



Introduction to Working with Young People

Cooler than School

Madcap – James’s perspective

18 year old James has been through difficult time. His involvement with Madcap has given him a more positive outlook on life.

James

I’m a lot more confident than I was, I mean, I can – it’s easier for me to talk to people and, like, get involved in things. Like, because I’m not always at home, like, doing nothing.

It’s a year since he was referred to Madcap by his Connexions adviser.

James

It’s a really good atmosphere, you know, you can have fun, well, for free. It’s just like, you know, a very good atmosphere, you know, you can record your songs and you go home at the end of the day, you know, and you’re like, make you feel good about yourself.

Madcap provides opportunities for James to develop his talent.

James

I’ve got two music videos to show for it, a song – two songs, actually, two new songs. I’ve got a couple of photographs from a gig we did a couple of weeks here at Madcap, which Steve organised.

James also helps out as a session musician for other young people at Madcap.

Steve

Ah, right, okay, you’ve given me what I need.

James

Yeah, I would like to get involved in, like, session musicianing, like, going down to the studio and, like, helping other people out with their, like, songs and stuff, because it’s really fun. You know, it’s good to know you’ve helped someone else, I suppose, as well.

Steve

I’m thinking, you know, (sings notes)

James’s relationship with the project’s central worker, Steve, is a crucial part of his experience of Madcap.

James

Steve’s really cool because he, like, helps you, and if you’re ever stuck on anything, he’ll always be there to try and, like, make sure you’re doing the right thing and not going wrong, and stuff. He’s very good at talking to people and getting his point across. So, he’s very clear, what he says and stuff, and you can always understand what he’s talking about.

Listening is an important skill for someone working with young people.

James He can be a good listener. Sometimes, when he’s busy, though, you can’t, sometimes, get a word in, because he’s always running about. So, I think he’s a good enough listener.

Madcap’s flexible approach has engaged with James to an extent that formal education could not.

James

When you're doing music here, you know, you actually get to do what you want to do, and you're not getting, like, the teacher saying, 'oh, you can't do that, you can't do this.' He lets you do anything you want, like really creative ideas. I've come in and we've made a music video, with like, it's a really really like, strange, like song and stuff. It's not like nothing you'd hear in the charts or anything. He's happy with anything you want to do. So that's the cool thing about Steve.

Madcap's atmosphere encourages informal learning.

James

They treat you like they'd treat anyone else, they make you feel comfortable basically, and like, you settle in, and like, yeah this is like a cool place to be. You don't realise you're learning, but when you get home you realise I've learnt something, so it's cool.