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After many years of poor mental health and isolation, Brendan Witham is taking big steps towards leading his best life.

The 42-year-old Bunbury local is using his NDIS plan to work towards his employment goal of being a support worker and mentor to young men.

He is also getting out and meeting people in his community.

‘I've had challenges my whole life,’ says Brendan.

‘I was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, depression, and anxiety when I was young.’

Brendan’s mental health has had a significant impact throughout his life.

‘I've always been a square peg in a round hole,’ says Brendan.

‘Being an outsider, I haven't had many friends.

‘Depression has been a big thing through my life.

It's caused a lot of issues at work and in social relationships.’

But this year Brendan’s NDIS funded support is helping him finally move in the right direction.

Brendan is working towards paid employment by accessing disability service provider Seed WA’s meaningful employment program.

‘I’ve found purpose and direction in my life again, after being on Jobseeker and the disability support pension for most of my adult life and thinking things can’t get any better,’ says Brendan.

‘Initially I helped build a large shed, and that was hard physical work. Then we worked on creating a gardening business.

‘It’s been great to get back to the mind frame of working.’

Seed WA and Brendan are now working towards achieving his goal of being a support worker operating as a sole trader.

‘I want to use my lived experience to support and mentor young men who have had challenges similar to the ones I’ve faced,’ says Brendan.

‘Seed WA have helped me develop this idea into an actual working business.

‘And I’m learning soft skills I've never really used before, like being punctual and well presented.’

Brendan has a passion for environmental land care and wants to use those skills in his support work.

‘I’m into looking after the country, so hopefully I can do some work out in the bush and pass on some of my knowledge to the young men I’ll be supporting,’ says Brendan.

‘I also want to pass on some gardening skills, like setting up vegetable patches and herb beds.’

His support worker is also helping him get out into the community.

Learning how to interact with others has been an important step.

‘It’s mainly been activities in a group for social learnings,’ says Brendan.

‘I love 4-wheel driving so we’ve been out bush a few times.’

Brendan knows the social interaction is good for his mental health.

‘I'm used to being on my own a lot, but I know I need the social contact. It breaks the vicious cycle of spiralling thoughts that drag you down,’ Brendan says.

‘It’s great to meet other people who have been on a similar journey, especially if we have common interests.’

Brendan reflects on how far he has come and how much it means to him.

‘I don’t know where my resilience comes from, but I’ve been picking up skills and knowledge along the way and now it’s all starting to come together after 20 plus years,’ says Brendan.

‘I'm actually realising some dreams I’ve had for a long time.’

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