

An example of our Financial Counsellor's Day!

Things are not always what they seem. (names changed to protect privacy.*)

A lot goes on behind the scenes when it comes to Financial Counselling. When someone reaches out at a vulnerable time, it takes a lot of courage to take that first step, but once they do, the relief that washes over them is life changing.

One may think that after that initial appointment all work is done, but almost always, that is only the beginning.

Take Chris* for example.

Chris* first engaged with Make A Difference 4 years ago. Chris* was a single man who had found himself with over \$180,000 worth of debt. This debt consisted of multiple credit cards, personal loans, car loans, the works.

Chris* had a full time job but had to take a big pay cut as his sector was downsizing and he could not afford to quit. There were limited jobs in his field, and he had to pay his rent. Chris* knew he had made poor choices (his words) and could not keep up.

Chris* expressed there were many times that he had considered ending his life and believed there was no way out.

To some, it may have seemed that Chris* had come to my office, met with me and left, and that is where it ended. But, behind the scenes four years of negotiations, referrals and check-in's occurred.

Initially, I was able to have Chris*'s debts halved to \$90k with proposals of 5 year long term payment plans. After 18 months, Chris* has obtained a new job with a higher pay rate, which allowed him to save a little money whilst maintaining repayments. With that money we discussed some options, to which Chris* agreed upon the option that we would propose a smaller full and final payout offer on his smaller outstanding debts, halving those debts again.

Four larger debts still remained, totalling over \$40k. Throughout the remaining period Chris* attended ongoing counselling sessions (to which I had referred him to) and this helped with his mental health significantly. Chris* no longer felt that life was over, and he had purpose. He met a lovely woman, and they were married in 2022.

With his initial debt of \$180k reduced to \$40k, Chris* continued to save and work hard. Moving into cheaper accommodation and following the budget we had drafted and re-drafted many times over.

After managing the reduced payment plans for the past 3 ½ years and having paid out most of the debts, Chris* was now able to offer full and final payouts on the remaining 4 debts. All of which were accepted, bar 1.

Fast forward to now. As of Feb 2023, Chris* was able to pay out the remaining \$8000 on the final debt he had (as he was able to save this amount).

This now means that Chris* is debt free and can start living his best life moving forward without money worries hovering over his head.

Email received from Chris 2/02/2023 –

Thank you, Kate.

It could have not been possible without your support. Its been just over 4 years we have been dealing with the banks.

Hats off to you, who made it possible.

I can't thank you enough, how lucky I am to have you by my side.

Thank you for helping me out of such a stressful situation I was in.

May God always bless 🙏 you with lots of love, happiness and abundance.

You are doing a wonderful work, bringing smiles to people. Keep it up. 🙌

Thank you so much.

So, when someone walks through the door, or calls to make an appointment, it is often only the very beginning of what could be a long and emotional journey towards financial freedom.

Kate Smith. Financial Counsellor, Make a Difference Dingley Village

Kate is available on Wednesday and Thursday, 9am-3pm.

Phone to make an appointment.