

Beech Court Ryan's Success Story

Ryan, an individual with learning disabilities and autism moved to Beech Court, a residential service in Southampton, Hampshire in October 2018 after his previous placement broke down.

Ryan had been living in a shared residential service for several years however, his behaviour had become more challenging and after an incident at the home, Ryan lost his confidence in the support team and the support team lost their confidence in supporting Ryan.

At Beech Court, individuals live within a residential setting, but have their own self-contained flats. For Ryan, this meant he could have the space he needed and environmental triggers such as noise and people, could be controlled and minimised. Being within a residential setting also meant Ryan had the security and stability of having the support team always to hand.

Despite the positive change in physical environment, Ryan's mum was anxious the same thing would happen, and the team would not be able to help Ryan with his anxiety.

The team, however, were confident they could support Ryan to achieve a better quality of life. To do this, they worked closely with Jenny from Consensus' Positive Behaviour Intervention Team who visited every week. Jackie, Beech Court's

team leader, trained by Consensus to support the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) process, gathers critical data and helps to analyse what approaches are working or not working; this in turn helps Jenny plan and implement Positive Behaviour Strategies that have helped minimise Ryan's behaviours and increased his confidence and independence.

During this process, Jenny worked with the support team to identify triggers for Ryan's behaviour:

THE NEED TO COMMUNICATE HIS WISHES, NEEDS AND FEELINGS

Ryan is limited in his ability to communicate verbally. One of the behaviours that Ryan displayed was to raise his fists up which had been interpreted as aggression, causing people to panic and move away or seek safety.

Jenny identified that raising his fists was Ryan's way of trying to communicate. Ryan didn't understand why people were reacting the way they were and not being understood left him feeling anxious. This then resulted in behaviour other people found challenging.

Once this had been recognised the key for the team was to support Ryan with alternative methods of communication that enabled him to express himself and be easily understood.

For example; Ryan would say single words such as "McDonalds." This was eventually interpreted not as a demand to go, but a question; "when am I going to McDonalds?"

To help answer this question a small poster was placed on Ryan's wall with the number of sleeps written on it until his next trip to McDonalds. The same poster approach was used for his mum's next visit to Beech Court.

Photo boards of staff were introduced so Ryan knows who will be working with him on the three different shifts each day. Ryan has been known to remove the photo of a member of staff if they have been on the early and late shift which is a positive way Ryan can request a change of staff.

THE NEED FOR A GOOD SENSORY DIET

Sensory experience can be very beneficial in reducing anxiety in individuals with autism and for Ryan having a good sensory diet has been important to help soothe and keep him calm.

One sensory sensation that Ryan enjoys is wearing a weighted bag on his back which helps him to feel a sense of security and comfort. Carrying a carrier bag with rice has provided Ryan with a similar sensory benefit and has over time helped to resolve the issue of his hands going up when he is anxious, which now happens far less frequently.

THE NEED TO BE ACTIVE AND ENGAGED

Ryan used to rush through his daily planner activities so that he could get to his end goal of going back to bed, which often heightened his anxiety. To keep Ryan engaged, the team have introduced short activities and included activities such as watering the plants and washing the car that provide Ryan with a sensory benefit.

As well as reducing his anxiety, another positive outcome for Ryan is that he no longer rushes through his daily planner activities. He is a lot calmer, looks forwards to his day and takes the time to enjoy each activity.

THE NEED FOR STRUCTURE, STABILITY AND SECURITY

Introducing a picture board with his daily activities on is another way the team have supported Ryan to reduce his anxiety as it provides a clear structure for his day and he is able to see each activity he has planned.



While this worked well when Ryan was at home, the team found he could still become anxious while out in the community without his board. To overcome this, they have introduced a mobile picture board that he can take with him.

Now, as his confidence grows, he is becoming less reliant on the picture board.

THE NEED FOR PEOPLE SUPPORTING RYAN TO REMAIN CLOSE, CONFIDENT AND IN CONTROL

The team learned that with Ryan, if he puts his fist up, the best place to be is close to him. This enables the team to use distraction techniques such as giving Ryan a 'high five' while also showing Ryan they are calm and in control.

The team also learned the worst thing a person can do is to panic and run away because Ryan will pick up on their body language and become anxious. He won't understand why they are behaving like that which means the next time he meets them, he is more likely to become anxious and for the behaviour to occur again.

REVIEWING AND ADAPTING RYAN'S PBS PLAN

Jenny now comes to visit once a month to review the Positive Behaviour Support plan. She looks at what strategies are working, what isn't, if there is anything that is no longer necessary and adapts and evolves as necessary in order to encourage further positive outcomes.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

A CALMER AND HAPPIER RYAN

When Ryan had his annual review in October 2019, it was agreed that there had been a total transformation in his behaviour and wellbeing.

He is now calmer, much happier and the anxiety that triggered his behaviours has been greatly reduced. Ryan's bubbly personality has begun to shine through as well as his cheeky sense of humour. He especially likes to tease the support team by offering one a biscuit and then not the other, which he thinks is very funny!

AN ACTIVE AND INDEPENDENT LIFE

Having a settled pattern has reduced Ryan's anxiety and enabled the team to support Ryan to work towards greater independence. He is supported to have a busy and varied life and to get out and about in the community. He enjoys a range of regular activities from crazy golf, ten pin bowling and swimming and has also enjoyed several planned days out including a trip to an air show and a visit to the seaside.

WORKING TOWARDS HIS GOALS

Ryan is also being supported to work towards goals that are important to him. One of Ryan's goals is to go to visit the cinema to watch a film. Ryan can become anxious in crowded places, so the service is gradually supporting him to achieve this goal by supporting him to watch films in the home cinema they have created within



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their summer house in the garden. This is helping to build up Ryan's confidence and resilience with the aim that in the future he will be able to attend a public cinema.

A PROUD AND POSITIVE SUPPORT TEAM

Reflecting on Ryan's achievements, Andrew Duckworth, Service Manager at Beech Court said, "We are all so proud of Ryan and what he has achieved over the last 14 months. Ryan's mum is also delighted with the positive difference in Ryan and says, "he is going back to the person I once knew."



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