

Appendix 3 Case Studies

Case Study 1

Organisation: Yellow Submarine

Project: 'Can Do' at Hill End Centre

Person C. This student has been in care and was in the process of changing his life completely as he was nearly eighteen and moving into adult care system. He was therefore in a very vulnerable state.

He arrived very eager to please and could communicate with adults in a polite fashion. Once settled he focused on the willow maze restoration. He was able to follow directions well but did require gentle support to ensure he felt secure.

On the second week we were working as a pair, he was willing to take a lead, remembering what had to be done and could be independent in his tasks.

He spotted additional tasks such as a broken post, we repaired it.

He was unable to attend the third week as he suffers from anxiety. He was able to phone in and explain, realising the need to do this.

During the fourth week he had a difficult week due to very difficult and confidential procedures happening in his life and was unable to come on his usual day. However, the impact of the course was such that he chose to come on Wednesday to work and worked well. The feedback via his support network was that Hill End was one of his safe places where he felt supported and there were no challenges to his concerns. Short, personal conversations seem to settle him. He joined all the volunteers at lunch and although quiet he was able to be part of the group by listening and staying in the room.

After half term he arrived happy and worked in the maze again, alongside another student. He was having problems with his hearing aid and needed a Drs appointment which had been booked. He was able to work independently and showed initiative during the morning. Again, the fact that he wanted to be at the centre despite a hearing problem was a positive action of his.

Starting November: the morning was spent working as part of a team clearing around a conference centre. He was able to work alongside other members jointly clearing the paths. He was then able to work independently back at the maze, and clearing away all the tools and equipment. He was able to report back on what he had achieved. He was showing signs of becoming an independent worker who required direction and support but making great progress.

He responded well during the training, chatting with other students, telling them about his previous experiences with trimmers. When it came to use them he was reluctant to go first and stood back. He told me he didn't like being watched, his insecurity was evident. Once he was going, he can use the machines. It was also a successful day as he was fully integrated in the day with all the students on the course.

The following week he was the only person attending which gave us the opportunity to work together. We used the trimmer and he was able to go slowly through the set up and refilling of the trimmer. As I was able to work on a task nearby it was easy for him to refer to me as questions of what and where to trim came up. The session allowed him the chance to become more confident.

At this time the student reached an age when his accommodation had to change and the level of support he received also changed. Confidential issues changed bringing a long-term

situation to a close. He has a new home now and was able to sign on with Aspire, his first job. Positive feedback from his key workers suggest that involvement in the project was a factor in assisting him to increase his self-confidence and raise his skill levels.

Case Study 2

Organisation: Ark - T

Project: Our Voice is Our Power

'Our Voice is Our Power' is a creative learning programme for vulnerable and disadvantaged adults who are furthest from the workplace. The project is based at the Ark -T arts and community centre in Cowley, East Oxford. Participants attend regular sessions with a tutor and editor and work together as a team to research, write, and distribute a quarterly edition of a community newspaper, The Cowley News.

AG attended the first round of 5 weeks training beginning in June 2017 going on to complete a further 5 weeks of training in round 2 and contributing to both the Summer and Autumn editions of Cowley News.

AG has experienced long-term unemployment and saw an advert for the community reporter training course in the Job Centre and his support worker suggested he come along. He said "I thought it would be a good idea because I have always been interested in the local community and community work."

"I have really enjoyed the group sessions and having guest speakers coming in like Deborah Glass-Woodin to talk about housing in Oxford, and the team working together to produce an article for the paper. Having access to the Camarados café and other Ark T resources is an added bonus!"

"Coming on the Cowley News training has helped me progress towards producing a similar paper or publication based around my union work. Since completing the training, I have continued to be part of the Cowley News Team, attending regular team meetings and supporting new trainees as a mentor."

Recently AG supported another member of the team – KK, who has a mild learning disability and struggles with literacy, to work on a story for the paper about 'The Porch and Stepping Stones' homelessness charity; they were able to do the interview with AG taking notes. KK said "knowing I didn't have to do the writing made it much easier!"

KK has had a long standing connection with this charity and many of its members which undoubtedly helped established a good rapport with an often hard to reach group within the community, supported by AG together they were able to interview staff and service users as a team producing an article for the next issue of Cowley News and potentially developing partnerships with the Porch Stepping Stones, who also work closely with Grendon Underwood Prison rehabilitation service for further work or news stories in the future.

AG said that "One of the best things about the training programme was its flexibility – the way the activities and programme were adapted to suit the interests of the group; like inviting various speakers in or taking us off to an exhibition at Modern Art Oxford or wherever!"

"The support has been great, both the group work and individual attention has been great and handled very well, for instance, talking to you like this means so much more than a certificate or a lanyard with a press card!"

"When I came on the course I was hoping to gain more experience in my writing and presentation skills for my union and community work, and this training has definitely helped with

that, I now feel much more confident talking about and presenting the work I do in the community with the Trade Unions Council and Cowley News, that said it would be great to have a workshop on presentation skills maybe?"

"Other things I have gained that I wasn't expecting are increased sociability, making new friends and reconnecting with old ones. I've also challenged myself in a good way and feel able to get going and keep on with my Union and community work. I'd never really seen myself as a community worker but coming on this course has made me realise that this is what I have been doing all my life without realising it regardless of being 'employed' or not!"

"I think everyone I know would benefit from coming on this course and I'd promote it to them any way I could!"

Since attending 2 rounds of the training in the Summer and Autumn AG has increased his confidence and has continued to be an active member of the Cowley News Team, contributing copy, fact finding and mentoring fellow team members. He also helps distribute the paper and is developing potential sponsorship opportunities through his Trades Union and community contacts.

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