

Sarah's Story

Following the end of an abusive 4-year relationship Auckland woman Sarah* found herself "broken" and "in a very dark space".

"I completely lost myself within that 4-year long relationship. I ended up leaving because I found out he was cheating but there were so many other issues going on such as physical violence, gas-lighting etc. He used to call me crazy if I questioned things".

"I really needed help but finances were so incredibly prohibitive," she says. Unable to afford \$120/hour counselling sessions, Sarah heard about the courses at Auckland Women's Centre, through a friend of hers. "She spoke very highly of the courses and they were affordable too."

Sarah* enrolled herself in Auckland Women's Centre's seven week. "Amazing Assertiveness" course and describes her tutor Wende as fantastic. "She was the voice everyone needs in their heart saying – Don't be so hard on yourself" Through this course I realised that I let people push me around. It taught me how to be assertive while still being respectful to others. It gave me the verbal skills I didn't have."

Sarah* then went on to complete a weekend course in Self-Esteem at the Women's Centre. "I learned so much about self-respect, relationship roles and communication. Throughout the course we did a lot of role play also which really helps you learn how to deal with situations. You get the theory and the practice."

Sarah* says the value of what she learned at the AWC courses has allowed her to break the cycle of abusive relationships in her life, not just with partners but also with workplace bullying. Shortly after completing the course, Sarah* left her "toxic" workplace and found another job in a healthier environment.



"This course has really taught me to respect myself, have confidence in myself, my career and what I can offer. It has definitely helped me progress in my career."

Relationship-wise Sarah* says – "I've met some super lovely guys since dating but I can spot a disrespectful guy from a mile away now. If it wasn't for the AWC courses I would've been doomed to repeat the same mistakes on a loop over and over."

"My communication is better also – it has helped with other relationships too, in particular my friends and family. I am also physically much fitter. I'm still shy but I feel like I have an inner confidence now. I feel like I have not only helped myself but also become a valuable resource for my friends and family."

Click [here](#) to see upcoming courses and workshop at AWC.

*Sarah is not her real name.