

## Milly's story



**Milly** is a young autistic woman who came to **Respond** when she was 15. As a child she had experienced sexual abuse and had recently started to have flash backs of the trauma, this was affecting her mental health, and she had become withdrawn.

**Milly** wanted to do well in school but was finding it hard to attend.

At the start of her therapy, Jane her therapist focused on managing anxieties linked to school. **Milly** explained how she didn't have many friends and was always trying to fit in. Her therapist began to support her to understand ways of being authentically herself and her identity as an autistic person.

Creative art sessions were used as a way of helping her explore emotions and feelings. In one session she painted a picture and then ripped it up, therapy became an outlet and focus for demonstrating anxieties, and we explored with her the trauma she was finding hard to understand and name.

**Milly** attended **Respond** and had therapy for five months, and during that time the flash backs decreased and her attendance at school improved.

**Milly** showed she was able to understand and manage the trauma better, no longer felt shame and learned through her therapy techniques to prevent escalation of anxiety.

**Milly's** school reported much better engagement and confidence in the classroom, with teachers reporting that she seemed more willing to get involved in the classroom and seemed less burdened.

*Respond has helped me understand why I feel like I do, and that it isn't my fault. I am going back to school now and hope to go to college. I don't want to hideaway now.*

**Milly**