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Melbourne NDIS participant, Holly McSeveney says photography has helped her to express, share and improve her mental health, and now with NDIS funded therapies she’s functioning at her best, even taking a massive step, starting Individual Photography, her very own business.

Using her NDIS funds, the 30-year-old, who has schizophrenia, a panic disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), said she engaged District 360 Supports to help her achieve her goals and now with tailored supports she’s well on her way.

“Agnes at District 360 Supports has been great, and the supports I’ve been able to receive have really helped improve my life,” Holly said.

“Agnes met mum and me face-to-face. She listened to my goals, was empathetic to my mental health issues and what I was hoping to achieve, then she found me the right supports.”

“With my mental health issues, at times it can be challenging to leave the house, but now I get funding to see a psychologist regularly, and I get support with daily living activities, like learning to cook, shopping, and cleaning and gardening around the house.”

Holly said Agnes also found Avinath, a support worker with the IT skills she needed to help her maintain her own photography business.

“Agnes knew my main NDIS goal was to start my own business, but I didn’t have the confidence to take that first step or the IT skills to build a website.

“I eventually found a website builder and she searched and interviewed support workers with IT skills, and she found Avinath who has been incredible,” she said.
“With my mental health I can get overloaded quickly and I become restless, so to be supported by a support worker who understands me, and can work with me, has really helped to build my confidence, and it’s enabled me to take that first step.

“I now have my own website which I’m proud of and I share my photos on Instagram so now I’m keen to immerse myself into doing some really creative work.” Passionate about photography, and feeling it was a big factor in lifting her from the dark, Holly said she was in her teens when she first picked up a camera.

“I was doing a group photography activity with my (then) social worker Julie. She asked us all take a photo of three feathers.
“Julie loved the way I’d composed the image and arranged the feathers, and it just felt right straight away, like I’d found something special.
“I was always taking pictures on those crappy little digital cameras we used to have, and on my

phone.

I eventually saved up for my first basic professional camera and ever since I’ve been taking pictures almost every single day.”

With her website ablaze with striking images, and securing awards, testament to her ability, Holly said her favourite work lies in her ‘Portfolio Series’, which she feels is her strongest work.

“I’ve done a lot of wrestling and band photography in the past. Action photography is so rewarding. It’s more than just settings, you have to use timing and peripheral vision to get it perfect, but ultimately my dream is to do more high profile gigs,” she said.

“I’d like to work with bigger bands and bigger wrestling companies, and one day do a photography exhibition to share and explain my mental health journey so people can better understand schizophrenia and mental health challenges and see, with the right supports, we can function just as well as anyone else. That would be a dream come true,” she said.

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