

Reflective Journal – Self harming

What happened?

Today was my official first day of placement for university (even though I already work there), I had been engaging with the young people and we were deciding what to cook for our cooking session for the following week, the session in my opinion went well although one young person I could see appeared distant. After the group discussion the young people started to leave so I decided to pull the young person aside who I felt appeared distant and asked her if everything was ok? And was there anything she wanted to talk about, she told me that she was ok and that she had just had an argument with her mum but she said it would pass and they would soon sort out the disagreement, I then asked her if she wanted to go and have a chat in private but she declined and said that there is nothing more to talk about and she was just having a bad day. Knowing the history of this young person by reading her file I knew that she had recently self-harmed so I suggested to her that if she was feeling low to come and talk to staff to try and help her deal with the situation which she agreed. Later on whilst I was cleaning up I heard a loud smash coming from this young person's room, I had knocked and asked if everything was ok she said she wanted to be left alone, I then asked her if she could open the door just so I could physically see that she was ok because I was concerned for her wellbeing. She eventually opened the door I could see that she had destroyed her room and noticed that there was a knife on her bed, I asked what had happened and if she was ok she just shrugged her shoulders and then asked her if she had self-harmed which she then showed me her arms. Some of the cuts were superficial but there were a few that were quite deep so we decided that

it would be in her best interest to go to hospital to be treated and assessed by the mental health team.

How did I feel?

At the beginning I was feeling good and felt that the session had gone well, but I personally was concerned for the young person who I felt appeared upset. After talking to this young person, I was still concerned about her well-being, so I approached my manager and asked his advice and he referred to a policy in which the organization operates. After speaking to my manager I followed his instructions continued to clear up, as stated above, as I was clearing up I heard a loud smash coming from this young person's room straight away I felt apprehensive about approaching her room, my manager had gone out for lunch so I had to check to see if this young person was ok, seeing a young person in this kind of state was a very different experience for me, which I felt I handled quite well I then saw the knife on the bed which made me quite concerned for my own safety but on the other hand this young person had no history of violence and I could clearly see that she had used it to harm herself.

What was good and bad about the situation?

I think that the session I held was overall good, and my observation on this young person appeared upset was good. I feel that after approaching my manager more could have been done maybe to prevent this young person from harming herself, but within the scheme that I am on placement it is where those young people live and they have the right to their own privacy. Unfortunately, at this moment in time the young

person did not seem to be at high risk, as she stated she was ok and that the argument with her mum would soon sort out the disagreement.

What sense can you make of the situation?

I think that if there were different policies and procedures that could allow staff to intervene sooner then maybe this may not have ended up with this young person self-harming, educating the young person on the support networks that are available and relevant for her situation.

What else could you have done?

I personally feel that there was not much more that I could have done in this situation, I feel that it was handled professionally and to the best of my ability.

If it were to happen again, what would you do?

Hopefully I would like to think this would not happen again but with the amount of young people suffering with mental health, it is more than likely to happen again. If this were to happen again then I would try early intervention, give the young person contact information for crisis teams and any other help that was relevant to her, hopefully this would either prevent or reduce the risk of this young person self-harming.

This reflection was based on Gibbs Model of Reflection 1988.

Reflective Journal – Pizza Night

Concrete experience

Tonight was the first cooking workshop that I had planned with the young people, and I was running it myself, before my shift I went to buy the ingredients that the young people had chosen in the previous workshop, there was 4 young people who turned up, I briefly went over what the plan was and then got the ingredients ready. The young people all had their own section in the kitchen where they could prepare their pizzas. I had explained step by step instructions and explained that for health and safety reasons I would be the one to put the pizzas in the oven and remove them, the young people were understanding about this and was happy for me to do so.

Whilst the cooking workshop was underway it was a relaxed atmosphere which allowed the young people to speak freely, the conversation was flowing, and the young people seemed to be enjoying themselves and so was I. When the pizza was cooking I had asked if anyone would like to help me tidy up so there was room on the counters for the pizzas to come out, 3 out of 4 helped clean up and there was a bit of a disagreement between 2 of the young people as one of them decided to go sit in the lounge and wait for the pizzas, I explained that it was their choice whether to clean up or not, and her response was that this particular young person should not be allowed the pizza if he does not pull his weight. I then explained that with time and more engagement within workshops, everyone will progress at their own pace, this seemed to have been resolved and the relaxed atmosphere returned. As we were waiting for the pizzas to cook, myself and the young people engaged in general conversations, I then took the pizzas out of the oven and they all sat down together in the lounge.

Reflective Observation

Thankfully, there was no bad experiences in this workshop apart from the 2 young people having a disagreement about cleaning up, this made me feel slightly uneasy as I was unsure how it was going to escalate, but after talking to the young people it seemed to have resolved any animosity within the group. I feel that Tuckman's theory (Teambuilding.co.uk, 2020) of forming, storming, norming and performing was used during this workshop. I felt that overall, the cooking workshop was a success, this made me feel successful, and pleased for myself that I had organised and achieved an enjoyable cooking session. The young people and I were actively participating in the workshop, in a non-formal setting whilst developing wider skills for example, Group work, communicating skills and cooking skills.

Abstract Conceptualization

I have decided that the next cooking workshop that I deliver I will let the young people take leadership in the activity so I can observe and assist when needed, this will show me more of each individual personality and how well the young people work as a team without the initial instruction from myself. The kitchen could be updated with more workspace available for the young people, even though it was enough room for this workshop if more than 4 young people turned up there would not be enough room.

Active Experimentation

as stated above letting the young people lead the next workshop will help them develop a wide range of skills, it will also help myself to develop my skills as a trainee youth worker. I would hope to involve the young people to get the ingredients, as this in my opinion would build their self-confidence.

I have based this on Kolb's experiential learning style theory (Mcleod, 2020).

Reference list

Teambuilding.co.uk. (2020). *Tuckman; Forming - Storming - Norming - Performing*. [online] Available at: <https://www.teambuilding.co.uk/theory/Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing.html> [Accessed 6 Feb. 2020].

Mcleod, S. (2020). *Kolb's Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Cycle | Simply Psychology*. [online] Simplypsychology.org. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html> [Accessed 6 Feb. 2020].

Reflective journal – Cottage pie**What happened?**

This cooking session was led by the young people of Clarewood, they had decided previously that they would be cooking cottage pie, so I set a task for the young people to gather simple recipes that they could follow and set up a plan to see who was doing what. After having a discussion with my manager, it wasn't possible for the young people to get the ingredients so myself and another member of staff went to buy them. Once we had returned the young people had come earlier than the agreed time to see if I needed a hand with anything before the session started, today's session was 6 young people and myself, and they had arranged by themselves who was doing what, and had printed off the recipe and stuck it to the cupboard, everything thing ran smoothly and the young people had told me that they are enjoying the cooking workshops as they have never cooked meals like this before.

So, each young person had their set role and needed little guidance. After the food was prepared, I then put it in the oven and the young people started to tidy up! I was not expecting this as the previous workshop had some confrontation about tidying up, this was nice to see. The young people and I had finished tidying, we then sat down for a chat while the food was cooking. They had asked me about my degree and what was my plans after it, I explained that once I get my degree I will be a qualified youth worker and my future at this moment in time is unclear, there are so many options and its ok not to be sure where you want to go in life. I explained that it does not matter about your age you will never be too old to follow your dreams, they laughed and said

how cringy but also how true that was. After this deep conversation the food was finally ready, so we dished it up and ate together as a **TEAM**.

How did I feel?

This workshop I felt had gone well, the atmosphere was calm, and the young people really enjoyed also the food was lovely too. I was disappointed that the young people were not allowed to go and buy the ingredients as Clarewood could not give the young people cash and they are not allowed to use the schemes card, which is understandable. I felt happy that the young people had taken an interest in why I was there and what my placement was about, this made me feel that I had made a good impression and helped me with my self-doubt. To me, for a young person to take an interest in my role meant that they want to engage and be involved in activities and organizing any workshops. I had put the word **TEAM** in capitals and in bold because this is what one of the young people had called us, which left me feeling proud of what we have achieved so far.

What was good and bad about the workshop?

The main good point for me was how the young people worked well together as a team, they had organized their own roles, and nothing went wrong. The only bad point was that the young people was not allowed to get the ingredients.

What else could you have done?

I personally don't think I could of done anything else I feel that it went as well as it could, I could possibly find out how we could allow the young people to get the ingredients so that they have the full experience, possibly a member of staff could get a prepaid card for a certain supermarket which could allowed the young people to go

or another option is for staff to go with the young people but I think this could cause the young people to think there is no trust.

If it were to happen again, what would you do?

I would do it the same, we enjoyed, and the young people were happy and had learnt a life skill that they will hopefully use again.

Reflective journal – Christmas decorations

What happened?

We had decided to put the Christmas decorations up, myself and the young people went to get the decorations down from the storeroom. While the young people were sorting out the decorations, I started to put the tree together. The stand for the tree was broke and the tree kept falling over, I tried to fix the stand which did not work resulting in the young people feeling disappointed. So, I used the power of social media to ask if anyone had a spare or old tree that they would like to donate for the young people that I work with. The response I had was incredible, one lady donated two trees one small desk one that we put up in the office, and the other one we put up in the lounge, we had people offering all sorts of decorations. I had told the young people that I had asked online for donations and they were so grateful with the outcome. The young people continued to sort out the decorations while I went to collect the donations, I also picked up a box of old decorations from my house. When I returned the young people were waiting for me in the lounge, I did not expect to see them all still there I thought some may have had enough of waiting, they were keen to help out two young people carried the tree out of the car while I got the box of decorations. We put on some Christmas music, had mince pies and hot chocolate, we were singing and laughing whilst putting the decorations up. I was glad that the young people were enjoying, as I thought that with the disappointment of the first tree being broken it could have impacted the atmosphere for the rest of the evening.

How did I feel?

Christmas is my favourite time of year; I was happy that I had the opportunity to engage with the young people and helping them decorate their home. There were mixed

emotions as some young people were staying at Clarewood for Christmas and some were going to see their family, I felt sad that some of the young people did not have that opportunity to spend it with family, I also felt lucky that I had come from a supportive and stable home. Besides this, I was happy with how the evening went the young people enjoyed whilst learning skills such as group work, leadership, communication skills and problem-solving skills.

What was good and bad?

The only thing I think was bad about the evening was the broken tree, this was rectified quite quickly. Overall, I think the evening was a success, the young people were happy and engaged in the task.

What else could you have done?

I could have checked the decorations beforehand. Apart from that I would not have done anything different.

If it were to happen again, what would you do?

Check all decorations before starting, besides this I would do it the same, as I felt the session went well and the outcomes from the young people were brilliant.

Reflective journal – Valentines movie night

What happened?

This was a last-minute movie night; I had made a poster at home and then send to a staff member that was working that evening. She printed out the posters and put them up around the scheme. As soon as I got to my placement, I knew that I only had an hour to prepare, I cleaned the lounge checked all equipment was working and then started to cook the pizzas. I was unaware of how many young people would attend as it was last minute. There was two young people who came to watch a film and then 3 other young people came for the food and then left. The two young people that engaged in the movie night both chose a film and then played rock paper scissors, the winner of this would put their film on. F1 was the winner and she had chosen 13 going on 30. After the film myself and the two young people cleaned up.

How did I feel?

As it being last minute I felt it went as well as it could of, I was a bit disappointed that three young people came down for the food but did not want to engage with the movie night, but pleased that at least two young people stayed. I feel that if I had organized it better with more time I could of spoke to the young people first and maybe had ideas from them to see what type of films they were into.

What was good and bad about the situation?

The movie night went well, and the young people enjoyed. I feel that the bad part of this workshop is that it was not planned out well, and that it was all a bit last minute.

What sense can you make of the situation?

Workshops time a lot of time and planning, even though it went well I feel as if it could have been better.

What else could you have done?

Plan Plan Plan!!! I would plan it better next time, getting information from the young people so I have an idea of what films they like and to see if they wanted to do a movie night.

Reflective Journal – Paining the lounge

What happened?

I had received an email previously stating that all staff are to bring in spare/old clothes as we would be painting. When I arrive at Clarewood some residents and a member of staff had started to decorate the lounge, I got changed and went to give them a hand. The staff member that was already painting had decided to let me carry on with the young people as she had other stuff to do before her shift ended. A few hours later and we had finished painting and started to clean up, whilst we were cleaning a young person asked if we could have a look online for cushions and a rug to make the room more homely, I told the residents that I would have to clear it with staff before I could agree to it, so I went and spoke to the manager and he agreed. So after we had finished cleaning we had a look online and managed to find suitable accessories which were local, I then went back to my manager and showed him what the young people had found which he then handed me Clarewood's bank card and told me to take the young people with me to go and collect the items. So, I went back to the lounge to tell the young people the good news and they were pleased, after we returned the young people went straight into the lounge to put the rug and cushions out. I asked one young person to go and get the manager to show him what they had bought and how it looked, he came in and was surprised, the difference in the lounge from that morning was incredible he thanked myself and the young people for their hard work.

How did I feel?

in the beginning I felt a bit annoyed as I did not like painting, but after helping the young people and seeing the joy in their faces I was happy that I had engaged with them and had the opportunity to make them feel more at home, I was happy that my manager

had put his faith in me to go and collect the items with the young people, I was happy that he liked what they had bought. I was also pleased with myself helping even though I don't like painting, the outcome from this was way more rewarding than I could have expected.

What was good and bad about the situation?

For me the only bad part was the painting, on the other hand the good part was seeing the young people happy and proud that they were a part of the process and they had succeeded.

What else could you have done?

I could have been more optimistic at the beginning.

If it were to happen again, what would you do?

I would not change anything, we enjoyed, and the young people had engaged completely in this task and went above and beyond expectations, they had taken charge and showed great leadership skills and good group work.

Reflective journal – Young person's well-being**What happened?**

I was talking to a young person and the conversation went quite deep about how unhappy she was with her weight and appearance, I reassured her and suggested that every time I am working we could do a fitness DVD, her face lit up and she ran to her room. She then returned with a fitness DVD and asked if we could do it there and then, I agreed as she seemed so happy and I did not want to deflate her enthusiasm. It was not that I did not want to do it, I did not have the right clothes or footwear on, but I had suggested it, so it was only fair that I joined in. After the workout she was feeling good, thanked me for doing it with her and said she could not wait until I was in next, I also suggested that if she gets a spare half hour on the days that I am not in, to either to try it on her own or see if there was any other staff or residents that would like to join in. we had also discussed that we can try and sort a food plan out for the next few weeks.

How did I feel?

I felt happy that this young person had approached me and felt that she could talk to me about how she was feeling, not only would the fitness DVD benefit her but also it would benefit me too. I felt a bit uneasy when she suggested that we could do it there and then, as I did not have the right clothing on and was unprepared, but as it was my idea I felt that I could not say no, as this could of made her think that I was just saying it with no intention of actually doing it. Even though I did not want to do it, I was glad that I had, and I enjoyed the workout. We have arranged a time for when I am next in that we will meet in the lounge to do the DVD.

What was good and bad about the situation?

In my opinion I think the majority of it was good in particular the fact that this young person approached me and confided in me, on the other hand the bad part was that this young person was feeling low and was not happy with her weight and appearance.

What else could you have done?

I feel that there was nothing else I could have done other than being honest about how I was feeling, which could have upset the young person. For that reason alone, is why I decided to participate in the work out and she was feeling low already.

If it were to happen again, what would you do?

Be more prepared and expect the unexpected. From now on I will take the correct clothing as a backup just in case.

Reflective journal – Drug use

What happened?

As I entered the property there was a strong smell of cannabis, I went into the office to speak to my manager to see if he had noticed it, he came out to see and he agreed, then we discussed what action we would take, so I asked my manager if I could take charge on this one as it would be great experience for me and I was confident that I could deal with the issue. The plan was to knock on each clients door explain that it is against our policy and that it is a breach of their tenancy agreement to have or use any substances within the property, if we continue to smell cannabis then the next step will be the police. Out of the Eight clients two of them seemed annoyed at me for talking to them about this and said call the police they wont do anything, after talking to all the clients I went back to the office and discussed what happened with my manager he thanked me for doing it and said he expected that reaction from those particular clients.

Later on there was another strong smell of cannabis, I asked my manager what was the next step and he told me to contact 101 and log it in with the police and to ask them if they could come to the property to speak to the clients, after logging the incident with the police I asked if they could send police officers here to speak to the clients about substance misuse, unfortunately there was no officers available at this time so we agreed on a date for them to come and planned a workshop which all clients had to attend. Unfortunately that date which was suitable for the police was unsuitable for me, therefor I did not see the outcome from this work shop, I spoke to colleagues after the workshop and they said that it went well although some clients did not stay for long.

How did I feel?

Smelling cannabis on the start of a shift is never a good feeling, you know that this shift could go in any direction. I was happy that my manager felt that I could deal with the situation, and I was proud of myself for handling the situation well and planning a substance misuse workshop with the police for the clients, I showed willing and determination and succeeded in the task I set for myself. I felt upset that I could not attend the workshop as I had family commitments, but I was grateful to hear that all clients attended and most of them took the information on board.

What was good and bad about the situation?

In my opinion what was bad about the situation is that the young people are using substances, and that there was not much respect shown towards staff whilst trying to speak to them about it, furthermore I was not happy that my manager expected two clients to be annoyed and to react with attitude but gave me no warning or guidance. The good part of the situation for me was that the police agreed and delivered a workshop for the young people, in which the clients attended and enjoyed.

What else could you have done?

I feel that there was not anything else I could have done in this situation I followed my managers instructions and he was happy with the outcome.

If it were to happen again what would you do?

I would hope to speak to the clients to see if they would open up and talk to me about why they use substances and see if there was any way I could help or even point them in the right direction to get help.

Reflective journal – client's visitor**What happened?**

For the past couple of weeks a client has been sneaking her boyfriend and friends in to stay overnight, at Clarewood there are rules set out for the safety and wellbeing of the clients and staff members, there is only two visitors per client allowed from 8am till 11pm and two overnight stays per week with only one visitor permitted to stay. Unfortunately flat 6 and flat 7 has been letting 3 visitors each in during the day and going back and forth each other's flat and allowing a visitor to stay every night of the week which is causing other clients to get annoyed, they are playing music till all hours and disturbing the rest of the clients and staff. The manager has been monitoring the situation and has spoken to the two clients involved, whilst on shift flat 6 came down to let his visitors in, I could see that there was three visitors there and one already in his flat, I decided to stop the visitors and flat 6, i asked him who was upstairs he stated that Josh was up there but its ok because he was going into flat 7 now, I then told him that there is only two visitors allowed in each flat, which then one of the visitors decided to have a go at me and said he was going into flat 7, so I said that's fine but no back and forth because you are disrupting the other clients, he laughed and walked off. I decided to speak to my manager about this and he said do not worry about it I will deal with it.

How did I feel? And what was good and bad about the situation?

I felt my manager was very relaxed about the situation, in my opinion he should of dealt with it straight away, our responsibility is all the clients and with a few of them complaining it is our duty of care to support them and resolve the issue, also the

visitors lack of respect for staff needs to be addressed as we are here to support and guide our clients, we are not here to take abuse from visitors. I did not feel that I had the support I should have had from my manager. I was very happy with how I handled the situation and that other clients felt that they could talk to me about their complaints.

What else could you have done?

On this occasion I feel that the visitors should have been refused entry, due to the clients not complying with the rules that are set in place to safeguard the them and staff, also with this issue that is reoccurring then the two clients should have a meeting with the manager to discuss it further and to point out that they are breaking the terms of their licence and causing disruption to the project.

If it were to happen again what would you do?

I would still stop the visitors before they entered and then call my manager to deal with it.

Reflective journal – Collage

What happened?

On my previous shift myself and a client Rachel were talking about why I was there and what my placement was about, on my next shift Rachel came up to me and asked if I could help her apply for collage, so we went online and submitted application and booked in an open day for her to look around and fortunately I was booked into work on the day of her open day, so she asked if I could go with her, I spoke to my manager and he agreed, so we went to the open day and Rachel was really excited we had a look around the collage and then went and spoke to the head of department for catering, he was pleased to tell Rachel that she had been accepted onto the course and that she should have a letter soon to confirm it. When we got back to Clarewood it was nice to how positive and happy Rachel was, she went into the office and told all the staff that she had been accepted onto the course and could not wait to start.

How did I feel?

I was very proud of Rachel for setting her goal and taking the step to achieve her qualification, her positivity had rubbed off onto another client as he is now enrolled into collage also. I was very grateful that Rachel choose me to help her and to attend the open day with her, I have build up a good relationship with most of the clients at Clarewood, having witnessed the joy in Rachels face it made me more determined to proceed my carer in youth work .

What was good and bad about the situation?

There was nothing bad about this situation, it was a good day everything worked out well and we even managed to get another client enrolled into college, hearing these two clients continuing with education made me happy, it made them happy that if they set their mind to something they can achieve it!

What else could you have done?

In my opinion there was nothing else I could have done.

If it were to happen again what would you do?

I would do the same it was a good day.