

East Maitland's Victoria Campbell refuses to be defined by borderline personality disorder

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JOURNEY: Victoria Campbell with a piece of art she used to convey her emotions about borderline personality disorder. Picture: Simone De Peak

For Victoria Campbell, the past two years have been an emotional rollercoaster. The East Maitland woman has faced a daily battle against borderline personality disorder (BPD) since her diagnosis in 2014.

She has struggled to manage her emotions, suffered deep depression and displayed extreme reactions that she could not control.

“You don’t know whether you’re overreacting,” she said. “You worry about every contact with every person. You think you’re an idiot, you’re a fool.”

The condition goes hand in hand with depression and anxiety.

“The anxiety stops me from going out. I struggled to do the grocery shopping,” Ms Campbell said.

The downs left Ms Campbell in hospital for up to two months at a time. But out of that negative came a positive – art.

“When I was in hospital I did a few sketches,” she said. “To be able to draw or write down those feelings helps to get those emotions out when you can’t find the words.”

Her works were displayed at a pop-up show on Tuesday, which Ms Campbell said helped break the stigma about mental illness.

“People misunderstand or misconstrue BPD,” she said. “To be able to present that puts a real face and a real depth of feeling behind it.”

Along with the art, Ms Campbell has taken other positive steps.

While borderline personality disorder is something the mother of three will always face, she has found ways to manage it.

Ms Campbell has undertaken therapy and is on medication. The 33-year-old also keeps positive quotes around her house, and consciously tries to re-map her thoughts.

Her days are still good and bad, but Ms Campbell said she has made great progress.

“Each down is not as down as the previous down,” she said. “There’s always light at the end of the tunnel, but sometimes the tunnel feels a bit longer and there’s a few bends so you can’t see the light.

“But I feel better than I have in a long time.”

<http://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/4237757/refusing-to-be-defined-by-mental-illness/>