

Focusing Minds CIC: School Case Studies

The following case studies have been collected from school staff with pastoral responsibility for the young people supported in their setting. The studies have been sought from staff in schools/settings where Focusing Minds delivered services for at least one academic year.

Aside first names, details including surname, age and setting and have been removed to protect the identity of the young people we have supported.

Jess – (Year 10).

Jess' development has increased dramatically. When Jess started meeting with Focusing Minds, she had severe anxiety, frequent panic attacks and refused to come to school. She is more confident in her abilities and, since support began, is yet to have a severe outburst in the manner previous to before. Jess really works well having her sessions and she does look forward to these weekly. During the period of time with Focusing Minds, she has recognised behaviour she is in control of and using appropriate measures again to support her own wellbeing. She is more confident to reach out for support from trusted adults and is accessing all of her classes now, which is fantastic.

Jess recognises her own struggles and is the first to admit when she is struggling and seeking clarification or support from staff. Teachers have noticed a huge improvement in her dedication to lessons and really trying hard in her studies. Her most recent results have improved which is fantastic to see and she is quick to come down and tell me about her achievements. Jess still requires plenty of reassurance in a morning and struggles more at the beginning of the week. This is recognised by staff, and we are quick to assist when needed.

Amelia – (Year 11):

Amelia values the sessions with Focusing Minds and will regularly seek out support sessions and time with the worker. Amelia really struggles within school and often does not follow her support plan. Focusing Minds sessions with Amelia show that she is focused on her mental health and does not feel that the support is there in school for her. Aside from this, friendship relationships are not the most positive for Amelia and this is regularly discussed in sessions.

Focusing Minds show lots of support for Amelia and will always make time for her; due to ongoing issues with attendance, Amelia has missed sessions which can sometimes lead to her then seeking support out on an alternative day during break time. Many parental meetings have been held to support Amelia and wider family; the support from Focusing Minds has helped with this due to an extra level of support needed for her.

Focusing Minds take the time to speak to Amelia about her lessons and the importance of being in these subjects and supports Amelia to recognise this.

Bailey – (Year 8)

Bailey has looked forward to every single session he has had with Focusing Minds. Whether Bailey was having a really positive day at school or had been in a rut with his behaviour and the consequences given to him in lesson, Bailey couldn't wait to talk with his worker and discuss everything from his behaviour to his successes and to his weekend plans to go and watch football. Football, and sport, was used brilliantly by Focusing Minds in sessions with Bailey, giving him another chance to let some steam off in their sessions as they played sports while talking.

Early on, Focusing Minds identified that Bailey would benefit from being active in their sessions so this was put in and straight away you could see the benefits this had by allowing Bailey to move about more and leave the classroom setting for a short while. Bailey and his worker would have discussions about Bailey's behaviour either that day or in the previous few days. This benefited him a lot as it allowed him to discuss it with another adult and also look for how to make improvements to his behaviour.

It's evident to see that Bailey really appreciates Focusing Minds support and the time he spends with his worker; the positive relationship Bailey has created has done him a world of good. The breaks in lessons that come from their meetings are beneficial for Bailey to help break up his day too. Finally, Focusing Minds have helped Bailey a lot to identify where he may have got it wrong in a lesson and to understand why the teacher has given him a consequence. On top of this, his worker has also helped give Bailey tools to help work on this and how to use them.

Zarra – (Year 9)

Zarra was referred to Focusing Minds after conversations with parent. Zarra was struggling with her emotions due to family issues. Zarra was at the point where she was struggling to come into school and when she was here, she didn't seem herself at times. Once Zarra started her sessions with Focusing Minds, it was like a load of pressure had been lifted off her shoulders. Zarra would write in her journal at home but struggled to speak to her dad and to staff in school. Zarra said she liked having someone away from her family and not directly linked to school that she could talk to but also feel listened to. As the sessions went on, a more positive change in Zarra was witnessed and she would often ask if her worker was in school that day as she was looking forward to having the extra support.

Zarra's friendships at school started to strengthen in this period too, it was noticed that she was spending her breaks and dinners with a group of friends. There were no instances where Zarra was by herself that had been seen previously on occasion. Zarra also started becoming more comfortable with speaking to staff in school about how things were going at home, at school and about her hobbies.

Although Focusing Minds was initially brought in to help Zarra with her mental health during a tough time in her personal life, Zarra gained a lot more from it, including improving her confidence, helping with friendships and

trust building. Since finishing her meetings with Focusing Minds, Zarra has still been able to access support through drop-in sessions. When these have happened, she has always reacted positively to these and has been thankful for the opportunity.