

[Skip to Navigation](#) [Skip to Content](#)



[About Us](#)[Factsheets](#)[Contact Us](#)[Help Now](#)[Members](#)

Our goal is a better life for everyone affected by mental illness. [See how we make a difference](#)

[Donate today](#)



- [Home](#)
- [Services & Groups](#)
- [Diagnosis & treatment](#)
- [Living with mental illness](#)
- [Carers & family](#)
- [Get Involved](#)

- [Home](#) >
- [News Views](#) >
- pocket advocate

News & Views

"Strip away the label and what do you have left? A person who is struggling and needs support"

Date published: 02 February 2016



[Digital team's blog](#)

Danielle first experienced psychosis as a teenager. After going through several cycles of recovery and relapse, she decided to do things differently. She tells us about The Pocket Advocate, a tool she created to help herself, and how it's now helping others too...



"I had my first [psychotic episode](#) at the [tender age of 17](#). The world seemed to come together and fall apart simultaneously. On reflection it's difficult to pinpoint what had triggered this incredible reaction. Earlier that year I had been on tour in Japan promoting a peer counselling education programme that supported students being bullied. The pressure and attention were immense. This combined with finishing my GCSEs and the natural ups and downs of being a teenager/young adult, I think led to exhaustion and complete breakdown.

I was placed on an adult [psychiatric ward](#).

I eventually returned to my parental home and tried as best I could to 'get back to normal'. Within a year or so, I had relapsed. This pattern continued for over 10 years. On reflection it seems clear to me that the problems relating to my original distress were never really addressed. The additional trauma of being hospitalised, [diagnosed](#), [medicated](#) and [stigmatised](#) covered up the underlying issues that I faced as a [young adult](#).

I somehow managed to get a first class degree in Graphic Design and Visual Arts, and in 2009, shortly after my last hospitalisation I sat down and attempted to unravel everything. Why was this continuing to happen? I felt like I had tried everything and saw that the only thing that I hadn't really tried was acceptance, but acceptance of what? I used my skills from my degree and designed a self-management tool intended for my personal use. I thought I would share it with friends and family, and hoped it would help us to navigate this difficult terrain.

I wanted to create something that was personal to me, to help identify the things that help me to feel safe or unsafe, know who to reach out to, and to communicate what I need with clarity and confidence.

I showed my [Social Worker](#), and, long story short, I managed to get some funding to develop it to support others with similar experiences. I called it [The Pocket Advocate](#).



October 2015 marked the seventh year since my last stay in hospital. The Pocket Advocate has helped me enormously, but I couldn't have made it this far without the support of a small handful of dedicated and loving individuals who shone their light on my path at a time when I felt I had none. [Therapy](#), sitting quietly, walking slowly has also really helped. I appreciate that what works for some may not work for all.

Strip away the label, the diagnosis and what do you have left? A person who is struggling and needs support. We all experience times of great difficulty, and some people are better equipped at dealing with those times than others.

Wherever you are, please don't give up. You are so much more precious than you will ever know."

To download one of Danielle's illustrations to help navigate challenging times, go to the-pocket-advocate.com. You can keep up with her project on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Portrait of Danielle, © copyright Luke Beresford 2016. Images of the Pocket Advocate ©Copyright Project Embrace & The Pocket Advocate. All Rights Reserved 2016.

Share on facebook Share on Twitter Share on Google+ Print Email

We are stronger together

From as little as £6 a year you can become a member and help us shape the future for people affected by mental illness.

[Find out more about becoming a member and join us today.](#)

Get support

[Find out where you can get help and support for your mental health](#)

Start your own campaign today!



Take action

Your guide to campaigning on mental health

Rethink Mental Illness.

We know that starting your own campaign may seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be!

[Download our Take Action Guide and start your campaign today.](#)

Support us today

1 in 4 people are affected by mental illness in England.

Together we can ensure they get the support they need.

Support Us
Today

- [Jobs & Volunteering](#)
- [Need crisis support?](#)
- [Media Centre](#)
- [Shop](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [Privacy](#)
- [Our supporter promise](#)



Registered in England Number 1227970. Registered Charity Number 271028.

Registered Office 89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP.

Find us on

- [Find us on Twitter](#)
- [Find us on facebook](#)
- [Find us on Linked In](#)
- [Find us on YouTube](#)

