



Thank you for taking the time to answer the feature questions below.

For the readers; please introduce yourself with a short biography:

TIMBARS

My name is Tim Bouman; I am 15 years old and live on the Isle of Wight. I had an interesting childhood, at 4 months old I went off to live on a cruise ship and did so for 2 and a half years, I've travelled extensively between cruise ships and Holland but unfortunately I do not remember a thing. After travelling me and my

parents moved down to the Isle of Wight, my mum's birth place. A few years passed that were fine, at about age nine, things started to change and my journey through mental health started. Now I am 15, nearly 16. I am currently at Platform One College of music studying a B-TEC level 2 and doing very well for myself.

Would you please share how and why you got involved in mental health?

I have suffered from mental health for nearly seven years now. I was nine when I remember it starting. I knew I was different from the other kids my age but I managed to hide it pretty well. I remember I started having small visual disturbances as well as auditory. I started questioning things I shouldn't be at that age and suffering from unwanted racing thoughts. I didn't understand what was happening and I didn't want to be different so I started self-harming. It progressively got worse and eventually a virus hit me and my condition doubled a long with a lot of physical and sensory issues as well. I was in and out of hospital a lot for suicidal attempts, absconding for long periods of time or fits of some sort. My mental health and physical struggle got so bad I was in a deep psychotic state and got referred to Mildred Creek Unit which was a mental health unit for people with physical tendencies; it was based in Great Ormond street Hospital. When I left the unit after 5 months I had become a little better but still had a long journey to recovery. I went into education for the first time in 2 years at a tuition centre for kids who and been out of education for a long time due to certain reasons. With lots of determination and help I slowly got better and came to a more realistic state of mind. Through this journey I was diagnosed with everything under the sun and put on every medication you can think of. I am now diagnosed with PANDAS Strep which is rheumatic fever of the brain (swelling of the brain,) which causes a mental health diagnosis of Bipolar disorder with psychotic tendencies; I am still on medication called Quetiapine which helps with my erratic moods and hallucinations.



What are the triggers; how does one start on recovery?

There are quite a few triggers; I have to make sure I stay as healthy as possible or I start to tread downhill! Sleep is a big one, I've never slept particularly well and still don't but I try to make sure I keep to a structured sleeping pattern as much as possible or my symptoms increase. I eat very healthy and do plenty of exercise; I do a lot of exercise because it makes me feel good, lifts my mood and gives me a buzz. If I stay alone a lot and stress/pressure myself to much then that sets off negative effects also, so I try to keep socializing and make sure I have me time because I have a tendency for overworking myself, I am very much a perfectionist. Crowds of too many people is a trigger, even if its family so if I am at a party I try to keep myself to myself or hang out with one or two certain people. Bright lights or annoying sounds, due to my sensory issues they make me tic, I do not have Tourette's but my neurological condition causes me to have violent body jerks.



Starting on recovery for me was actually accepting help; I remember when things started getting really bad I didn't want help because I didn't think anyone could. When I learned to accept help it became easier and through time I developed coping strategies. Just know no matter how hard things get, it will get better.

Please tell us a bit more about your music and your journey in making it?

Almost from the moment I became ill, I became very focused on music, it was almost an overnight reaction. I could play tunes on the piano. Writing lyrics was a huge release for me, and this has continued to be so on a daily basis. I picked up the drums and have been honing in on my skills/knowledge in every musical area possible ever since.

Do you have any 'coping strategies' that you use on a daily basis or in your life at all?

- Having structure
- Keeping my mind active
- Exercise
- Lyrics/Music
- Walks



May I ask what are your personal beliefs surrounding the explanation of your mental health experiences?

I believe that I have always felt different from others, and have always had strange experiences. I managed to cope with this though until I was sick with a virus, which intensified all my problems. I also believe that this journey happened for a reason. It was a rather large life lesson that has taught me various aspects of life and I am still learning. If I could go back I would not change a thing.



What does the future hold for you?

MUSIC MUSIC MUSIC !!!

Also, travelling, meeting like-minded people, finding myself and my true purpose. Making lots of money, successful career and lots of adrenalin rushes.

Favourite Quote?

"...Never Give up – paint the sky, make it yours..."

"...Mental health is not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of being strong for too long..."

"...The best revenge is to be unlike him who performed the injury..."