

The importance of consistent relationships

Transcript

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Corporate parenting within our setting is very much tailored for the individual need depending on the young person. For example, we may have an 11 year old who has been residing at home. And this is their first care placement, and they have no contact with family and therefore we step in and do your basic care needs. Showering, looking after themselves, brushing teeth, we arrange all their medical appointments, dental appointments, things like that on their behalf. Or it could be a 16-17 year old who's attending college and the work we're doing is about providing them self-care skills for moving on, whether that be back with a family setting, or whether it's into another sort of through-care placement, where they're continuing to attend further education beyond what we can offer. There are a number of difficulties, the most common one is probably resistance from the young people to anybody but their family trying to parent them or trying to step and that takes a long time for them to develop relationships in which they can trust and which they can rely on to help them. And depending on what age we get the younger people and you know, it limits the time we've got to do that work with them before, we need to start doing any other kind of work that needs done with them to move them forward. To overcome those difficulties, we have a key worker and key teacher set up for the meets at the start and end of every term, the key worker does a lot of the self-care skills and corporate parenting type role. And then we have staff teams of eight or nine staff that work with a small group of young people who meet fortnightly and review each case and look at where we're going with that as well. So that we've tried to keep consistency around the young people as regular as possible so that they know who's on shift, who's coming in, who's not, who they can turn to who they can speak to. And just try and keep it as structured as possible in that way. Consistency is important in terms of the young people knowing what support is available for them. Knowing when they're next going to be able to speak to their key worker who's going to be there, knowing who's going to be attending meetings. That means that if they have a conversation with a key worker, they know that that conversation is being listened to and will be taken forward. A lot of our people struggle with attachments and consistency helps them develop those attachments. So, for them, it's about knowing who's on shift tonight, who's on overnight who's on the following day. And that just helps them relax because they know who's going to be around and who can support them with any needs that they may have.

I think often the light bulb moment for the young people where they realise the support and care they're getting comes when they start looking at the transition from moving on from care. And they realise that the support they've got and the risk associated of that support not being around for them. I think that's when they begin to recognise that they do have that support network there, then they do have people they can trust and that they can rely on and that they can turn to in need. And when it often becomes an unsettling time for them grappling with the concept of maybe not having the same levels of support around for them. And again, that's the through care and aftercare plan that we put in place should be able to support them a bit better with that and develop that a bit more for them. The aftercare plan is vital in terms of ensuring that they transition smoothly and that they're able to contact us as much as we can contact them and answer any questions they may have and still provide a level of support if they're not getting it from whatever their final destination may be.

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