

To whom it may concern,

Although I voluntarily participated in Beauty from Ashes, the program completely blew my expectations out of the water. I took part at first with the assumption that it was like every other counselling or therapy service I had received in the past. Thankfully, I was proven wrong rather thoroughly.

BFA is an incredible program, and I've never encountered or heard of anything like it before. It dives straight into the heart of your trauma without any hesitation or regret. Everything happened so fast that I had difficulty finding my bearings at first, to the point that most of the defense mechanisms I have preventing me from exploring those dark parts of myself didn't have a chance to boot up. I was forced to face myself. It was like someone reached into my chest, pulled out my heart and showed it to me. I realized so many things about myself that shocked me, and by the time the program was finished I felt truly changed.

In addition to the impact I experienced individually, there's another aspect to BFA that stood out and affected me: the social aspect. The small group sessions are daunting in their intimacy, but they yield an effectiveness that I don't think would have been otherwise achievable if this program was more one-on-one. Watching other people become vulnerable before you, listening to their incredible stories, is deeply inspiring. It's an act of self-care that requires tremendous strength, a strength that, in the outside world, is often met with indifference or ridicule. But in Beauty From Ashes, such exposure is only met with love, and that love creates a place where it's safe for people to empower themselves. It exchanges shame for integrity. This profound experience allows for a unique bond to be formed among group members; it feels like finding a family, and it adds substance to the idea that there are people in this world who will acknowledge your pain unconditionally, not stigmatize you because of it.

Since I've completed the program, my life has been seriously affected. Through BFA, I've become close with someone I otherwise would not have interacted with much, and our friendship has continued to grow. The way I look at myself has evolved positively, my thinking has become clearer, and my habits have become more conducive to a healthy lifestyle in nearly every way. My compassion has deepened, both for myself and others. Symptoms of my Post Traumatic Stress Disorder have eased, and I feel more determined to achieve my personal goals. Although I was always aware of what I carried, I never realized how deeply the weight of it affected me or how utterly I had been denying how I was contributing to my own condition.

Despite all that, I know that I have many more issues and hurts to confront within myself. I fully intend on attending another Beauty From Ashes program and look forward to what my healing journey has in store for me next.

Sincerely,