

**Olivia (26) & Emma (unborn when the work started)  
12 sessions**

	<b>Start</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>End</b>
<b>HADS</b>			
Total	13	22	13
Anxiety	8	11	8
Depression	5	11	5
<b>PIRGAS</b>	82	90	90

**Olivia and Emma's story**

Olivia has an older son but suffered a miscarriage before the pregnancy in which she saw NorPIP. She describes overwhelming grief for her lost baby and felt that others didn't understand and were dismissive of her feelings, sinking into depression. Through working with a NorPIP therapist Olivia began to resolve some of these difficult feelings and felt able to welcome her daughter as a baby and begin to enjoy parenting again.

**In her own words (taken from an interview transcript):**

***What brought you to NorPIP?***

I was at Penn Green Children's Centre - I was seeing someone there and she wondered if I needed more than her. I thought I needed someone to talk with. I'd had a miscarriage and fell pregnant after a couple of months... I thought I was fine but I wasn't fine. I was worried I wasn't going to bond with her. I was 20 weeks and I thought 'I need to sort this out'. I realised I wasn't really over it, I want to get my head sorted before she gets here.

***What were you hoping for?***

You want answers but know you're not going to get them. A lot of people don't talk about it... none of my friends had experienced it (miscarriage) and kept saying the wrong thing. I was really worried with her, I didn't want to see her as a replacement.

I was talking to people - to vent it out - but wasn't really getting it out. It was hard to find the right place to talk. I was all over the place, [older child] wasn't getting much, I had no energy, wasn't bonding with Emma.

***What do you remember about your first session?***

I really wanted to talk to someone. I was a bit anxious - who's it going to be? First impressions - some people can be very intimidating - when first met her

she felt really quiet. She was really quiet and softly spoken. Had a big smile on her face and I got a drink so I liked that.

The first session was form filling and stuff, there wasn't much. She got me to fill a wellbeing thing out to compare at the end. The form filling makes it feel more official, makes it feel like you're seeing someone properly, not just talking to a friend. She said you're low here [demonstrates pointing to the form] and here but I can understand why – it makes you think 'it's not in my head then?'.  
[My therapist] surprised me because of how quiet she was. I expect counsellors to be quite opinionated and they do talk a lot – 'this is the only way it can be'.

It was in a room I'm familiar with so that helped. The set up wasn't what I expected, it was in a circle of chairs and you could sit where you want. But she adapted to me, it didn't feel like you were on top of each other.

***What was your experience of the therapy?***

The first couple of sessions we were finding out why I was there – the waterworks came out, opened up some other things about why I feel down. That helped to vent that a bit because I can't get it out elsewhere all the time. Emma was the main thing but also getting other bits out. You don't realise that you're doing it – you're just spilling – bringing different things.

It felt quite relaxed, you can say what you want. I didn't try to be safe with what I say and protect myself. I went in with pregnancy but other things came in too.

It went at a nice flow to what I wanted. I expected it to be the end when I'd had Emma but [NorPIP therapist] persuaded me into having a few more sessions – I knew I loved her but she persuaded me to stay for another month. I think I'd have been fine to finish when I wanted to but it was definitely helpful that it carried on a bit.

I did feel sad when she signed me off because I'd worked with her for a long time.

***What was the relationship like with your therapist?***

When she gave her thought and stuff you don't feel... she wasn't like 'this is my opinion and this is the right opinion'. She would let you vent and then give you some advice but it was still friendly, but you know you're talking to someone who knows what they're talking about.

It was something to look forward to as well.

***Was there anything that surprised you?***

[My therapist] surprised me because of how quiet she was. I expect counsellors to be quite opinionated and they do talk a lot – 'this is the only way it can be'.

I always felt disappointed at the end of the session. We'd say 'I'll have to remember it for next week' – but she always remembered so we could start again.

***What is different about life now?***

I was in a really dark place and then suddenly the sun came out – I felt much brighter. I was in a dark cloud all the time.

I had to get up anyway and go to nursery but now I can get on and look forward to being a family. I feel happy, not crying or being miserable.

I stopped questioning stuff, why can that person do this [eg sustain a pregnancy] when I can't etc. No one talked about it before, people don't talk about it – the Children's Centres don't have a miscarriage or baby loss support group. Just to go and chat – at least everyone's been in the same place as you. Hospital don't even check on you, you're completely off grid. Just got left to it.

A lot of stuff happened at the same time – had her, moved into new home, things were falling into place. You've not got a lot of stuff weighing on your mind. I had the energy to take (son) to the park – and within a week I'd taken her into nursery.

He picked up that I was sad and stuff and he'd ask to go out in the garden, didn't even take him out in the garden, I'd let him out but I didn't go out – whereas this summer just gone we were running around rolling around the garden being silly – had the energy to be silly.

I'm now able to be silly – I plan a lot more days out now, so being able to walk around, it motivated me to lose some weight, I feel healthier - I wouldn't have bothered with that before then. Have had my hair cut this year and stuff. I felt good and was proud to show her off. Walked into a new group and looking forward to it. It's a proper social event getting out – meeting up with new people, more friendships.

It was definitely the bond with [therapist] that made that bond with Emma come – someone who was there and could give me what I needed.

I seemed more happy. My mum said I seemed better. I'm in a good place now.

***What would you say to other parents?***

I had a really positive experience from it, [my therapist] was really friendly, it's a really relaxed atmosphere and you can say as much or as little as you want, and self-protect if you need to.

I would say to be careful that it doesn't open up anything that you're not expecting, it can bring things back that you've locked right at the back.

It was a really positive experience and I looked forward to it, it got me through each week.

***What could have been different?***

I wish I could have seen her the first time.

***What message would you give to commissioners?***

I don't think it would have been as quick if I'd gone NHS and when you're in that dark place you can't wait. They've got people who can help you, and it's their calling.