

Fieldwork Assessment Reflective Journal 18/10/03

It's Wednesday already and I face the day with a little trepidation, today Karen is expected to visit to carry out a fieldwork appraisal/supervision, I am not sure what to call it!

In the timetable World of Work was planned which is one of the elements of prince's trust, this was the date that suited both myself and Karen, on the Friday Liane notified me that she had finished all the work she needed to do with the group and didn't have anything planned.

My line manager suggested Motorvation and recommended splitting the group to make the session more manageable. On Monday evening I stayed late to plan and prepare an XL session for Wednesday, I knew the young people would only concentrate on folder work for a short period of time and thought worksheets would offer the least resistance.

On the morning of Karen's visit I explained to the young people who Karen was and why she was coming out to see us, the initial response was one of mistrust and of feeling set up, this turned to anger with the young people accusing me of expecting them not to kick off! Just because Karen was coming out to observe, if this would work as a means of social control then I would be inviting Karen out regularly.

I tried very hard to put them at their ease and told them to forget Karen was going to be there and to act normally; this approach was not going well at all! The response from the majority was one of making my life as hellish as possible and they all declared they were going to kick off.

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I was aware that the programme had changed because the work for XL was completed and any change in the programme promotes insecurity and nervousness amongst them, which nearly always leads to aggression, verbal, angst and frustration the hardest response to deal with is the mistrust.

Bearing all this in mind plus the introduction of Karen into the equation, I knew it was going to be a bumpy ride. We have worked together for eight weeks and are starting to get to know each other, but that morning I felt they were experiencing a certain amount of conflict, in normal circumstances kicking off would be second nature for them, I am sure they could reconcile themselves to their behaviour, after all most of them feel it would be a deserved reaction, they certainly felt let down, betrayed and frustrated enough.

That morning I could see the dilemma they were in, peer pressure and peer expectations are undeniably powerful feelings and emotions, if individuals were deliberating how to handle the situation that morning I think the overall peer expectation of 'lets give Amanda a hard time' was too powerful to go against, did any of them stop and think at all?

I realize how important 'face' is to a young person especially with their previous experiences they have a lack of trust and respect for the establishment. The hard thing is at the moment they seem to view me the same, just another part of their lives that is or has been difficult.

Why shouldn't they feel like revenge, why should they co-operate for the first time when they haven't any other day? All this pressure though was self inflicted I didn't ask them to behave in a certain way, I just informed them of Karen's visit. What I

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found interesting was their view that I wanted them to behave impeccably, this pre-conceived view was shared by all of them, they reacted as if they didn't believe me when I told them to act normally and to try and forget Karen was even there.

I'm sure in their own way they felt I was using reverse psychology on them, they felt I was trying to catch them out! They treated me with mistrust and anger and were very wary, but it intrigued me that they really put all of this pressure upon themselves.

I would like to think that somewhere in this minefield of thoughts and emotions they found themselves in, that a sense of loyalty or memories of me trying to be fair or going that little bit extra for them registered somewhere and formed a part of the bigger picture.

The young people also wanted to know what reward they would receive if they played ball so to speak, nearly all of them expected me to use this approach and take them up on it! Was I tempted? It's hard to answer yes or no, I considered all aspects and it didn't sit well with me at all.

The young people got quite angry when I explained that I didn't expect them to behave any differently than usual, their anger to this again gave me an insight into their inner conflict, the young people thought I expected them to behave with no reward at all!

Did I miss an opportunity to give them the benefit of the doubt were they testing me, were they using the reward system as a smokescreen to cooperate with me without losing face?