



Supported

Into Education...

Developing an Inner Curriculum



VbE
International

Training ourselves, each other and our world

*“Outstanding
Alternative Provision,
Inspirational”*

*Dr Neil Hawkes, founder of Values-based
Education*



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Mission Statement

Over the past 7 years working with young people, we have recognised the fundamental need to help those we support develop positive human values.

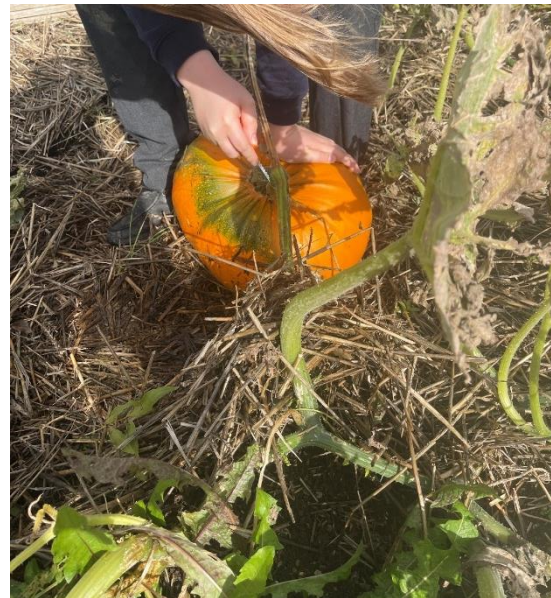
We work alongside young people to explore and experience the feelings of trust, respect, honesty, and humility; whilst providing them the opportunity to think and practice living within the safe professional relationship we build with them.

We believe you do not just teach these values but also enable the development of these positive habits, skills, reflection and dispositions through role modelling and the person experiencing them first-hand, enabling them to live as an active member of the community.

Our Approach

We have used our 70 years' worth of combined multi professional knowledge and experiences within the care and education sector to develop and take a holistic approach to the support we provide for each young person. This enables us to engage with young people from mainstream education but also those with additional needs, this includes ASC, learning difficulties, attachment disorders, ADHD, Trauma and behaviours that cause concern.

For many, feeling detached, anxious, and disconnected creates isolation and a lack of positive emotional experiences. We work to bridge these barriers and improve a young person's self-esteem and mental wellbeing, by focusing on individual barriers, enabling the young person to have their voice heard.



Our Method

Collaborative working between our staff is essential to ensuring the best possible support is delivered for our young people. We do this by:

- Holding weekly team meetings, this includes discussions, resolutions and thinking about the young people, whilst supporting creative ideas to develop their inner curriculum.
- Organising and receiving external professional training.
- Carrying out termly reviews for and with each young person.
- Allocating time for reflection, recognition, and implementation of improvements for the young people and for our staff.

Values Based Education & Support'ed

VbE is central to all practices and engagements with the young people we work with. The whole foundation of all of our work is based around the VbE framework with a clear vision to educate by allowing our young people to engage with society.



All of our support staff account for the emotional and social needs of those we support – as such, education is tailored for a variety of individuals, accounting for the diverse range of backgrounds that make up their life stories. Regardless of a young person's perceived barriers to learning, there is always something Support'ed can offer. Our priority is to ensure the young person we are supporting remains central to a holistic approach. Our approach is entirely person centred, whilst encouraging collaboration

between the variety of other agencies assigned to them.

Our End of Term Reports record a young person's progress with a focus on their inner curriculum (based on the 8Cs), rather than solely grading them on their meeting of academic targets. We identify progress in many areas – examples of which can be found later in our case studies. Values-based Education is central to all we do.

Our Remit

Support'ed operates across Devon, offering educational support in both schools and their homes, promoting and teaching the principles of Values Based Education relating to enrolled pupils. The focus of this is to bring schools, parents, families, and other agencies together and ensure our students get the best possible outcomes in all cases.

Our staff are flexible, allowing young people to shape the work they will be completing, and have a say in how they do this work and how they develop their own self learning. Gentle encouragement, paired with a gradual stretching of the educational and valued based expectations we have of each young person.

This can be in any area of life where they require education – we provide social and emotional support, mentoring and role modelling, practical life skills, assistance with reading and writing and encourage social development. These are moulded around the young persons needs rather than the young person having to mould to our expectations and goals. This for us is very important due to the cohort of young people we work with to enable them to repair, navigate and move forward into self-learning.



Values-based Ethos:

Values-based learning is integral to Support'ed's function – it makes up the whole of our team's approach and vocabulary when planning, discussing, and reviewing the support we provide. Staff use a variety of methods and theories to meet the needs of each individual young person - for example the Gentle Teaching approach, Trauma Informed, ASC and ADHD Awareness - to achieve the best possible outcomes for the YP. All sessions are recorded and reviewed to celebrate success and identify areas for further development through the young person's inner curriculum.

These are reviewed on a term-to-term basis with an underlying plan to support and promote the development of the young person's inner curriculum. Due to the nature of the young people we work with, formal educational environments are a barrier to achievement, therefore this work is undertaken through social and interpersonal experiences. Throughout our work we use VbE terminology as part of our working vocabulary with the young person to create natural interaction with the approach of Gentle Teaching.



Curriculum plans are tailored to each young person's specific needs. This process starts with a review of their initial referral. A face-to-face meeting with the young person, identifying their own goals, likes and dislikes and discovering the best adult personality which will match and meet their needs. We will also meet with schools and families to gather a broader sense of the young person whilst recognising that

this is a reset for them. A formulated individualised curriculum plan is developed. Following this an initial proposal of our thoughts and ideas is created.

The team will discuss the needs of the young person, and a member of staff is assigned who we feel is best suited to be compatible with a high percentage of all aspects of the young person's life.

From here we can develop the young person's inner curriculum at a pace suitable for them. Every session includes a breakdown of the YP's progress within each of the 8Cs, demonstrating where they are doing well and identifying clear areas where further development in their own personal inner curriculum is needed.

“When working with young people, there are times when you will see results in 10 seconds and there are times where you won't see it for 10 years. Either way, keep planting those seeds of character, eventually they bloom.”

It is important for Support'ed to recognise their employees own individual strengths and weaknesses as well as listening to staff voices to shape their future training. Additionally, within our group communication, regular learning is shared with the teams in a less formal way.

It is important that all staff members feel empowered and can offer their own learning and individualised expertise to the team. For example, ADHD – a member of staff is an expert by experience and puts their own



management techniques into practice with the young people they support as well as giving insights on the condition and how it impacts people in their day to day lives.

Support'ed offers their staff a range of on-going professional development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and awareness, meaning YP's get support from qualified subject matter experts. This includes accredited courses as well as ongoing refresher training to ensure staff are kept informed and up to date with our policies, procedures, and best practice. Support'ed have also supported staff in completing more specialist courses.

Support'ed also work hard to support the health and wellbeing of our staff. Staff have access to a trauma informed expert on a termly basis to offer some support with their often emotionally challenging work. Supervision and additional reflection and learning is given during weekly team meetings as well as when required. It is also important for Support'ed to use real and relevant case studies to enhance individual and team learning.

Support'ed's entire vocabulary revolves around VbE – our mode of operation is entirely young person centred. All young people are assigned a member of staff who is found to be compatible with the way they like to learn. Staff work hard to identify areas where young people and their families are at risk of being marginalised and work to bridge gaps – often Support'ed are the first port of call for families that are having difficulties understanding the plans external agencies are making for their children. Our rotas are drawn up to allow staff time to attend multi-agency meetings where they act as advocates for the young people, ensuring their voices are heard.

To ensure consistency in our delivery, staff complete shadow shifts whenever they take on a new young person from another Support'ed worker. At team meetings, staff discuss the young people they support to ensure the whole team has a good



knowledge of the broad range of individuals we work with. For each young person we look closely at the 8C's, starting with curiosity. This promotes self-learning within the individual, and we use community facilities to further develop this. Staff regularly share optimal locations to take young people to in order to support the development of specific values.



Support'ed Journeys of Engagement

The following are just a few of the many stories of Support'ed's work with Young People, made up of our observations, extracts from the Young Person's Reports and direct feedback from their families.

Journey 1

Context

The young person was referred to Support'ed in November of 2021, with support for him beginning shortly afterwards. They had received several diagnoses and, when looking at their inner values, they were lacking connection, confidence, and calmness, though showed signs of curiosity around nature.

The following sections have been written having examined the young person's end of term reports.

Intent

Support'ed initially sought to build a relationship with the young person and their father in order to help them engage with the process of returning to an educational setting. Due to previous experiences of being bullied, there was a high level of anxiety surrounding this. The young person lacked confidence approaching many tasks, exhibiting an attitude of "I can't", so our primary objective was to help them realise that they can.

It was identified that the young person had high levels of curiosity, particularly surrounding nature. This interest and passion was focussed upon in order to develop their physical health, confidence and to support an increased connection with the outside world – this was highly important as they had been experiencing a high level of isolation as a result of their anxieties.

Implementation

Early sessions involved spending time with the young person in their home in order to build a trusting relationship and help enable them to step outside their comfort zone. For them, this meant trying new activities and skills, being around other young people again, and learning to trust other adults.

We planned walks with the young person that focussed on connecting to nature and promoting curiosity. We followed a working book titled "Nature and Me" – this encouraged being aware of their surroundings, promoting the positive experiences of their senses as well as working on their emotional strengths.

There was also work put in around the young person's diet – they were initially restricting themselves to a small range of food types. By promoting positive

experiences through cooking and trying new foods, the young person has made huge progress and have even made their own apron.

Impact

The young person now physically pushes themselves – they are able to walk for longer periods of time, which has improved their experiences of nature. Their mind has become calmer as they have become fitter – this in turn has further developed their curiosity and desire to explore further without the fear of breathlessness.

The young person has come a long way with regards to their confidence. They were previously fearful of many things in the kitchen, for example anything sharp, hot water, and the oven. They have largely overcome these anxieties and are happy to get stuck in and messy whilst cooking. Their previous fears surrounding dogs and bridges have been addressed through gentle, gradual exposure. The young person has now been able to play with a colleague's dog at the beach and they have been able to cross bridges as well.

The process of transitioning them into an alternative education setting is well underway with the view of this being a stepping stone to be able to access a suitable education setting at a later date. Their connectivity is improving; they are making friends at forest school. Despite their earlier cautiousness, they are now happy to get stuck in with other young people.

Observations

I attended one session at the young person's home with Support'ed on the 5th of May 2022. The plan was to continue working on the young person's motor skills and confidence through cooking. It was immediately apparent that they have come a long way with their social skills – they made good eye contact and engaged well despite me being a stranger and clearly enjoyed some informal conversation.

The young person's anxieties around use of kitchen equipment have clearly improved massively – they were confident enough to teach me how to use a sharp knife properly and gave clear instructions on chopping vegetables. With some support, they were able to read the recipe, use the oven, scales, and cooking utensils. These are all activities that previously they young person would not have made an effort to attempt. After this, they also did some IT tasks, summarising their recipes into a book they and Support'ed are producing using Microsoft PowerPoint.

The young person has clearly built a great connection with their Support'ed worker – they were, overall, quite calm for our session (they were a little excitable, but only in

a happy and positive way), and approached these relatively new tasks with confidence.

Next Steps

The young person now has the courage to “try new activities without hesitation.” Support'ed has been taking them regularly to a Forest School, in an effort to improve their fitness and get them socialising with new people. The young person's fitness has considerably improved – they were previously struggling to walk to the base camp and could not carry their bag. They now find this no problem, and no longer become “distressed or out of breath.”

They socialise well with others there, running around playing tag or football, and have made several new friends. Prior to this, they did not have any other friends within their age group. They are also receiving home visits with a teacher from a local alternative schooling organisation to work with them on their academic skills – “[The young person] has been engaging with this really well”.

Our aim is to continue our work to support the young person access activities that them him to grow and learn to trust themselves. We continue to assist them with the transition into the transition setting and are working towards returning them to a suitable educational setting once this has been agreed upon.

“[The young person] has overcome so many of their fears and anxieties since we began working with [them]. [They were] too afraid to leave [their] home when we first became involved with the family and now [they are] spending a whole day at Forest school each week and during that time [they are] without any direct support for 3 hrs. [They are] overcoming [their] fears of leaving [their] father, being with other adults, being outside and getting grubby from playing in the woods, being near bodies of water. [They are] learning about [themselves] and [their] abilities and [they are] flourishing as a result.”

Family Perspective

The young person's father has spoken at length about the impact of Support'ed's work with his child. He states that the young person really enjoys the activities organised by Support'ed, which include healthy cooking and taking the young person to Forest School. The father can see his child's fitness improving every week as well, which has been very encouraging to see as the young person's GP has recommended more exercise for him.



He said Support'ed's gentle approach to introducing new skills in an applied manner, for example reinforcing their reading and mathematics through the use of recipes, is "amazing" and the young person finds her much easier to engage with than other education workers they have seen in the past.

The father also states that the young person's confidence has grown since work began. They have learned to overcome a lot of their anxieties as the work set by Support'ed is set at a suitable pace for them, whilst still being challenging enough for them to get some benefit out of them.

Support'ed has also been of immense help to the father himself, who said that the worker assigned to the family is superb at bridging the gap between him and the local authority – "Without [Support'ed Worker], I'd have no idea what is going on with the council" – Support'ed able to keep the father informed of changes and provide a great amount of reassurance when it comes to the young person's future.

Journey 2

Context

The young person was referred to Support'ed in November of 2021, with support beginning for them that month. It was noted that they had been struggling with their mental health, causing them to stop attending college. They found it extremely difficult to engage with adults, particularly women, regularly challenging education staff and refusing to listen to directions given. It was also noted that they had difficulties concentrating and focussing their attention on tasks they needed to complete.

Their mother also noted that the young person had engaged in suicidal threats and self-harming behaviour. Their sleep pattern was extremely disturbed – often staying up all night using the computer. As a result of being dysregulated, they were extremely noisy and would often wake other family members in the middle of the night by either becoming verbally confrontational or using the kitchen facilities. They were not looking after their personal hygiene.

Approach

Support'ed identified a need to work on the young person's relationships – due to their condition, they had difficulties forming and maintaining healthy relationships. Two of our staff members have completed work mentoring them around this area, in particular appropriate conduct around women.

A lot of support was put in place surrounding the family dynamic in the home – particularly the young person's relationship and attitude towards their parents. Staff engaged in gentle mentoring and open discussions about the impacts and effects of the young person's actions.

A need was also identified to work on the young person's financial knowledge. They had a lack of understanding with regards to money and would immediately spend any money they obtained. Again, this was addressed with discussions with the young person's mother surrounding their access to cash and money being earned rather than simply being given.

Support'ed also encouraged the young person to improve their personal hygiene before going out in the car with staff. This also included changing into clean clothes and generally looking after their personal health to a better standard.



To encourage the young person to further develop their life, social and work skills, they were taken to a farm for individuals with learning difficulties to gain some experience and insight surrounding various different career paths.

All of this work was in an effort to bring some structure and daily routine to the young person's life and encourage them to maintain it.

Family Perspective

The young person's mother had a positive discussion regarding the impact of Support'ed's work with their child. They spoke about the dramatic change in behaviour and emotional state – “[they were] suicidal last year, now [they are] much happier, more [themselves], less depressed.”

She described Support'ed's work as “brilliant.” Support'ed have a “different approach,” “working with [them] one on one, mentoring [them] on right and wrong.” Activities that stuck out as having a big impact on the young person were climbing, and writing out a CV. They have managed to find themselves a Saturday job using the CV, of which their mother is extremely proud. She describes the young person as “much calmer, more relaxed, less aggressive.”

Journey 3

Context

The young person started work with Support'ed in 2017 having received several diagnoses. They were in a school for people with special needs, where were struggling to engage with the young person due to their dysregulated and challenging behaviours. These included absconding and negative verbal and physical behaviours towards staff and pupils. Due to these behaviours continuing to happen, we supported the transition for the young person to attend an alternative educational setting that was considered a specialist in managing these behaviours.

Following the successful transition, Support'ed finished working with the young person. In 2020, as the young person was leaving school, there was a significant family breakdown, leading to the young person becoming potentially homeless. As no provision was found, Support'ed were asked to reengage over the summer holidays, working in conjunction with the specialist school that were providing overnight support.

Support'ed supported the transition for the young person to access a specialist residential school. After three months this broke down, due a serious incident. Support'ed were asked to reengage once again to support the emergency care provision that was put in place. Support'ed then worked on the transition from this emergency care to residential support accommodation within the city.

Support'ed remained in position providing Post 16 Alternative Education support from this time (March 2021), and this support is ongoing.

Approach

Support'ed recognised the internal conflicts, fears, and anxieties that the young person presented, which were masked by actions of "fight or flight." Support'ed identified that they required a Values-based/Professional relationship approach to support them in learning, developing, and maintaining positive relationships with others.

Support'ed worked on changing and reframing the young person's need for risk taking behaviours, by teaching them to risk-assess situations and keep others safe. It was also important to teach them about their body's physical "fight or flight" reactions, to help give them a sense of control surrounding these feelings.



There was a need to enable reframing of their understanding of human reactions and human relationships, so that in time they would be able to form and maintain healthy peer relationships. Support'ed have been teaching and continue to teach the young person the complex management of human relationships, in particular around their peers, enabling them to reflect, learn, experience and subsequently begin to identify others who have a more positive effect on their life.

Support'ed also worked with the young person to help them understand their mental health issues, particularly anxiety and depression, providing real time discussions, reflections and plans to enable them to self-manage. The young person is now able, at times, to own and embrace these feelings, whilst recognising that they will pass and that they are able to control them without becoming emotionally dysregulated.

Support'ed worked with the young person regarding their relationship with their parents, enabling them to have safe reflection around past incidents and allowing them to forgive themselves. Support'ed supported them to learn life through experience, promoting healthy engagement with the community, with nature and encouraging their natural curiosity whilst building their confidence in social interaction.

Journey 4

Context

Prior to support, the young person has spent a significant amount of time in the care system and had a difficult upbringing. The young person had been excluded from a local specialist school through them becoming confrontational as a result of their “fight or flight” mode taking effect. They had a breakdown leading to them being placed a residential home in December of 2021 and moving to a new residential provider in January 2022. Support'ed began work with them in March 2022.

The young person was extremely anxious and did not have any faith in professional workers due to feeling they have been let down or hurt in their previous experiences. Support'ed were asked to develop a relationship with the young person and help to support them back into education under the specialist school until an appropriate permanent education placement was sourced.

Approach

Support'ed staff started to build a professional relationship by getting to know them and taking a genuine interest in the young person before any work was introduced due to their elevated level of anxiety and lack of trust in professionals. During this period, we identified that engagement work around their physical, social, and mental wellbeing which are worked on daily through a person-centred approach.

Support'ed have had work provided to them from the specialist school, to carry out with the young person to ensure that they can obtain a grade through their GCSE's. This is regularly overseen and under the guidance of the designated schoolteacher.

Support'ed are actively working alongside other professionals and the school to look at provisions for the young person to get back into full time education.

Support'ed have been asked to continue the transition when an appropriate education provision is sourced and transition to support the individual with building a relationship with their new one to one worker. This will enhance and continue to develop the young person's ability to maintain their trust in the professionals working with them and ensuring that continuity is maintained.



Impact

The manager of the residential home the young person resides in spoke at length about the impact of Support'ed work. Support'ed “quickly established a relationship with them,” achieving this by “channelling into [the young person’s] mood and tailoring [their] sessions around that.” The young person “trusts and is happy to confide in” the support worker, which has previously been challenging for other involved agencies.

He also stated that “[Support'ed] were only hired to provide support for [the young person’s] emotional wellbeing, but [Support'ed staff] have gone above and beyond and support [them] with [their] English and maths for an hour a day. [Support'ed worker] is one of a kind and doing a fantastic job working with [other agencies]. [Their] contributions are very valuable”

Feedback

Support'ed are committed to ensuring that the Young People, and their families, have their voices heard. They play a key role in helping us shape the service we provide. The following are just some of the comments we recently received from our 2022 Parent and Student Questionnaires.

"It isn't something that feels forced. [Support'ed worker] helps me understand issues that I have with other people and helps me reflect. There is mutual respect, I feel listened to. The martial arts helps me stay calm and helps me manage my anger."

"I feel understood and listened to. I like learning and talking about astronomy and various other interests of mine. I feel very calm in my sessions. (Support'ed has affected my life) for the better."

"[Support'ed worker] is my bro, without him I would be in a dark space, the time we spend allows me to talk about stuff that I don't talk to others about. I like going on adventures and visiting new places. [Support'ed worker] is my interpreter."

"I am able to get out and about, which is good for my mental health. It has changed my life, when I first met [Support'ed Worker] I hated him, but he has saved me from some dark places and situations and he will always be around."

"The staff, [staff name] in particular, have been amazing with [the young person] and he has really enjoyed his sessions. [The young person] seems slightly calmer and the sessions are helping with his anxieties and social skills."

"They have really taken the time to get to know my son and make adjustments they need to make by far the best educational thing my son has in place. They take the time he needs found a level of interest with him and push him. Hes more confident, has the ability to deal with criticism more and just overall he's so happy to go with them something I haven't seen in a while"

"The guys ([staff names]) who work with my son are amazing an absolute credit to what you do they push him to be the best version of himself and [the young person] really responds to them he is over the moon with the work they do and so am I after seeing the positive impact they have on him. They contact with any change well in advance to not cause disruption even if it's a different person and they structure there work with him so well that it isn't overwhelming for him."

References

For more information on our unique approach to supportive education, please follow the following links:

- <https://valuesbasededucation.com/>
- <https://gentleteaching.com/>
- <https://socialrolevalorization.com/srv-theory/>
- <https://www.psychologyassociates.org.uk/associates/cas-schneider/>

Contact Us

For more information on the Alternative Education, Post-16 and Home-school transition services we can offer, please contact us using the details below:

Tim George (Director)

tim@support-ed.uk

07743 456864

For a referral form, please contact:

Miles Fowler (Administrator)

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