

Mario

Mario was a 30 year old man who survived a motor vehicle accident that left him with a severe traumatic brain injury and numerous physical injuries. After hospital he was involved in a life skills rehabilitation program but because he did not participate in the program of housework and self-management, he was moved into a seniors care centre. When he was referred to Parley he had been in the care centre for 6 years, including 2 admissions to a psychiatric hospital for medication reviews. He had episodic behavioural outbursts that included threatening and assaultive behaviour towards vulnerable residents, frequent threats of self-harm, and he made rigid demands and expectations regarding the few food items he would eat. He rarely went out in the community and made little eye contact when spoken to.

After a functional analysis of Mario's behaviour, it turned out that Mario was accessing his needs for attention and reassurance by expecting others to monitor his well-being and respond to his needs without overt cues. He could not initiate social emotional connections or recruit reinforcement. Mario would eventually escalate when others allowed him to isolate himself.

Parley consultants worked with the care facility staff and Mario to change the consequences that were maintaining isolative behaviour, to stop assaultive behaviour, and to modify his rigidity. After 8 months Mario was stable and no longer a threat to others, and he was keen to leave the nursing home.

Mario moved to his own apartment with two hour in-home support twice a day for help with household management, medications and meal preparation. Through on-going teaching and monitoring with positive behaviour support plans, he stabilized to almost zero incidents of frustration and threats of self-harm. Parley targeted and taught functional communications and desensitization for avoidance. And Mario embarked on the adventure of getting his life back.

After 2 years Mario successfully discontinued 85% of his psychotropic medications, with one medication remaining as a sleep aid, and he started using a SAD (seasonal affective disorder) lamp for the remaining low mood mid-winter. His moderately severe case of tardive dyskinesia resolved. With regular exercise he lost weight and was no longer slumped and shuffling when he walked. Data from at-home care attendants revealed significantly improved memory and mood on a daily basis. Behavioural support services have decreased to basic monitoring on a retainer.

Once Mario got his life back he renewed his interest in listening to music and playing the clarinet. He is well-dressed and an excellent conversationalist, staying up on current events and computer technology. He has multiple community connections. With the support of Parley's interventionist, Mario becomes increasingly independent in taking transit and in facilitating activities and personal self-care needs, like initiating making and attending medical and professional appointments independently. Mario is tidy and he likes to fix things and make his home look nice, but his lifelong avoidance of housework conveniently (for him) continues.