

Brigstocke Road Approved Premises' Approach to the Management of challenging behaviour influenced by the RAID approach.

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Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust has joined forces with the National Probation Service to offer a community Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) service. This innovative approach to the management of high risk of harm offenders with suspected personality disorder has seen NHS Psychologists going into Approved Premises to support staff in working with residents. In much the same way that secure services have struggled to manage challenging behaviour in an ethically sound way, Approved Premises often, although very skilled, struggle in the day-to-day management of challenging behaviour. It was considered by the Psychologists that it may be helpful to introduce the RAID approach to the Approved Premises staff. However, RAID had been designed for a mental health context and was considered perhaps most beneficial if adapted for this particular criminal justice environment. Therefore Dr Andrew Newman (Clinical Psychologist) met with the developer of RAID (Dr William Davies) to update and develop the current edition of the RAID manual to better meet the needs of criminal justice staff. Thereafter Dr Newman provided training in the RAID approach to Approved Premises staff in the Bristol area.

Following training the staff were really enthusiastic about adopting a RAID approach. To support this development the Psychologists in the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Project team began offering RAID focused formulation sessions where a RAID approach could be developed to manage residents challenging behaviour. RAID led to a number of changes in practice for the local Bristol Approved Premises. This nomination is made as a representation of the good work that the Approved Premises have done. We have decided to present the case of Noel (not his real name) that represents the positive work that Brigstocke Road Approved Premises did.

Case study

Background

Noel was a man in his early 20's with an extensive forensic history; 15 convictions before his current sentence. He has spent most of his adult life in prison and has only spent three months in the community since the age of 18.

Previously upon release he had attended four out of the five Approved Premises in the South West, being moved from one to the next because of inappropriate and challenging behaviour. There was a general sense of pessimism regarding his upcoming release from prison, with the assumption that he would soon do something to breach his license and be recalled to prison. Indeed, Noel also held a pessimistic attitude of "I don't care; I expect I will be in prison within a few days". Moreover, prison Officers had jokingly suggested they would keep his cell for him as he would be back after the weekend.

Developing a RAID approach

When Steph Hardwick (OPD Forensic Psychologist in Training) met with Noel's Probation Officer it became clear that something needed to change in order to make this release from prison successful. After consulting with the Probation Officer and developing an initial formulation (understanding of his difficulties) and determining that he met the criteria for the OPD Project (high risk offender with suspected personality disorder), it was considered helpful to support the Approved Premises with his management. Therefore before release we arranged to meet with the staff at the Brigstocke Road Approved Premises to develop a plan that was RAID informed.

We started by identifying red behaviours and these were as follows.

1. Rude, inappropriate and on occasions over personal behaviour. It was mentioned that in general he can act in an immature manner, swearing often, placing his hands down his trousers and swinging on swivel chairs. When female staff attempt to engage him in an encouraging and motivational approach he misconstrued this and asked over personal questions, such as their relationship status. Within custody his behaviour towards staff is reported as being hostile with a refusal to engage.
2. Lack of motivation and hope, using self-sabotage strategies. Examples of this include; agreeing upon plans but not following them though, he was given the opportunity to attend the gym on a previous stay at Brigstocke Road but failed to attend. Equally when he appears to be making progress he can become uncomfortable and resort to aggression.

The first task for the team was to convert these red questions into green questions. Green statements being behaviours that we are trying to promote and if he is to engage in these green behaviours they will inevitably replace the red behaviours – as you cannot do both at the same time. We came up with the following three green behaviours that we were going to try and promote.

1. How do we help Noel to be prosocial and appropriate in his interactions?
2. How can we help Noel set-up and achieve his goals?
3. How do we help Noel follow rules set by Probation and his restraining order?

First we decided to draw on the personal strengths and personality characteristics that Noel already had that would be beneficial in this approach. Noel had a very supportive family, his mother and grandmother were really important figures in his life and he valued these relationships. Interpersonally he can be warm with staff and can develop positive attachment relationships. He also responds really well to praise and this was highlighted when he completed a programme. Given Noel and the staffs' pessimism about his likelihood of success upon release from prison, we considered it important to focus on the hope that he could do well. Moreover we highlighted the importance of using praise and his links with his family as a possible reinforcement to increase the green behaviour we wanted.

We then turned to looking at relationships and how we could strengthen these before he even arrived in the Approved Premises. It is a known RAID principle that strong working alliances will improve the impact of positive praise. Therefore developing a relationship as soon as possible was likely to be beneficial. We advised Julie Hopkins, the keyworker, to write to Noel in an encouraging way to share her hope that he would succeed in the

Approved Premises. We also wondered about organising a videoconference to begin to cement the relationship before he even arrived.

We considered some of the physical factors to be important for helping Noel. He often struggled to get up in the mornings and staff thought he may miss the morning meetings, which happen on a Wednesday and Friday. This has caused him problems in Approved Premises in the past and therefore we were clear that we needed to setup a clear plan that would help him to engage in these morning meetings. In addition, Noel had historical problems with smoking cannabis and using spice in Approved Premises. This had previously led him to be moved from one Approved Premises to the other. Therefore it was again considered important to think of plans in order to help him avoid misusing substances.

The RAID Plan

Taking all the information into consideration we developed a plan in order to support Noel from staying out of prison and successfully completing his Approved Premises stay.

His release was near Christmas and we knew that spending time at home at Christmas would be really important to him and therefore a really helpful reinforcement for his green behaviour. We decided that if he attended four meetings in a week one with his Probation Officer, one with his keyworker and two of the morning meetings we would enable him to have leave on Christmas day. If this went well we would then look at what he would need to achieve in terms of positive attendance to be granted leave over the New Year. In addition, he would need to provide negative drug tests before Christmas to be granted this leave. This is very consistent with the RAID approach, rather than suggesting that he not use drugs which would be simply stating a red behaviour, the green behaviour of providing negative drug tests would provide evidence that he was drug free and also it would be impossible for him to use drugs and give negative drug tests. To continue to reinforce his progress we also decided to send him green letters, so when he provided negative drug tests and attended meetings a green letter was sent to him and copied to his Probation Officer, praising him for his attendance.

Of course the RAID approach also utilises punishment and sanctions and for this we decided we would follow the red and yellow warning system that the Approved Premises already utilises. If he were to be rude or inappropriate we would give him a yellow warning and then a red warning. These would be reasonably small punishments, immediate, relevant as they would be direct feedback on his behaviour and then after a week we agreed that they would be forgotten about. This filled the SIRF acronym (small, immediate, relevant and then forgotten) advocated by the RAID approach.

Implementation of the RAID approach

Due to the contact we had with Noel before he entered the Approved Premises he was slightly more optimistic about his progress as were the staff. He agreed to the plan with the reinforcement of spending Christmas at home with his family and was able to attend the sessions required of him and was pleased to receive green letters praising him for his attendance. He provided negative drug tests and again was pleased with the green letters sent to him and his Probation Officer, praising him for this achievement. Because the whole

staff team was following a positive behaviour approach he did not misconstrue individual staff's positive approach to him as potentially flirtatious behaviour. Indeed we saw little evidence of inappropriate boundary pushing in terms of personal questions from Noel.

After Christmas we set a new goal for a reinforcement of leave at New Year's Eve and he was able to continue to follow the RAID approach and not display challenging behaviour.

Over the course of his time at the Approved Premises there was one situation where he made comments to a member of staff that were seen as inappropriate. However, this was dealt with, with a warning, quickly given to him with a clear explanation of why this was inappropriate and this seemed to defuse the challenging behaviour. Although this punishment/sanction was used the positive approach of consistently giving positive feedback in the form of green letters and consistently reinforcing his behaviour with time with his family continued and so pushing more and more prosocial behaviour in and giving him less time to engage in challenging behaviour.

Considering this was a man who had never spent more than three months out of custody whilst an adult and had previously failed in four Approved Premises in quick succession the result that he was able to complete his full course of three months at the Approved Premises with only minor challenging behaviours is a great success! Indeed perhaps most importantly he is also now given the hope that he can succeed with the right plans around him and indeed staff may now have an idea that if the right systems are put in place, Noel can succeed.

Summary

The Approved Premises staff at Brigstocke Road engage well with the RAID training and have been able to use the skills they have learnt with the support of the OPD psychology team to develop a clear plan to manage Noel's challenging behaviour that has resulted in him completing his time at the Approved Premises successfully. We feel that this is a great example of how the RAID approach can be used in a criminal justice setting to improve people's lives and general practice.

Yours Sincerely,

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