

Matthew's^{*} Journey

Sheffield Day Services, South Yorkshire

Supporting Individuals with
Learning Disabilities

Matthew's history

Matthew is a young man in his 20s who lives at home with his mum and dad. He has a diagnosis of autism and has specific complex needs. He is governed by his own habits and rituals which can lead to behavioural issues.

Matthew previously attended other day services in the local area, but unfortunately these placements were not successful. Matthew has certain obsessions and was often disruptive, the staff teams didn't know how best to work with him, resulting in daily physical restraints which then caused violence episodes.

His mum visited Sheffield Day Services in a distressed state in the hope that they would be able to support Matthew. She spoke with the Cygnet team, his social worker and psychologist and they agreed that they would initially take him on a month to month basis, to see if it was the right placement for him and whether they could support him effectively.

When Matthew came to us

The team worked closely with Matthew's mum and social worker on a transition plan to help Matthew settle in at Sheffield Day Services. Photographs of the building, the rooms and the staff were sent to Matthew so that he could look through them with his mum and familiarise himself with the service and the support staff.

Upon admission, Matthew became quite anxious and continued to observe his obsessions and rituals leading to him hurting himself and others. Staff would attempt to safely de-escalate the situation without the use of restraint, something they knew was an instant trigger for him.



Matthew's care & support

Trust was key; the team needed to build Matthew's trust. After being restrained regularly at other services, he needed to know that he could trust the staff to not put 'hands on' when he was feeling anxious or angry. The team built up this trust with him slowly, showing him that they were there to keep him safe and help him enjoy his time with them.

The team knew that Matthew worked well with structure so the speech and language therapist at Sheffield Day Service designed a 'Now & Next' Board especially for him. Again this was sent home with Matthew so that he could familiarise himself with it in safe surroundings. This new board enabled Matthew to decide what he wanted to do each day along with a time schedule of how long he would be doing each task for. He was given a stop watch so that he could set it, enabling him to know when it was time to move on to the next activity or even time to go home. This helped a great deal and as time went on Matthew presented with few incidents of challenging behaviour.

After a couple of months, Matthew's confidence grew and he started to feel more at ease with his staff and surroundings. He soon started to love the service and increase the number of activities he was willing to participate in.



Matthew today

Matthew now has a fantastic relationship with the staff as he understands that they have continued to work with him and learned to understand him. He still has his rituals and obsessions, however they are much less frequent and the staff now understand how to support him through these when they occur.

Each day he visits Sheffield Day Centre is exciting for Matthew. He loves films in the cinema room, going on outings in the bus, using the swimming pool (he is a very confident swimmer) and other activities such as using the ball pool and arts and crafts.



All any parent wishes for their child is happiness, to be shown respect, and be valued for who they are, and as such they thrive.

With all your incredible and relentless support and dedication, this is exactly what you have achieved.

Our son has never been so happy. Dreams can come true, you're all amazing!

Matthew's mum



www.cygnetgroup.com

*Name has been changed to protect his identity

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