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'Inspire' Youth Work in Hospital Project offers support to young people admitted to Wrexham Maelor Hospital with self-harming behaviours

Inspire Youth Work in Hospital Project is a Bridging the Gap - Big Lottery Funded Project that offers support to young people admitted to Wrexham Maelor Hospital with self-harming behaviours, including alcohol and substance misuse.

We received funding in 2006 to run a five year project with the hope that at the end of the funding period it will receive core funding. It is run as a partnership between Wrexham County Borough Council and North Wales NHS Trust. The official launch was held in December 2006, with the project going 'live' in February 2007. Since the project has been 'live', we have been able to work towards the outcomes of the project as laid out in the funding requirements. We have engaged with young people, primarily on a one-to-one basis.

Outcome 1

Reduce the levels of young people readmitted to hospital who overdose or self-harm, by enhancing support networks and build up functional coping strategies.

According to Hawton et al. (2006), "It is important to know what sources of help and support, including peer relationships, adolescents who engage in deliberate self-harm feel available to them and what coping methods they use when they are feeling worried or upset about something" (pp.149). Therefore when a young person is referred to the service for self-harming behaviour,

'Inspire' aims to explore with the young person the support networks available to them. The team believes that giving young people informed choices as to what is available and allowing them to take ownership of these choices will allow them to increase their support networks, develop skills and contribute to their communities.

'Inspire' also aims to support the young person in building functional coping strategies so that they are able to enjoy life and achieve their potential. By enabling the young person to enhance their support networks and build up functional coping strategies, it is hoped that 'Inspire' will have a role in reducing self-harm readmission rates amongst those who engage with the project.

Outcome 2

Young people admitted to hospital will be able to maintain or return to family home or have functional family links.

Hereward Harrison, Children's Director of Policy and Research (2001), states that "for all of us there are a list of things that keep us going in life. Families, friends and school are likely to be high on young people's lists and those in crisis experience a reducing list" (pp.1).

For this reason, supporting young people to maintain functional family links is a key element to the project. Families can also play an integral role in enabling young people to

enjoy life and achieve their potential. Support from their family is considered to be important, not just in times of crisis, but also in the long-term. Therefore, 'Inspire' aims to work alongside parents or carers where appropriate, providing them with guidance and education when necessary.

Outcome 3

Young people will maintain or re-establish links with mainstream education providers, training or employment.

Another of the project's aims is to support young people in maintaining or re-establishing links with mainstream education providers, training or employment (see Harrison, 2001). This will help young people choose positive activities which discourage anti-social behaviour. This can be done through helping them to access college courses or helping them to forge links with youth workers, teachers and employers who are able to provide them with support.

Where appropriate, 'Inspire' aims to meet a young person in their school or college and, if they feel that their education or work has been a predominant factor in the current issues that they are facing, the team aims to work with the young person to develop skills which they can adopt to make their school or college life less stressful and more productive.

Outcome 4

Young people will be discharged to the family home or into temporary housing, including hostels, foyer, foster care etc, to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Where a young person is not able to return to the family home after discharge from hospital, 'Inspire' aims to enable the young person to maintain or establish links with temporary housing, care homes, foster care, etc. 'Inspire' has spent time researching housing and what is available to young people in Wrexham County Borough by meeting with local housing departments

and organisations. According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, higher needs such as enjoying life and achieving their potential can only be achieved once their basic needs, such as shelter, have been met. Therefore, by working alongside the young person and relevant agencies, 'Inspire' aims to enable the young person to access safe and appropriate housing.

Outcome 5

Young people consulted with will engage in decision making process and/or take up support offered.

As the project is based on youth work principles, the support we offer to young people can and is only taken up on a voluntary basis.

Young people who decide to take up the service are always consulted with in the decision making process and play an active role in deciding what support is offered to them. This is in accordance with objectives outlined in *Everybody's Business* (2001) "to establish child-centred services which take into account the views of young people and families using them" (pp. 7).

In light of this we always ask each young person who engages with 'Inspire' to evaluate the service they have received from us, any comments or suggestions made by the young person are taken into account, this therefore provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to their communities.

References

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