



The Recovery Project 2021

Case Study

Everest School, Basingstoke

The following case study is of a female, Year 8 student at Everest School, Basingstoke who took part in our Recovery Project between 22nd June - 25th July 2021.

It has been generated following an interview that took place with the student on 23rd June 2021 which was conducted by Leigh Johnstone, Artistic Director of Fluid Motion Theatre Company and Dr Tim Cooper, GP and Trustee of Fluid Motion Theatre Company.*

The student started off by saying that the project was allowing her to interact with people that she might not normally interact with at school and this was having a positive impact on how she started to understand the effect the pandemic has had on her peers. She said 'we get to see that actually that person is not how we thought they were, they are actually dealing with quite a lot of stuff'.

The student said that the workshop that focused on the topic 'Loss' was an important and poignant one as she began to see the extent to which her year group had all suffered some sort of loss during the pandemic, whether that was the physical loss of a family member or the loss of friends or freedom etc. She said that many of her friends were blaming themselves for the loss they have suffered and that it was contributing to their poor mental health. She said that understanding how her friends are feeling has given her the chance to try and support them as best she can and to be more empathetic.

The student said that the fact that the project was arts based was a great stress reliever and allowed her to approach the topics in a relaxed and open way. She said it was hugely beneficial in giving her other ways in which she can express herself and her feelings as she doesn't know how to do that with words. She said 'I can make it more obvious that I am not ok if I don't know the words.'

Dr Cooper asked the student what it was like coming back into school after being away for so long and whether they had started to have conversations with her peers about how the pandemic had affected them and what they had lost or been isolated from etc. The student said 'we just didn't really talk about it, we just got on with it.' The student then went on to say that this project has given her and her peers the opportunity to stop and reflect and to some extent process what they had been through over the last year and a half.

The student said that this project has given her the tools and the confidence to start asking questions of herself and to her peers about how they are

feeling inside and how they can start to articulate that. She went on to say the project has given her the skills to take more notice of how others are feeling, specifically around body language and as a result feels more able to support her friends when they may need it.

The student said that during the lockdowns she noticed that she wasn't laughing as much as she used to and that she was lacking enjoyment or entertainment during that period. She said that this project has helped her understand how she is feeling, commenting 'sometimes you don't actually realise how you are feeling. You don't know because you can't put it into words and sometimes I will be like "I am fine" but I am not fine but I don't know how to tell people. This has just kinda given me the words and the description and how I can show people that I am not actually fine.'

Leigh asked the student if she had been given any opportunity to process her thoughts and feelings or if this project was the first time she had been able to do that. She said 'This is kind of the first time, cos I think the only other time was when I was at my house and I had just lost someone and I was like, I just cried for like four hours straight and I was like I don't know how to talk about this, how do I talk about this? And now I am actually able to talk about this'

Dr Cooper asked the student if she felt that as a group of young people they had ever gone through something like this collectively before. She said no and the only nearest thing she could relate it to was moving up from Primary to Secondary school but added 'it wasn't even that scary, it was just like a 'oh I'm in a different place I can make new friends, it was like a positive thing. Now it's like people I know I will never see again and it's quite scary.'

The last thing that the student wanted to say was 'My friends, they have been through so much as well because one of my friends has just, the've lost someone prior to Covid and sitting at home doing nothing kind of brought it all back and her emotions were just all over the place and she is always on the phone to people like "are you ok?" and I don't think anyone is really there for her. That's why I am trying to make sure I am and to try and talk to people.'

Dr Cooper remarked at the end of the interview that in his role as a GP he doesn't always get to hear the voices of young people, especially in relation to how the pandemic has impacted them. He said that it was really interesting to pick up on how much it has/is affecting them and got him to think more about how he and his colleagues can work to support young people in the future, alongside projects in the community like this one.

*A recording of the full interview can be requested from Fluid Motion Theatre Company by contacting Leigh Johnstone, Artistic Director
leigh@fluidmotiontheatre.com