

Peer Mentoring

Background

Ellie, now 18 was referred to Activity Agreements by Skills Development Scotland at the beginning of 2016. Estranged from her immediate family at a young age, Ellie suffered from lack of self-esteem and confidence throughout her primary and secondary school years and consequently dropped out of school. Admitting to feeling isolated she was motivated to sign up to Activity Agreements and was able to identify her own strengths and weakness and with support compile an individual learning programme which met her needs in the areas of personal, social and educational goals.

Activity Agreement Support

Within an agreed timescale, starting from one hour per week for the first 4 weeks, Ellie started her own Activity Agreement Journey Journal. Identifying her 'Hope and Fears', 'Comfort Zones', 'skills', 'Previous Achievements' using the STAR approach (Situation, Task, Action and Result) and goal setting by using the SWOT method ((Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) this enabled Ellie to design a unique and personal Activity Agreement Plan. Over the next 5 months, Ellie progressed from weekly 1-1 sessions per week to attending Activity Agreement Hub groups twice a week lasting an additional 8 hours per week. Sessions delivered by Activity Agreement workers covered the areas of Confidence/Self-esteem, employability skills to practical art and cookery skills. As Ellie's confidence grew she attended courses in First Aid, Well Happy and started to independently travel by bus.

Progression

When offered the opportunity to embark on a nine week Peer Mentoring course, Ellie was one of the first young people to volunteer. The course is designed around the principles of peer mentoring and gaining the practical skills to be a supportive peer mentor for other young people starting on an Activity Agreement. Ellie fully participated in the course and used her skills and knowledge with others outside the group and made the big step to introduce herself with her Activity Agreement Support Worker to meet new young people and explain her own Activity Agreement journey. Due to increased confidence and self-esteem by engaging with new people on the Peer Mentoring course Ellie has started work experience in a flower shop and is about to commence a 12 week creative craft, art and technology course. By her own admission, prior to the course she felt quite vulnerable and thought she would have to disclose her own personal history, which she was worried about. Realising that Peer Mentoring was about mutual respect and supportive role, Ellie was able to gain the trust and confidence of new Activity Agreement young people coming into the service.