

Supported Employment Case Study: Danniella's Journey to Confidence and Independence

Background

Danniella has a diagnosis of Autism and Claustrophobia and has, in the past, been prescribed medication for depression. She plays a vital role in supporting her family. Her mother was unwell, and Danniella provided ongoing care alongside contributing financially and managing household responsibilities.

Her presence was essential, without her, the family would have struggled significantly. This responsibility, while important, also acted as a barrier to moving forward with her own independence and career.

Despite achieving strong GCSE results, Danniella faced challenges in sustaining employment and finding a workplace where she felt she belonged.



Challenges

Danniella's early employment experiences had a profound impact on her confidence and mental wellbeing.

After gaining employment independently in a call centre (2015–2017) and later at Specsavers and various other customer facing roles, she struggled with workplace culture and inclusion:

"I was trying to find somewhere that I fitted in and wasn't alienated. It felt like school all over again, everyone had a clique and I didn't fit in."

These experiences left her feeling isolated and undervalued:

- She felt openly excluded by colleagues
- Her confidence declined significantly
- She began to question her worth in the workplace

Over time, this led to anxiety and panic attacks, affecting both her ability to work and her trust in employers:

"It just got to a point where I thought no one wanted me... I felt like I should just be what society said I am."

Introduction to Supported Employment

Danniella first encountered the Supported Employment Team after attending a *Proud to Care* event. Originally seeking a job in care, Daniella became overwhelmed by the qualifications she would need to start her journey as she knew this would not be a possibility due to her commitments at home.

The *Proud to Care* event organisers, recognised her need for specialist support and connected her with the Supported Employment Team, where she began working with Coordinator Alex Simon.

Support Provided

Danniella's experience with supported employment marked a turning point.

Unlike previous job coaching experiences, which she described as pushy and misaligned, Alex took a personalised and empathetic approach:

- Listened carefully to Danniella's preferences and needs
- Matched her with roles that genuinely interested her and matched her skills
- Provided support with applications and job searching
- Accompanied her to workplace tours and opportunities

"He was never pushy... I never felt forced. Everything he sent my way I was interested in."

This tailored support helped rebuild her confidence and trust in the process.

The Opportunity: B. Braun

Through collaboration with Employer Engagement Lead John North, Danniella attended a recruitment event at B. Braun alongside Alex Simon and Brindley Turner.

The process included:

- A workplace tour
- On-the-day training
- A guaranteed interview

Danniella found the experience inclusive and engaging, particularly valuing the practical elements:

“I loved the process—it was informative and welcoming. I had a really good idea of what I could be doing there.”

Although she was not successful initially, she demonstrated resilience:

“It did knock my confidence... but I picked myself back up and carried on.”

Soon after, whilst on a different workplace tour, she was contacted again and offered a role in the Caps Unit.

“Two weeks later, I received the call that I got the job—I still have the original message!”

She began her role on **2nd March**, choosing not to require a job coach on-site due to the relationship between the Supported Employment Team and B Braun and the supportive environment already established.

Workplace Experience

At B. Braun, Danniella found a workplace culture that was inclusive, understanding, and responsive to her needs.

- She was open about her autism and felt accepted
- Managers and colleagues adapted support around her
- She felt safe, valued, and part of a team

A powerful example of this support came during a personal crisis:

When her dog was put down, her manager immediately recognised her distress and offered her time to be with her family. A colleague ensured she got home safely.

“I felt so supported by the whole team.”



Impact

The impact of supported employment on Danniella's life has been significant and transformative.

Employment & Confidence

- Sustained employment in a role she enjoys
- Increased confidence and independence
- Strong sense of belonging in the workplace

“I feel a lot happier, I haven’t been this happy in a long time.”

Financial Independence

- Contributing to the family household
- Supporting her father to become a full-time carer for her mother
- Able to plan and fund personal milestones

Personal Achievement

- Booked her first solo holiday abroad (3 weeks in Tenerife) where she is planning to meet some of her colleagues
- Developed confidence in completing daily tasks independently
- Building social connections with colleagues

“I keep pinching myself because I can’t believe this is my life now.”

Employer Feedback (3-Month Review)

Carl -Line Manager

“Danniella continues to perform at the level expected from her three-month stage in role. She has maintained strong progress and demonstrated increased capability and confidence across her duties.

She remains fully integrated within the team and consistently demonstrates a positive and engaged attitude. Her confidence has continued to grow since the first month, and she clearly sees herself as an established member of the team.”

Future Aspirations

Looking ahead, Danniella has ambitious and inspiring goals:

- Progress to the top grade within the Caps Unit
- Continue developing within B. Braun
- Potentially relocate internationally for work

“I wouldn’t be opposed to relocating to Germany. That place has made me feel that happy and confident in myself.”

Conclusion

Danniella's journey highlights the transformative power of personalised, empathetic employment support.

Through the Supported Employment Team, she moved from a place of low confidence, anxiety, and uncertainty to one of stability, independence, and ambition.

"Supported employment made me realise it was my self-confidence I struggled with, you gave me that confidence to put myself out there."

Her story demonstrates how the right support, combined with inclusive employers, can unlock potential and change lives.

Case Study written by: Brindley Turner, Employer Engagement Officer

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