

## Introducing Srishnaa (Sushi)

### Statement of living/lived experience in mental health.

Hi there! My name is Srishnaa, but everyone knows me as Sushi. I am 25 years old and am currently studying full time at RMIT. I currently am diagnosed with high functioning depression, anxiety, and Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD). I am also a carer for both my parents who also suffer from mental health illnesses such as bi-polar and depression.

In the intricate tapestry of my life, the threads of abuse and CPTSD have been woven into a profound journey of resilience and transformation. My early years were marred by abuse and sexual assault, leaving deep scars that, for a long time, dictated my very existence. Through a labyrinth of self-discovery and healing, I embarked on a path of recovery. The relentless pursuit of understanding and reclaiming my mental well-being became the catalyst for my own transformation. As I faced my own demons, I realised the power of empathy, compassion, and self-love.

This personal journey led to start my career within the mental health sector, where I have found purpose and passion. Drawing from my lived experiences, I am dedicated to empowering others on their journeys to recovery, offering a beacon of hope, and imparting the wisdom I've gained along the way. My mission is to destigmatize mental health issues, foster resilience, and provide a safe space for individuals to embark on their own paths to healing.

Through the lens of my past, I am now shaping a brighter, more compassionate future for those who have endured similar hardships. My life's tapestry, once defined by abuse and CPTSD, is now woven with threads of resilience, empathy, self-love and a deep commitment to mental health advocacy and support.

### A few questions from A Path To Follow.

#### Favourite colour

My favourite colour is yellow! Yellow is such a beautiful and vibrant colour that I believe, makes me feel happy, joyful and warm! It also reminds me of my favourite flower, the sunflower.

#### Favourite recreational/social activity

I absolutely love sport and more specifically martial and weightlifting. Over the years, I didn't know how to cope with negative emotions. However, when I discovered martial arts and weightlifting, I really enjoyed it and most importantly, it provided me with a safe space to channel my feelings. So, whenever I feel down or even happy, I love to head to my local gym with some friends and lift some weights and practice some martial arts.

However, besides sports, I love painting and cooking. Both those activities make me feel calm and at ease!

#### Favourite food

I LOVE FOOD! But if I must make a solid choice, then it would have to be a spicy tonkatsu ramen with extra seaweed, pork and eggs!

#### Why peer support?

There are many reasons as to why I want to become a peer support worker. I would love the opportunity to support a young person who is experiencing a variety of challenges, by building a positive and trusting relationship that both supports and empowers them.



As someone who felt alone and isolated during such times, I wish I had the right support systems around me. Therefore, I hope by becoming a peer support worker, I can become that vital support system for a young person so that they are always reminded that they are never alone during their journey but most importantly, that they feel safe and noticed.

### **A goal with APTF Inc.?**

My main goal at APTF, is to be able to inspire and empower as many young people as I can during my time here. Additionally, I would love to develop and gain vital skills such as facilitation, case-noting and counselling skills that would allow me to become a successful practitioner in the social services sector.

### **APTF Inc.'s point of difference?**

What makes APTF stand out from other providers is the unique services they have to offer young people. Each service not only provides a young person with lots of support, but it aims to empower them through strength-based practices. Additionally, APTF uses a less clinical approach to mental health by enhancing the power of lived experience.

### **How do you think a younger peer would benefit from your support?**

I believe a younger peer would benefit from my support because I can help them develop a fresh perspective and a different way of understanding their challenges. I would also find ways to empower them throughout their journey however most importantly, I would ensure they feel supported and reassured that I am there for them in the toughest of times and will always be an encouraging and welcoming person to lean on and connect with.

