, life will return to normal afterwards. Compassion becomes very important to mood here.

All the same you know it will wear off and the compassion will also soothe the fears of it recurring when in between episodes. There may be more time and strength for doing things like the housework that need doing and more motivation for things you can enjoy.

if you are still depressed with life in other ways you need to find something you are still interested in and can get motivated for. It has not been turning out the way you want so even with the loss of fear of the schizophrenia you still need coping strategies as the low mood won't easily shift.

With the voices you need to stand up to what they are saying, and you can get help with this. It needs a psychologist to take your side. Yet if the voices are criticising about being responsible about 9/11 cheering up in this way will be much harder. You will still have your good points though.

Antidepressants may not work but at least they will make you sleep. Then you won't be worn out as much which can also be depressing. You won't be going for days without sleep and feeling tired out all the time. Then you are more able to do distracting things like housework which as we have seen will cheer you up.

Once rested you are more able to take on life's challenges so your goals might seem more achievable. There will be less psychological exhaustion to go with the feeling of being drained emotionally. That allows more of a chance to get motivated with life and think about where you want to be.

So, you need to distract yourself from the depressed thoughts in the way you do with the schizophrenic thoughts. The good news is that unlike the psychoses they can be got rid of. Still, they are not easy just to snap out of. As we have seen there are a number of ways of doing this.

With keeping a pleasure diary this is where a wish list comes in. You also need to live it up as much as you can and as often as possible. The odd treat won't make any difference and you won't feel like living it up with profound depression. This becomes more possible with the support you can get.

Using an alcoholic drink is an issue with the pleasure diary but it is also a depressant. if you can keep it under control, it should calm you down and cheer you up. it is best done socially as you combine as the warm feelings it gives you with making you more receptive to the friendship.

Someone caring can help with depression especially finding new friends and partners. Otherwise, this may mean living in a mental health project where the care is 24/7, both with staff and other people. Then at the times when the worse starts there will always be people around to rely on.

This is going to be much worse if you have lost your family through stigma and that means you need to meet a new partner. The problem is this is easier said than done as the choice at day centres may be limited but I have seen it happen a few times. It will negatively affect the pleasure diary.

All the therapies together can make life workable and in particular I have got family contact three times per week. Together with the emotional support we get out and about and do things. At other times I can have my friends around at home and chat to my other online friends on the internet.

This all requires a lot of input if you are to keep going with life and without so much help I wouldn't have coped with the depression. Intensive social support like this may not be possible if your family is too busy and that will mean the other activities are much less effective for your mood.

Again, that still leaves a lot of time on your hands, and I had to fill this in using other ways. Some study was possible at the local college though you can only do so much of this, you can build it up over time. Doing this rekindled my passion for education which got me through being out of practice with it. Having a reason to stick with it helped with the pressures of course work.

In my case too as Francis Bacon said we work to live not live to work and being a workaholic. It was useful to ignore this advice. The study and writing allowed me to fill in a lot of time and was very useful for not getting bored. The therapy of the time spent cheered me up a bit more than usual.

In my case outside of work I needed some leisure opportunities which also helped fill in a lot of time. Before the illness I was interested in Archery and Target rifle shooting, so I decided to give that another go. I found my interest in it hadn't gone and this helped get things back to normal.

These activities were organised each weeknight and I found that If I got severely depressed one night that was the time to go and do them. I could share my enthusiasm with club members and like the day centre I had something in common to talk about.

At other times having spent a day on my own I could use the sedatives in the anti-psychotics to knock me out if the depression had been building towards the evening. Of course, it was still there in the morning but was not as bad with things going on to look forward to that day.

At other times on an evening if I was feeling depressed and could not get to sleep you need to have interesting and enjoyable activities around the house. One idea I had here was to order some good food and watch a DVD over a few drinks. As the depression began to ease this proved effective.

Day centres can also help by getting out of the house and you cannot stay at home all of the time. Yet going to have a chat isn't going to cure the depression unless everything else is in place. Once other things cheer up it could distract you. It could also be both soothing and distracting at the same time.

### **Problems**

Professional caring is soothing which could heal depression and the system is designed to help. It does this through financial support, proper housing and people to provide emotional help when living in the community. This again can help you cope more with depression but is not a total answer to it. There may still be serious problems which are the flip side of the story we have told.

Chatting stands more chance at more moderate levels of psychoses. Having a chat can cheer you up with depression but when it is profound it is a professional job and may need hospital. There you will be suffering with the schizophrenia but will be chatting to the nurses which is an important thought.

Still your family will love you and this should act as a source of emotional strength but again this is not enough on its own. You will need to have therapy in the mental health system. In combination all the strategies will help you cope more but it will take much time for you to get to be happier with things. Family support helps you cope but may not in the end be an answer.

Then you cannot keep busy all the time, so you need to do something soothing. This even when emotional input is available. Yet doing too much is stressful and sometimes you will feel bored in between all your activities which can also be a depressing experience.

Being bored is an experience in life with schizophrenia though often you are too frightened to feel the force of this. Doing nothing is stressful and a few hours doing a course is not enough to fill the gap without work. Something else has to be done.

So, you need a plan for each day and something to look forward to all the time. Being single means, you need something to fill the gap when you don't have a partner, so this becomes a major life issue. Then leisure is expensive when you have time on your hands so much depends on your finances.

You need to treat yourself with depression and over time you will acquire many material possessions. Other things like getting out and enjoying life are also possible. In my case I found I could go shopping, eating out and travel with my new friends. The materialism proved cheerful eventually.

The problem here that my finances were enough to fill the gap and this material side wasn't as much as what I was used to. That required some adjustment to my quality of life, and I had to make difficult choices such as whether or not to have a house or a car. Again, this caused some low mood.

You need something to get out of bed in the morning and that means having something to look forward to. Yet doing all these activities only helped me cope with life. They took the edge off both the schizophrenia and depression. Yet I still I wasn't happy with life.

Overtime you will feel more up to the motivational challenges schizophrenia poses. You can acquire the strength to deal with it and think more positively. Then you need to get motivated again as you need to get your life sorted out and that raises new questions.

It was possible to be depressed with the material side but overtime I found it more manageable. That helped me cope better and I started to have a few more things which helped me cope as the years went by. I waited to see what would happen here but in the end it wasn't enough.

It may be for some there is so much else to life than the power struggle. There is a place we belong. If you can see it in these terms, there will be less need for distraction and more opportunity with the illness to heal the depression. So the other thing here is that love might cure it. This relies on meeting someone in the mental health system which can be very difficult.

Finally, there is also a stigma attached to being depressed as life is not a bowl of cherries and you just have to snap out of it. Yet depression is a mental illness and survivors of it need professional support and care. This is one reason why there is a mental health system.

### **Long Term Depression**

So, life has to get back on track the way you want it. With schizophrenia and depression this is going to be very difficult and if things don't improve over the years you will feel like time is running out. This again is another reason for questioning your life that might cause depression.

I could get through many years of life using the strategies outlined here. Yet coping with it meant that the underlying depression and the initial problems that were causing it had never really gone away. I had to look at life again and see what had to be done.

Over the years if the depression does not heal you may begin to question if life is worth it. Yet staying in the mental health system a long time could answer these problems. You will become part of an organic community that will develop over time, and this has many positive aspects.

You will eventually form friends for life and any partners you meet will still love you more and more during the time you have shared with them. This will deepen our ability to care and be cared for and will be a good feeling so far even if we haven't got to where we want to be.

I had to figure out what I most wanted in life and that meant pursuing my career. Other things like materialism and emotion were important but were not enough without my primary goal. The answer I found was to take up writing about mental health but not everybody will find a solution.

You will need to see it as not being a waste. There is still much opportunity to engage in life even if the illness has meant you cannot pursue your dreams. It may be possible to formulate other goals that are not so difficult but none the less desirable. This gets back to John Nash again so there will always be some hope for this.

Yet there is one thing the mental health system can really help and that is education. It can equip you with the skills you need to get a job and the compassion therapy can give you the strength to hold one down, even with schizophrenic depression. This support continues throughout academia.

That just leaves one final barrier to working and that the stigma of schizophrenia. If this stops ding so you then it is likely that the depression will return. All the same there are people like Elyn Saks who have achieved highly despite the severity of the illness. So, it can be done.

There is also help here from the employment service who can link you in with employers who are sympathetic to the illness. People like Elyn Saks are also well known so that should help a lot. There is also increasing evidence from MIND and RETHINK that attitudes are beginning to change.

### **Conclusion A**

Coping with depression in schizophrenia can be just as difficult as the psychoses that caused it. The initial stress and depression that caused the schizophrenia will stay with you and make things even worse. The mental health system can help you cope so far but without life getting back to normal this will not be true for everyone. So, what is needed with depression is to not give up hope which can be helped with the strategies outlined here which can help with this feeling.

### **Emotional Pain in Schizophrenia**

Emotional pain is common with schizophrenia and in my case involved terrible feelings of responsibility for causing 9/11. You have to struggle with the emotional pain and realise you are a good person using any insight you may have. This can be difficult if you are hearing critical voices confirming what you have done. I think if you are frightened all the time, it is difficult emotionally and the voices will add to the fear and pain. It is also depressing to see the way your life is turning out but the mental health system can help with all of this. As you will see in this article you go through the pain and survive it until it wears off. You have got to be strong for this and love can be a source for strength. I think on the whole it is possible to be happy with life having schizophrenia though it involves much struggle and courage.

Emotionally there is always hope for recovery. Here I often think of advances in the medication like Clozapine and Abilify which have increased the cure rate or have less side effects. My Community Psychiatric Nurse said breakthroughs are being made all the time and this was really brought home to me as I had a recovery period at one point. After that there are new treatments like compassion focused therapy might also help this when the medications don't work.

Psychologically you have got to learn to like yourself which can be done by speaking out against the voices. Thinking you are responsible for 9/11 will damage your self-esteem but the possibility to do something socially useful could make up for this and will keep the voices quiet which in my case criticise about it. Self-esteem as Maslow described it opens up the possibility of self-actualising. Life in the mental health system can leave you free to find yourself and doing this is very interesting. You may feel happier about yourself and avoid some depression.

Schizophrenia can be emotionally exhausting. Being emotionally drained can stop you enjoying life and might take some help to get this back on track. Thinking about your emotions is very important and can be distracting. With help from hospitals, day centres and sheltered accommodation your life will improve and start to heal. It becomes very important as is planning what to do with the rest of your life and to realise you still have friends, family and the possibility of meeting someone.

You can be in the grip of fear so sometimes it is hard to shake off and the emotional pain is severe too as you cannot get the painful thoughts out of your head. It is like a voice won't shut up adding to the problem. You will just have to wait until the symptoms pass. Yet being frightened to the point of passing out with the fear may mean you need a Valium but often this is not prescribed. It is important to try alternative remedies like lavender and rock rose can help here but they were not effective in my case. Then the other alternatives are to confront the problem or distract yourself which is easier said than done. This is true for the emotional pain and depression as it is for the fear it causes. If it works you might be able to overcome the pain and do something, you enjoy or find pleasurable which might take your mind off your emotional problems.

Depression and schizophrenia often go together and thinking you are responsible for 9/11 can make you suicidal. This can be added to by critical voices which suggest you should do this. There are things can be done about depression including medication which I think has been very important for me but has

only worker so far. After that with depression you need to take your mind off things. This can be done by keeping a pleasure diary and with constant anxiety there is a need to keep busy but if the depression is profound as about 9/11 falling in love might be the answer to that and thoughts of suicide.

Imagine what the pain is like from causing 9/11? It is intense but you don't get it in your heart. With insight I know that my heart tells me I am a good person, and this can counteract the delusions. You will have your own voice about this which can speak up against the critical voice you are hearing. You can think you take after your family being a good person and that thought can help with developing insight as the authority of it will challenge the voice. The other techniques for calming down like safe place imagery and breathing will help find your emotional voice but this might not stop the terror. I get some fear that I might passing out with the terror which makes me stay at home but that just concentrates my mind on the voices talking about 9/11. It was necessary to get help with both and this involved a number of therapies which will be outlined in this article.

For Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to start you first need to confront the problem and externalise it to stop the subconscious overload. Here being loved can help with the emotional side and might give you the strength to do this while graded exposure going out to deal the fear side can also help. Then there might be a possibility of insight which can further help with both the fear and pain. Your family can be present at these times in the clinic with the therapist there they can learn about the insight to support it for you outside of therapy. In my case I thought people were reading my mind about 9/11 and might be passing information back to the CIA. This was tested out with my family there to see if they could discern my thoughts and because I trusted them when they said they couldn't I believed them that they weren't lying. I started to have some insight. Then they were able to remind me of this when at home and out, so I started to calm down and more able to coexist with the fear and better able to distract myself.

When at home with this newfound insight being in the more homely environment was more therapeutic and with family support at the same time this got even better so I started to feel more emotionally engaged. The insight could then be practiced better at home first and allowed some more emotional strength before going out when there are other people around to be paranoid about. I was stronger at home than when out and now had a backup plan of getting back there in a crisis. This helped me keep trying with the outings.

Then you will need to confront the psychoses outside of the clinic by having family with you and eventually by yourself. Again, you need to both externalise and weigh up the scale of the problem then feeling loved can help too. On your own going through the pain when out can itself be frightening so you need strategies to tackle the fear too. My insight was based on having never been assassinated for causing and when out your friends and family can remind you of this. Again, I trusted my family even though I am paranoid about other people, so this had some chance of working.

It first helped by contemplating about 9/11 at home with my family there and then doing this out and about. Home is my safe place so with a few deep breaths I started to contemplate what I had done rather than let it go over my head. This next step was doing this when out and about and being around people

who might make me paranoid about it. Then when at home again I could practice this on my own after which I could do the same outside. This then helped overcome the paranoia that the spying neighbours might be passing information about the CIA.

So, relying on your friends and family is crucial to getting out and about as their love can support you when remembering the psychoses out there which can trigger off a psychotic episode. The problem is that this might not be possible through stigma. Losing your family adds to the emotional pain of the voices and relying on your new friends will help but cannot replace what has been lost. Then when out and the emotional pain strikes with terror there is no back up plan and you might be stranded. Yet this might have an answer as it is possible to fall in love get married and even have a family which will help more which you can learn to rely on in your live but there will still be some emotional pain not having your family around.

Crucially the Job description for working in sheltered accommodation is to “provide emotional support to people with mental health problems.” The staff become like friends though for some of them there are barriers to this. Making friends with them is soon possible as like staff at the day centre they have good social skills. Their role here is very important in that you may need more intensive support than just a couple of afternoons at a day centre and if there is social isolation living by yourself being in a project will answer too. They can support you getting out and about if you are too frightened to do this which makes you feel better with life, and they will even go on holiday with you. The stigma free environment calms you down to make friends which might not be possible outside the mental health system.

Living with your friends and full-time staff support means you are spending more time with your friends than at a day centre once or twice a week and the community grows more quickly. It is a bit like having a partner providing 24/7 and as I only see my mother three times a week, so this has become very important. Still, I get a lift from a daily phone call with my mother. Being in a project means you can make friends and get out and about doing things with them which is often more fun than going on your own and this should cement the friendship. Problems arise when moved out you have to find other ways of passing the time. Without staff support the emphasis on friends and day centres which mean frequent contact. To that ends I joined a local archery club but being single leaves a lot of time on your hands. Yet when moved out you do get the opportunity to live with a partner which is a better 24/7 situation than being in a project all the time so there might be an answer to this.

I don't think it does much good sitting at home all the time and with nothing you can do as this makes you dwell on your emotional problems so you more depressed. It is important to get out at least once per day as you might then associate your house with being unhappy. This can be helped by getting back home form having fun when out and this can help turn you home into a happy place. Then especially on an evening having friends and family round make the place feel more homely perhaps over a few drinks. Then with the emotional pain of 9/11 it might sometimes be more therapeutic to be at home than out and about indeed getting back at home quickly might be necessary if the symptoms are acute. You can always ring your family for emotional support at these times which will combine with the homely therapy during

such an episode and might calm you down enough to be distracted by media until you can get off to bed early. Finally, being at home is important to having your own space to think about yourself and your life which can also help emotionally and keeping a diary about this will be very distracting.

A source of strength you can built strength up with graded exposure to fear. Then the more you keep practicing this the more opportunity for emotional response to the illness there will be. Yet the more you start to calm down about being punished for 9/11 the more you will feel the intense emotional pain of what has happened. This is out of the frying pan and into the fire it might seem like it is hardly worth the effort. It might seem better to live in fear than being Intense emotional pain. Al the same you can get to thinking if you do not tackle things they will never improve. This will happen only gradually but the more emotionally you engage with life the more hopeful it will seem you can do something about it.

Emotional Pain caused by thinking you are responsible 9/11 made worse by criticism from the voice about can cause a disturbed emotional state can give you nightmares, in particular the fear of punishment. The lack of sleeps saps your strength and makes you more emotionally vulnerable both to getting through the emotional pain and having the strength to stand up to the fear. Being exhausted might stop you doing housework or having the strength to get out and about. You will be confined in a slum. Without therapy during the day and not getting out will make you more emotionally disturbed will generate more nightmares. There may be a viscous circle here. Yet on the other hand if you are getting emotional pain on an evening taking your tablets early will knock you out and then providing the nightmares are not so bad you will the symptom the following day may be better. In addition, having a nap can help improve strength during the and get you back to being more functional.

Happiness in the long term is very important and you have to come to terms with the way your life has turned out. It will take some mindfulness to think it through. Then I am able to settle down at home on my own without the symptoms to think about this. You first need to calm down enough to think about all this and to have space on your own to do it. What I have found is that much of life can get back to normal in the mental health system and have found asking myself has it stopped you doing what you want? It might in between episodes provide the time to do something you always wanted to do and for me this was education. Thinking about things in a philosophical way might cheer up the depression as the illness makes us real people. After that I realised there are other positives, and I knew even with severe symptoms some happiness is still possible. One of these was that if there are periods of insight or phases where things aren't so severe some normality is still possible. That includes the freedom to do many of the things other normal people can do without stigma affecting it for instance having the opportunity to travel or out for meals. The I had other thought such as without work you can still volunteer which will give you a sense of achievement.

Again, just as important you still have friends and family who love you even if you have been single all your life and there is still the possibility of meeting someone and falling in love. The downside to all of this is that prolonged isolation could make viewing your life in the long term much more difficult to come to terms with and some people commit suicide from the endless suffering. Here it is important to

realise this can be soothed with compassion allowing the feeling of emotional connectedness with other people.

Living on your own can make you more emotionally disturbed. So you often need to simply get through the day and there are a number of things that can help with this when at home. Music is emotionally something and may remind you there is a positive side to life which can cheer you up. It can remind you of happy times before the illness bring back good memories. It can fill in time when living independently when you are not with friends and family. Films are another possibility and if my dad comes with me to the cinema then I can sit through a film with support, so I am not paranoid my thoughts are being broadcast on the screen. I can then buy a copy of it on DVD and watch it at home.

One thing that is very important is exercise and it is good to get out and get some sun and fresh air. Sitting at home with the blinds drawn means I don't get much sun, so it is important to get out once per day. It is also good to see wide open spaces and the horizon as you lose this being in a room all the time. This helps you breathe more easily. It is also good to get a change of scenery instead of staring at the same four walls all the time. Having to stay indoors all the time can feel confining so it is important to get a sense of freedom by going out. Then once back the feeling of confinement wears off. Nature can be therapeutic, and you are not so uptight in the wide-open spaces. This as compared to sitting at home when having the blinds drawn will add to the feeling of being locked in.

Again, all this can cheer you up though enjoying the exercise and nature might take some insight if you are paranoid about the people outside of the house. These feelings never completely go when out but staying at home with the blinds drawn concentrates the mind on the paranoia. So not going out at all is so bad that there is strong push to do this on a daily basis even if you have to limit the time outside. Sometimes the paranoia of going out can be uppermost in your mind and you have to keep reminding yourself you will feel better for it, both once out and when you get back.

Relaxation classes and compassion both open up emotions and allow more chance for a place like a day centre to work. Then you can become part of the organic community at a day centre which is a good feeling, and the system also allows you to become part of the group in sheltered housing. You will get to like the feel of the place and associate it with happy memories and safety. This helps with being emotional and to develop closer friendships in there. It means you can calm down enough to talk about the pain you are in and then sharing your problems can with insight relax you even more. Then you are free to do other things like the courses on offer and staying functional which can be distracting and take your mind off things further.

When you get back to sheltered accommodation having spending time with your friends outside of the project this livens things up at home. This when you are living on your own allows for this outcome too and means the periods you spend alone mean you can be spent more distracting and more productively. After being to a day centre you can enjoy making something to eat at home which continues to relax me. Then it helps me focus on what I am doing so I can settle down to a DVD or continue with my writing. You need this kind of support once or twice a week and it keeps you going with life and also in the long

term too. You don't need to have company all the time and allows for having some time for yourself is therapeutic too. It means you can spend some time at home on your own without feeling isolated.

With going out you have first got to visualise the safe place you are going to and how it feels, imaging you are sitting in the café. This helps getting over the doorstep and removes the initial mental barrier where the mere thought of going out becomes a problem. It helps to remember what you were looking at including the natural surroundings and the lovely view of the river out of the café window. This brings to mind how peaceful it was and how relaxing plus you could combine it with something pleasurable like having something to eat. The mental barrier can eventually be fully overcome when the feelings of safe place replace the memory of the paranoia.

If the pain stops you going out, coexisting and graded exposure to the anxiety should cheer you up. If the emotional pain hits you when you are out, you will become visible and will need to get back home as quickly as possible. You need to take an anti-depressant with you and makes these types of tablets very important. Having a friend or family member who can reinforce the insight or remind you that you are loved can help with this, so you don't have to run.

Sometimes though you have to force yourself as going out can make you paranoid. So, you need to balance the emotional need to get out with the danger you might be in from the psychoses. This could stop you going out altogether but if the emotional pain from the delusion and criticism from the voice about it means it has got to have an outlet then getting out may still be possible at some point as this will push you to do it. Staying in concentrates the mind on what is happening and staying in too long with the emotional pain could be so stressful that it might cause a crisis with the pain or the other symptoms. Thus, going out could avoid the need for hospital or even a suicide attempt. Some insight could be crucial here as well as supported graded exposure to the fear of leaving the house and being around other people.

It often helps that I can write about my experiences of going out and what happens including coping strategies I have learned which help with this. Thinking about the writing out there silences the voices and reminds me I won't be held responsible for 9/11 if I do something useful. This calms me down enough to enjoy it and focusing on the writing distracts my attention from the people around me who might be reading my mind about 9/11. Recording what happens and it how works when you are able to calm down including the relaxing situation and how to cope with it reminds me that this can be done successfully. It is reassuring in that for these reasons it can be done again and again. Then when there is less insight there is another strategy that can help with getting out of the house and keeping active with life.

What I have realised is that the illness has triggers when out and about and the point of going out is that it will take your mind of things. Going out will not work if the emotional pain and fear keeps reoccurring. With the subconscious overload these problems are always at the back of your mind then you have to be wary of remembering about them. So, when out you have to be constantly distracted by things else these thoughts might come back in your mind. This can still happen but can also happen when at home. Yet there is a difference as being at home means it is a lot safer and there are no associations of 9/11 but

being out and about. This takes your mind off things when back at home and so is a different ball game. One is that at home you do not see the neighbours, so this is a case of being out of sight and out of mind. The only observation comes from the voices but then there is no visible eye contact, so this does not trigger off the symptoms. The distraction and lack of eye contact can be then applied when going out. Without though you are in much closer proximity to other people as when sitting on a bus or in a café. You have to be careful not to look at them and knowing they are near you can trigger off thinking about the illness. Eye contact is something that is difficult to avoid when out and I am often watching people out of the corner of my eye which again reminds me they are there. I need to control my thoughts, so I am not thinking about 9/11 and not to look at the people who are around me as this really brings home the paranoia and pain. I feel they are thinking I am responsible for 9/11 with my guilty looks and that response can be terrifying. Then the more this happens the more I feel like not going out. The problem is that still leaves much anxiety as letting your gaze or mind drifting onto the other people can happen naturally and there is not always control over this.

Although you cannot guarantee this will not always happen you have to stop it occurring by thinking of other things before you come into eye contact with people. You still need to stop the paranoia before it starts. Having someone with you means you can try to be engrossed in the conversation before you go into a café for example and helps you feel part of the. Passing people in the street means finding your way through the crowd and there is less one to one proximity to the other people. Also when on a bus you can look out of the window and take notice of passing places on route. If you keep thinking about whatever comes into mind means you do not start looking at the other people. So, you can switch off to them being there and importantly too it stops you remembering. Keeping thinking of something else stops the associations of place from triggering off an episode and helps replace the painful memory with something more pleasurable or safe. Thus, the two dangers of memory of the psychoses and eye contact with the people than might trigger off a relapse can be averted.

Associations of place and people I have met can both trigger a relapse. Giving guilty looks to people who work in local shops and cafes may mean you cannot go back into places where these people are. Yet getting out of the local town can avoid this. If the paranoia happens a lot in your own home village or town centre, you may run out of places to go. So it is helpful to go somewhere new where there are no such associations. Fortunately, Durham is on the railway line and so it possible to get completely out of area. You can then begin to think of doing this as a lifeline as the need to get out is still very important and you can get away from the people you are paranoid about.

Yet there are problems with trying to do this. It maybe if you start feeling ill the feelings and symptoms will not wear off so it is less possible to get out of the area. This may mean getting through paranoid places on the way there before you can escape them but it more possible to avoid the people you are paranoid in the local shops and restaurants. Then when sitting on a train if you have been paranoid before you get on it may make you feel visible and no longer just part of the crowd. It may be necessary to

change you seat to avoid this but if the paranoia triggers the voice there is no escaping that so you might as well just go home.

Once off the train and in a new city centre the whole experience of going somewhere new is very distracting and might take your mind off things. So sticking with the frightening train journey might be worth it. Then you can begin to enjoy things. With the change of scenery, the negative associations of place will go, and you can begin to calm down again. A change is as good as a rest here. Then if you stop being frightened by triggering the delusions or the symptoms wear off that may silence the voice too as this may be stress induced. You can add to the experience by eating out, having a few drinks and doing some sightseeing. Maybe too you can stay overnight to lengthen the time you spend in the therapeutic place and once you get back home you can look at things anew. This might help break the negative associations you have built up when being in your hometown.

Being emotionally drained means, you will stop enjoying life and will prevent you staying functional. If your place turns into a slum this will just make you more and unhappy. The mental health system can make you lazy to the point you cannot help yourself. Then being lazy is also a problem as if you slum it you may feel more depressed when the symptoms start. The emotional suffering can be combined with being physically frightened and you need to be calmed down to look after yourself and concentrate. In addition, you need to be calmed down as fear can paralyse you and stop you eating when you need to keep your strength up. Alternatively, if you have good and bad phases with the illness you can do the housework and other activities in between. This depends on how often and long the good phases are but fortunately the housework need doing only once a week so this might be possible at some point.

The mental health system can provide support with this including getting motivated to look after yourself. You will feel better if you get prompted to wash and then find an interesting hobby at a day centre. Then once motivated you will realise life is not all doom and gloom and you will feel more capable. This can be helped by having more social support as in Sheltered accommodation which may soothe these tired feelings, so you won't be so worn out. If you can distract yourself from the pain, you will function better with housework and personal care and will be more able to engage with the social contact in sheltered accommodation. This in turn will help with keeping more functional and make you feel better soothing the emotional pain. Insight can help with looking after yourself and soothing with compassion will keep you more functional too.

New friendships will deepen over time and doing things together will give you happy memories. This will help build positive associations of place such going to a day centre and help you get through the difficult phases. This starts out as an emotional lifeline and can result in a state of normal happiness. There will be some emotional strength here, but the problem is that people you know and your partners will be suffering. This can be emotionally painful to watch on top of your own problems. Alternatively, you can also help them pull through and know they can get hospital support.

Deepened friendships can be difficult as people often come and go from day centres so there might not be time for this. The same is true for sheltered accommodation especially including staff so the 24/7

emotionally supportive environment may not always be there. Living independently means the friends and staff you have met at the project may not always be there too so you can get quite isolated. Some people you know may commit suicide with schizophrenia which is very traumatic if the person is a friend who you cared about.

You have got to be happy with life and developing insight can help with this. It started with knowing the mental health system was there to provide care even in the face of causing 9/11. This led me you to realise people aren't blaming you for it. In fact, they are trying to help you get your life back to normal. My insight was if they thought I had done something for 9/11 they wouldn't have a caring attitude.

My next insight was also that if everyone knows I am responsible for 9/11 then how have a never been assassinated? This in turn calms the voices down as they criticise about my responsibility for 9/11. Insight can be built upon in that I also think the phone line might be tapped and that the neighbours might be spying for the CIA. Yet if I am being monitored and everyone knows where I am and what has happened why is it I have never been caught?

The insight only goes so far so I am still not sure about these thoughts even though I can question them. That means still keeping the blinds drawn in case the neighbours are watching me and not talking about my delusions on the phone. I am aware these thoughts come and go so there is still some anxiety even when I can question thing. This anxiety is much milder than the periods of more pronounced psychoses and it is possible to distract myself during periods of insight, so I am more functional with the fear and emotional pain.

Insight is then very important to emotional wellbeing. Periods of insight can help with having a rest from the symptoms, so you are not constantly worn out with them. It maybe that even without insight there are good and bad periods so that the anxiety will never go away. Yet with insight this is possible from time to time. Then you can really enjoy the emotional side of life again and have the finances and friends to do it with. This of course depends on much insight you have got and how long it lasts but it might be prolonged allowing extended periods of rest. Otherwise, it will allow you to enjoy the activities that take your mind things even more and settle down to life again. With insight can tell yourself the bad phases will pass, and you have just got to hang in there. Even with severe symptoms when this is more difficult, and you can give up on life with schizophrenia this becomes very important: schizophrenia involves recovery and relapse which makes insight very important.

There is an imperative to do something to conquer the emotional pain and fear of schizophrenia and in order to survive you need to be focused on other things to help deal with it. That means never giving in to it as the consequences could be disastrous leaving you defenceless in the face of the full force of the psychoses. You have got to keep fighting as giving up will just make things worse though at times this might seem impossible. Then you have got to keep having hope that you will overcome your problems and hope can be helped here by demonstrating you are making progress in dealing with your life with the illness. You need to think that you are showing improvement in your life and at the worst times remembering successful people like John Nash or Elyn Saks can be inspiring here.

Calming down brings out your emotions and this can be done with graded exposure to fear, breathing, safe place imagery and insight. But then you will be replacing fear with emotional pain which is just as difficult. Thinking you are responsible for 9/11 is a powerful force for shutting down your emotions but once you stop being so scared you can be emotionally numb with trauma. Love is the most profound emotional support and is the best answer to this and allows other forms of therapy. Even with emotional support life has still to get back to normal and there are many ways might be possible in between episodes. The anxiety about 9/11 never completely goes away but with constant anxiety emotions can take your mind off it and allow other forms of distraction.

Writing about the illness makes you realise how well it benefits you and helps you weigh up the good versus bad. Keeping a diary is similar and you can give yourself positive reinforcement with the good things in your life versus the negative reinforcement of feeling miserable all the time. It will remind you that life is not always continual suffering and maybe that the good phases are more frequent than you might remember. You will have been through bad periods, but you can record how you dealt with them. This can involve noting any insight you may have or how you have distracted yourself. Other things can include how you have made life meaningful with still pursuing your goals so if you start feeling depressed you remember all these good things too. During the worst times of the psychoses when all you can think about is the paranoia there will be pleasurable memories recorded that will distract you into thinking all you have got to do is hang in there until the feelings of fear and pain pass.

One major emotional problem is that I cannot see family members including my young nieces and nephews. I see my sisters now and again, but I am frightened if I can cause 9/11 what could happen to the people around me. My mother has become my emotional a lifeline as has the day centre where I have made new friends. These problems are particularly acute at Christmas and not seeing my family for the occasion is depressing although my mother does come round and makes some Christmas dinner for me. it is especially depressing not being able to see my nieces and nephews at this time even when I see my mother as this would be a strong force for happiness. I Have pictures of my loved ones on my wall and having some insight will allow for family contact and increase the possibility for emotional therapy. Falling in love can also ease some of these emotional problems.

Not being in or able to visit my home area is also an emotional problem but as I have lived away in a new home area for so long this has been solved so far. I feel more myself at home in my new town and have been able to put down new roots. This has been helped by living away from home and family as at university and has also meant it was possible to make new friends. Just as meeting new people at university meant leaving old friendships behind so it was necessary to do the same within the mental health system where previous contacts were lost through stigma. Also having been to university meant I could move out of my home area and enjoy living somewhere else and that has given me some flexibility for moving away. I Have a new life in Durham and living in a town has opened up more possibilities for doing things as there is more going compared to the remote village, I grew up in. I couldn't move back there now and though I miss a lot of things form my past I have adapted to my new circumstances and

am more content with them over time. All the same I still have pictures of my favourite home place on my wall and having insight may allow for going home to the village I grew up in and further increase the possibility for emotional therapy.

One problem that makes me wary about going out is in case I pass out with the fears, so I need someone to go to in that case. When it seems too paranoid to go out some insight and support is needed here. Otherwise, if you are frightened about doing this you can launch yourself into it and see what happens. Often the fear will pass so you can enjoy the pleasurable and emotionally normal experience of getting out to various locations. Then the experience of coping emotionally with this is positively reassuring for the next time and will build confidence all of which is good emotionally. If you go somewhere familiar as to a café with a family member it will feel like a safe place but if you start going through emotional pain having someone who loves, you with you will help you cope with this too. You will feel better emotionally as well as feeling safe at the same time.

The emotional side may need some positive reinforcement at these times as well as the feeling of being safe. You can get wrapped up in yourself thinking about 9/11 so that you need to step back from yourself and see what you are thinking. Otherwise try and distract yourself with something that might catch your attention like latching on to a positive thought such that you might come through the pain again or realise being loved can soothe it. Being distracted it might be possible to generate insight at this point again and once distracted you can look around you if you dare to see if people are really reacting to you. Once done the feelings of being in a safe might return and doing this will break the negative associations of place from having been paranoid somewhere previously. It will stop the memory triggering off the psychoses and replace it with good and safe associations which will mean you get a chance to go back there and practice the insight again.

Sometimes staying in a place where you become paranoid might not be possible. If the psychoses about mind reading starts with delusions, critical voices, emotional pain and fear the whole thing might get too much again. If the symptoms persist it is just as easy to go back to the car or if alone walk down by the river until they wear off. Then it might be necessary to keep trying with visiting places you have been before to see if there is any insight the next time round. However, this might be a case of once bitten twice shy. When the shock passes you can try it again and some insight can help here too. You can tell yourself getting back to the car or home is a safe place so the symptoms will wear off quicker and will not prolong the agony which might put you off going out again. It may also help to have some supported graded exposure in trying to do this. This can run up against becoming a mental barrier where even the thought of going out become a problem so this might take a push from a support worker or insight again. Too much fear will cause not going out for a long time.

Happiness is not just about being loved as other things can cause depression that need addressing. In my case there is also a material side of life and I have had to come to terms with my financial circumstances. This could make you alienated and I found I had to make difficult choices. Making a list of good and bad things can help you weigh all this up and it might be necessary to remind yourself you don't always get

what you want. In my case not being able to concentrate meant I could not drive with my disability but that meant I could afford to furnish my house, eat out and do some foreign travel. You can also get good quality housing which is one advantage of losing your place in sheltered accommodation. In the end I found I could cope with life on these terms and ended up feeling content with it.

There is a need to treat yourself with schizophrenia but this hard to think of ways of doing this all the time. Even with keeping busy that still leaves a lot of time on your hands and creates a need to keep lifting your mood in this way. I spend a lot of time searching for a wish list but once you have everything you can run out of treats. Other ideas include travel to the coast or places of historical interest places especially on a sunny or eating out once a week. This also has to be done carefully as you can have too much of a good thing, so you need to plan your week carefully to try to fill in the time.

So, a lot of people still experience boredom which can be severe, so you need to think of somethings distracting. In my case I was able to deal with the boredom by defining my passion and I began to devise my plan. I joined a local archery club and attended a night class at my local further education college. Other days I went to the day centre or had outing with friends and family. I found an answer here in learning to cook. That meant I had something going on every day. As long as the illness does not interfere with what you want to do in life which in my case was writing and study this keeping busy will help you cope emotionally.

Yet treating yourself needs to be built on top of friendship and emotional activity and so having something meaningful to do day to day is still essential to keeping positive with life. Falling in love can answer all this to but I think you can work round not having a partner. It may be hard to meet people outside of the mental health system with the stigma and some people are very isolated within it. So, you need something meaningful to do day to day but without love merely keeping busy life can seem a bit empty. Friends and family filled the emotional gap for me here and it was good to meet and make friends with a diverse group of people at the day centre.

Being paranoid can stop you doing day centre courses and you cannot get out and do things with your friends. It will also stop holidays, eating out, night classes and doing sports which in my case meant going to archery. Hearing voices all the time will stop you concentrating on the day centre courses and you may be so withdrawn you cannot engage in proper conversation. The consequence of that is that it leaves you on your own at home and getting the full emotional impact of the delusion in addition to the confinement. You will feel less like eating or doing housework and will be so exhausted you will sleep all the time. At home the mind is more concentrated on the delusions and there is less distraction. The worry is that this could have you back in hospital. The worst of it is the thought is that if you can cause 9/11 what will happen to the people you care about, and this could sever links with your family. At these times some insight is sorely needed which could help get your life back on track.

Sheltered accommodation helped with devising my daily plan as I had a link worker to go out with me every day. The project staff could motivate me a bit more for this but living independently posed problems. Getting out was replaced by going with a friend which meant I didn't have to do this all on my own,

though sometimes this helped too. Sitting in a café was a normal experience for me and as natural as the shopping mall and helped with mood living on my own. Being independent also meant that much responsibility fell on my mother who provided emotional support to motivate me for being on my own and staying functional. Some things had to be and was not fun like doing housework and my mother was able to support and train me with doing this. It was also possible to do more fun things around the house like cookery and my mother was again able to support me with trying new recipes so that with her help I was more motivated to do this. Eventually as it turned out to be fun I could do it when by myself though to keep going with it required ongoing support from my family. Keeping up with the exercise which I had help with when living at the project was also important as it is a good cure for depression but being drained emotionally and feeling fear meant you may not feel up to it. This also had an answer from my family emotional support as at other times I generally felt livelier so I could also tackle this too.

After having been out the fresh air clears my head a bit and I can stop worrying about the next psychotic episode. You know worrying about it won't stop it happening or change anything but stopping the worry still needs some distraction. Having a few deep breaths prevents the worry too and again helps clear your head. So, it easier to think about or enjoy something else. Sometimes it is shard to snap out of doing this and requires getting out about and about after which you feel more like starting on with the housework. Before getting out you have to coerce yourself to get ready but when you get back you feel a bit livelier and keeping busy is easier. I try to get out as early in the day as I can and that leaves more time for doing the housework. Once it is done you can start to relax a bit and concentrate on something else more enjoyable. I still have to force myself to keep everything clean and tidy which means having to exercise some responsibility here as not doing will make me feel worse. Once it is done, I am pleased I made the effort. After that I can be lazy as I want and usually settle down to watching a DVD and having something nice to eat with a glass of wine. The good feeling often continues the good feelings until I need to sleep but not always.

Being at home is less distracting if it is all day long and after you have been out you can settle down to enjoy the evening. I find this the best time to focus on the writing which takes my mind off things and stops the voices. All the same I often find that on your own and sat around the house the emotional painful thought start to creep back in. You cannot be out all the time but there are other options. One is that there is an evening drop in at our local day centre and night classes at the FE college. It is also possible to take up to a sport and I go to an archery two nights a week.

Yet there are problems with getting out like this. One is that it all depends on your ability to concentrate. Another is affording the transport as the taxi fares getting to the archery club are very expensive. The most serious difficulty is that there is a need for back up if severe symptoms start and that means getting back home. Being caught out in a crisis at any of these venues is serious and will put you off going places so this might not have such an answer.

Living in sheltered accommodation can take you mind off the voices on an evening as it has a 24/7 social environment. Yet with independent living this is not possible, and something has to fill the gap. A lot of

the time I need constant activity, so I am thinking all day long about the writing which concentrates the mind on other things than the voice. In addition to occupying my mind living independently has made me dependent on my mother ringing me on an evening and having friends round though some people don't even have this going on. I also have to keep busy with movies and computer games to avoid my mind dwelling on the pain involved about 9/11. The problem is that still memory ensures I still think about it from time to time.

Once this starts it is difficult to stop thinking about it and you just have to hope the thoughts and memories will come and go though. Sometimes though when the paranoid thoughts reoccur to you it is not at the forefront of your thinking so doing housework or the need for therapy forces you to think of something else. At other times if you realise what you are thinking about is dangerous or real that will trigger off an episode. At this point going back to the writing will not work and you have to wait until the symptoms wear off. This can take a long time and you can be in crisis for the length of the paranoid thoughts. Then the only option left is to try taking some of your tablets early or a Valium if prescribed but often the emotional pain is intense, and you feel there is nothing you can do about it.

So, I cannot write all the time and have to do other things. This can be a problem as I am more distracted when I write than doing other things. It helps that I am completely obsessed with the writing so that it does fill most of the time for me. In combination with going out most of the time is spent doing other things and when I am out and about as the situation of doing that forces me to think of other things and again that. This is because I find being out more distracting as i am focused on the paranoia of being around other people. But you cannot be out all the time as you cannot write all the time so that leaves plenty time for being around the house. Then taking my mind off things is a lot more difficult and at these times my mind is a lot less occupied so sooner or later my thinking drifts back onto the paranoia.

Being a loser has also helped me greatly in that with it the intellect is partially under control, and this has helped me both at university and with the writing. It has given something to aim and having such a goal in life can help with coping with it and with life in general. So once the difficulties with emotional pain about 9/11 subside there is always something left. This has also applied to many other things that can happen to in life such as relationship break up and the loss of our family business. That caused a nervous breakdown but with the control over my thinking it helped become through what has happened and helped the consequent depression. It wasn't completely the end of the world, and neither was the onset of schizophrenia which resulted and from it and made things even worse.

It also involves playing the "losers' game of life" as Roxette put it and as with allows an intellectual focus this can absorb you full attention. It will stop you worrying about the psychoses and keep you motivated so you don't give up on things. In addition, the overly material side as being "sure all that glitters is gold" will add to this motivation and keep you positive about your life in other ways but it is the intellectual focus that takes priority. The psychology has helped a lot with doing educational course at my local day centre and further education college and has meant on never giving up on going back to finish my university research. It allows me to get through each day as I can spend hours and hours thinking about

intellectual things and that obsession has meant I never get tired of it. It has been emotionally supportive in doing something I love and allows for passing the time once I get back from being out and about. That absorption has meant I don't remember about the psychoses but when I come out of the fascinated immersion and are in the here and now this can come to mind so it is not a complete answer occasionally. However, alongside everything else that keeps me busy this psychology and its way of life keeps me going in the long term and provides some reassurance for the future in that if my life doesn't turn out the way I wanted this will always be there. The danger is that the stigma surrounding the psychology might erase it and without the intelligence it gives you will no longer be able to answer the voices about 9/11. In the meantime, however the materialism of it helps distract me when out and about and occupies my intellect when at home. So, it helps me get through life in a very distracting way and over the last twenty-five years has meant there has been breaks in the suffering so it is not all doom and gloom. I really like the pleasurable things of getting qualifications and shopping etc so I don't often feel depressed, and I feel motivated to keep climbing academic levels which ensures these feeling will still be there in the future. As for the material side goes there is always something new to get and a car is next on my list: so, some progression is always possible in this way too. I am so motivated by this psychology I never get sick of it even in the long term.

I am so taken by being a loser that it spaces out remembering about the psychoses so that there are happy times versus the emotional pain. Then it allows a longer time to build some strength in between episodes and that while during an ill phase means there is something very positive to look forward afterward. Out of all such good things in life this has priority for getting through the psychotic times.

The paranoia can make you isolated and withdrawn so that the social isolation and depression form the illness combines to make things worse. At these times there may be little emotional input, but you can tell yourself when the delusions pass there will be emotional help again. Without emotional help there may be a risk of self-harm but practicing compassion will connect yourself to other people so emotional feeling will return. You may end up back in hospital where there will be people to connect so you are not on your own with this. At the worst time relying on your friends and family can be a powerful emotional therapy and feeling loved by them may also stop any self-harm. During more moderate levels of paranoia, it may be harder to confront things and distract yourself if have been on your own for long period. Then without emotional support trying to distract yourself with the material side might seem a bit superficial. You may have to tell it yourself that you just haven't met the right person which can make lonely even if you have friends to rely on until you do.

I find the feeling of being at home emotionally soothing. This can be combined with having been out and clears your head and allows you to reflect on the good things in life instead of getting symptoms all the time. Then the fear and emotional pain only hits you from time to time. Being at home is also helped by having some empowerment from the system and this helps you cope emotionally if you have been to a day centre. Again, after that you can then enjoy life when back at home and this can be used as a coping strategy to overcome the pain with pleasure. When the fear is usually at a subconscious level and cannot

be got rid of you might have to just get on with life about 9/11 as there is nothing you can do about it. Thinking about things won't change anything so you just have to make the best on a bad job and enjoy life as much as you can. This attitude can be combined with things that can distract you with your positive emotional thoughts and this helps keep you emotionally engaged both at home and out and about.

### **Conclusion**

The emotional support I have had from friends and family together with the various part of the mental health system have had prevented me getting depression in addition to the schizophrenia. I have found meaning and purpose in life and this has helped me cope with the emotional pain form my delusions about having caused 9/11 and the voices I hear criticising about it. There is hope here for people suffering with emotional pain in schizophrenia and it is important for clinicians as well as friends and families of people with schizophrenia to know what can help in the lives of service users and how it all works. We can then begin to improve the lives of those suffering from intolerable emotional pain.