

CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND

Jody is a 15-year-old female diagnosed as having mild to moderate learning difficulties. In the past she has been placed in secure accommodation for her own safety following several episodes of repeated behaviour in the community that have led to her being sexually exploited. After an initial assessment period she was referred to Horizon Care for placement in the community to prepare for a return home to her mother. It was hoped that she could also develop some skills to assist her to live independently in the future.

Jody's mother also has learning difficulties, to the extent that she was unable to keep her daughter safe. Jody has nine siblings. All of them have some form of learning disability and all apart from two (who are living at home with their mother) are in the care of the local authority.

Jody's father and mother were in an abusive relationship which led to the systematic abuse of Jody and her siblings. There have been various allegations of sexual abuse from the children against members of their family. Jody's mother has no contact with Jody's father due to the breakdown of their relationship. However, Jody has supervised contact with her father once every six weeks.

On admission Jody's behaviour was very sexualised to the point that she would go in search of a partner to relieve her sexual tension, putting herself at further risk of exploitation and harm.

ASSESSMENT

Horizon Care's assessment of Jody included the observations of care staff and contributions from our clinical psychologist, our educationalist and local sexual health services.

ACTION

The findings from the assessment were used to inform a comprehensive behaviour management plan which included reactive strategies for the challenging behaviours displayed by Jody and complex risk assessments to reduce the risk of harm.

Under the direction of the clinician, a variety of therapeutic techniques were used including Behaviour Therapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Anxiety Management. The clinician monitored Jody's daily behaviours and records, working closely with the staff team, advising them of any change needed to the daily routine and enabling the prediction of possible incidents. Further to this, monthly consultation days allowed all the professionals concerned to review the progress Jody was making in the placement and to determine the contributing factors to this.

Work with Jody began with exploring her understanding of sex. The information gathered determined that her experience of sex had been as an 'act' rather than as a relationship and therefore her expectations of sexual relationships were limited. It was recognised that we needed to raise her self-esteem in order to heighten her awareness of the difference between a sexual act and a sexual relationship.



CASE STUDY (CONTINUED)

Anger management and risk management were also part of the work carried out with Jody as part of enabling her to stay safe, before finally engaging her in semi-independent living skills.

OUTCOMES

Stay safe, enjoy life and achieve

With assistance from staff Jody gained the confidence to engage in education, eventually enrolling at college. Jody also works with the local Connexions agency, helping her into further education, training and employment. The staff encouraged her to enrol as an Air Cadet to assist with her integration into the community and to give her the opportunity to experience social interaction with young people of a similar age group in a safe setting.

Stay healthy and make a positive contribution to society

Jody continued to attend sessions with the clinician and sexual health worker to further improve her personal understanding and self-esteem. Meanwhile staff worked with her regarding personal health and hygiene and skills for independence including laundry, cooking, cleaning, shopping.

... and finally

Through contact Jody and her mother were encouraged to slowly re-develop their relationship and learn how to put their past experiences into context. Although this work is still ongoing Jody managed to achieve her planned return home and has continued to engage with services such as Connexions and to attend Air Cadets, which will further assist with her contribution to the community.

