



Additional Information

Aquarius Birmingham YP service

Case study 1

A carer was referred to the service at the beginning of May as she was currently looking after her grandchildren as they were removed from the family home due to their dad's substance misuse and limited contact with their mom. The counsellor is doing work with the carer around their coping strategies and education around the dad's substance misuse. We have a practitioner who is supporting the grandchildren and as the grandparents do not have internet access or a computer. Due to ongoing issues with the amount of data they have on their phones, it has been difficult for them to complete schoolwork and keep in touch with me. They both expressed an interest in maintaining contact with the practitioner via video chat early on into lockdown but this was not possible due to them having limited data on their phone.

As a service we have managed to purchase a phone which we have loaned to the children so they can continue to engage in video sessions with the practitioner and communicate via text messages.

We completed a creative activity via video chat where we explored different ways of coping with difficult emotions. We did so by working through a worksheet together. It wouldn't have been possible to cover such a session over the phone as the video chat enabled us to show each other the worksheets and opened up discussions. Practitioner has set aside time each week to do a video session with the siblings which gives them a safe space to discuss any concerns they may have or use the time to distract themselves from anything that may be worrying them while doing something fun and interactive.

By supporting the grandchildren this has taken pressure of the grandparents in terms of them coping with the new living arrangements and being able to talk open and honestly about the situation as well and the impact that it is having on the whole family.

Case study 2

At just 13 years old A's life - already filled with upheaval and trauma – was spiralling downhill. His mum was unable to look after him due to her own mental health problems, and his father refused to home him due to his unruly behaviour, so he was living with his Auntie. Diagnosed with ADHD his behaviour at its worst was totally unmanageable, for example he was excluded from mainstream education. A himself was struggling with his mental health and was engaging in risky behaviour which put him at high risk of exploitation. He turned to cannabis to cope.



A was referred to the service by PRU for substance misuse support around his cannabis. In these sessions we were able to support A in a number of key areas including harm reduction, drug education around cannabis and the effects, healthy relationships, diversity and better coping with his mental health problems. By tailoring our approach to suit his needs – offering consistency and patience – a relationship of trust was developed and he began to open up.

We also referred A into Grow Project to help with alternative use of time. In the course of a table tennis match in the garden Andy would open up about issues he had with his PRU and his father, and about the challenges he was facing. He told discussed with the Practitioner how he did not blame his mom for his poor upbringing and spoke highly of the support he was having from not just us but also the PRU. When he did some painting in the garden he found this very relaxing and again opened up more that when just sat inside

A continues to attend Grow and to benefit from 1:1 support. His behaviour has greatly improved and he has cut down his cannabis use. His family relationships are also improving. His PRU commented highly on the progress he has made and commended the project.

Forward Carers 14 – Meal Kits

- The meal kits so far have supported 18 young carers in total (aged 10 and upwards)
- There are 6 other young carers within these families under 10 who also use the kits with support of older siblings. (Even though the under 10 YP do not meet the criteria I would say after meeting the families they would have some form of caring role within the family)
- Total number of people within all the families is: 47 people.
- We are in the process of planning Covid safe workshops for young people to be delivered at Evolve.
- Working with the families and having regular check ins with Social Work student which has led to referrals to Sprurgeons for Young Carers support, employment and CHK support for a care leaver and new cooking skills and new foods introduced to young carers.

Meal Kit Case Study 3:

Very hard to engage YP aged 15 referred to the meal kit project although she would not class herself as a young carer. Mom is a drug and alcohol user who has regular hospital stays due to pancreatitis and also epileptic seizures. YP was not in education and had stopped playing football on a Friday evening due to wanting to look after her mom due to the risk of seizures when her mom would be home alone.



Meal kits have supplied YP and mom with some positive use of time and a chance to sit and eat a meal together downstairs rather than YP in her room and mom in bed. I have been having very short but regular contact with YP and she has started to go back to football

where her mom has gone with her and waited so that YP can see mom during the session waiting. I called YP last week and she has returned back to school on a part time timetable and feels much better for seeing friends. YP reports enjoying the foods in the meal kits and was not sure we would even deliver them even though she said she would like them.

Feedback from Meal Kits Project

- All YP's have reported back:
- They have enjoyed receiving the kits.
- All families have enjoyed the recipes in the meal kits.
- All families have tried something new and would cook them again.
- All families have cooked together and ate as a family which is something they do not normally do as often or at all.
- All families have cooked from fresh more since receiving the kits
- Families' would like to try international dishes and cook as a group with other YP's and families.

Statistics showing complexity is really high compared to national data

- 36% in Mainstream Education. 50% national average
- Solvent use 6% compared to 3% national
- 34% NEET compared to 19% national
- 40% White British compared to 75% National
- 14% Domestic Violence
- 72% Triggering action from the SDQ (Mental Health Screening tool)