

Core self: Using tried and tested treatments for specific problems

Approximate time: 20 minute tutor time session

Materials: Case studies

Aim/outcome: To encourage students to understand different ways they can be supported for specific problems

Explanation:

Using the case studies ask students in groups of four to answer the following questions:

- What action should this young person take?
- What are their options for support?
- What treatments are available for this young person?
- Once students have completed the task ask each group to say why they have suggested the different options and if there any other options they could suggest.

Expansion activity:

Ask a counsellor, anger management worker, drugs and alcohol worker to come in and speak to students about what their service provides and how it works.

One-to-one:

Encourage the student to discuss the scenarios and places where that person could go for support, and if they are stuck suggest ideas

Students say: Be cautious to make the scenarios impersonal and not to mention any of the students' experiences to the rest of the class. Also if one student in particular has experienced one of the issues in the scenarios, then do not use that scenario with the class.

Case study one

Looking back it started when I was 16. I started avoiding people, feeling very anxious about social situations and then I started taking less care of myself, not showering or having a bath. And from then on it was a very vicious circle: the less I did the less I wanted to do, the more I withdrew and the more I wanted to withdraw.

The hardest part was nothing was actually going on. I was doing well at school. I was relatively popular which had been a bit of a façade. It felt like everything was getting darker and darker and I started to feel suicidal as well. At the time I didn't mention this to anyone, I was so encased in my head. My head was like a prison. People did notice. Generally, people thought because I was avoiding people and not taking care of myself, they just assumed I was on drugs, smoking cannabis, when I wasn't.

My family didn't know what to do so they did nothing. And if they did say or suggest something I would snap. I could be very angry. Although it was a gradual descent over a period of time it generally got worse and worse, I completely withdrew. I had no friends. I dreaded going to school and college. My attendance was really bad.

- What action should this young person take?
- What are their options for support?
- What treatments are available for people who suffer from depression?

Case study two

I find it hard putting it into words. I have experienced it for so long I don't notice it any more. But when I go to work or join groups or social situations I really notice it. I notice that I go quiet. I tense up. I have thoughts going around in my head: "what are they thinking about me?... they gave me a dirty look,... they hate me,... they think I'm stupid." Then I can't concentrate and I can't speak and I am stuck with all these thoughts going around in my head.

A lot of the time I don't notice I am anxious, it is only in certain situations. It can be harder one to one and if there isn't a large group. My anxiety gradually built up. In school I would get embarrassed if I was late and the door was locked. I had to wait for someone to let me in and I would really dread this. Also in lessons, at first, I started being quiet and withdrawing by not sitting with friends. I just sat on my own and did not speak to anyone. People didn't say anything, they thought I was shy and then eventually I stopped going to school all together.

At home I'd just babysit which made things worse because I didn't go out at weekends and I stopped socialising. Not going to school and not socialising made me just switch off from everyone emotionally I withdrew into a world of drinking and getting stoned by myself. Four years later I've moved out of home and I'm keen to turn my life around. I think I want to volunteer and do some GCSEs. I really want to sort my life out but I am really scared and I don't have a clue where to begin.

- What action should this young person take?
- What are their options for support?
- What treatments are available for people who suffer from anxiety

Case study three

When I was 12 my Dad left and I lived with my Mum and two older Brothers. I got on well with my mum but my two older Brothers used to bully me. Most of the time I tried to stick up for myself but I was outnumbered. My two older Brothers used to blame things on me, and put me down and call me names. This didn't make me very confident but I used to act like everything was okay.

By the time I was 15 I started feeling anxious in social situations so in order to deal with this I used to misbehave. Sometimes I was really loud, obnoxious and threatening. I was especially like this towards people who tried to help me or who were nice to me. It was like a control thing if someone guessed that I was vulnerable or depressed, I just wanted to kick off.

On the outside I had a giant shield that I protected myself with, while on the inside I was falling apart and I felt completely depressed and lost. And the more I tried to hide it the worse it got. I just felt more depressed and I hated what I had become. I was the mouthy, aggressive one who everybody didn't want to work with or they were worried how I was going to act or behave next.

- What action should this young person take?
- What are their options for support?
- What treatments are available for people who suffer with anger problems?