

A star is born

An example of an EP intervention with a young person and school

The situation

Boris was referred to the Educational Psychology Service in Year 8 because his teachers were worried about his underachievement, lack of motivation and unwillingness to attend certain lessons. Parents were concerned that he didn't seem happy about school.

What happened...

The EP worked with Boris on several occasions. The first session with Boris was used to establish a relationship and for the EP to find out more about his perception of the situation. He presented as a very articulate young person who struggled at times to understand the views of others. His particular interests were to do with drama, music and politics. Consultation with a Year Head that Boris trusted helped provide further context. Boris found it difficult to understand that he should attend all the lessons in the curriculum, becoming very upset when asked to do so. His anxiety could be extreme, causing him to have panic attacks and leave school.

The Year Head, Boris and the EP devised a more flexible curriculum, which initially resulted in improved attendance. Despite managing to attend some lessons, Boris' anxiety nevertheless increased and school attendance became very difficult for him. As attendance at school became less and less regular, Boris' panic attacks increased. The EP worked with Boris on developing relaxation techniques to help him learn to manage his anxiety. This proved to be successful.

What happened next...

Socially Boris continued to struggle with the demands of a large secondary school and it was agreed to refer him for an assessment by a Multidisciplinary Team. He was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome. He moved to a smaller education setting that was better able to cater for his needs so that he could complete his GCSEs in Year 10. Success within this setting led to Boris moving into a residential college to complete his post-16 education.

The result

Boris telephoned the EP recently to say that he had been offered a place at University. His acting career has now moved onto a professional footing. Boris is realistic about his interactions with others. He can still have occasional "fall-outs" where he can become angry that people don't understand him, but he sees these as few and far between. Boris considers that his success is due to the support he received from the EPS. He was reminded that the intervention used was very much a partnership.

Psychology used: Humanistic Psychology, Cognitive Psychology and Psychodynamic Psychology

