



SWRAC

Thrive
Wimborne, BH21 3AA

Tutor: Rachel
Learner: SF

The learner starting point

When SF first started at SWRAC in Sep 2020 she would not engage with any other students or the staff and would keep herself disconnected from everything that was going on. She was very unsettled and would spend most of her time walking around. Any small change to SF's surroundings or routine would unsettle her greatly.

The learner journey (including support provide)

To begin with, SF only attended a few days a week. This was decided as the best course of action as it helped SF get used to her surroundings along with the other staff and students that she would frequently see. After a few weeks, SF then increased to full time and she seemed a lot more settled.

It was important that SF had routine as any change would unsettle and frustrate her. The staff ensured a routine was set for her, for example, breakfast always at 09:30 and lunch at 12:30. This helped SF relax and she soon stopped pacing as much around the building and began to engage more during class.

Although she was improving, SF still struggled to engage fully in class. To help support her with her work Rachel (tutor) organised a reward chart with stickers for SF. It became apparent that SF loves stickers so this proved to be a useful way to encourage her. SF seemed to recognise that if she completed a task, she could then get a sticker on her reward chart. When she had achieved enough stickers on the chart, she could then have some free time to do what she wanted to do.

At first, this 'free time' seemed to stress SF as she was used to having the decisions made for her and 'free time' required her to decide for herself what she wanted to do. To help support SF with deciding what to do with her free time Rachel organised a 'happy list'. Rachel supported SF with looking through images on Google of things she wished to do and this was then put onto the 'happy list'. The list included things like 'Rosie & Jim', 'hide & seek' and 'The Hoobs'. SF could then just point to the activity she wished to do during her 'free time' and this was a lot less stressful for her. This also helped SF work on her decision-making skills.

SF is currently working on 6 ASDAN challenges. These include:

- Mental health and wellbeing.
- Using a fridge and freezer safely.
- Develop understanding of daily health and hygiene routines which maintain good health and wellbeing.
- Participating in games

- Participating in activities linked to nature and the environment.
- Practical understanding and organisation of time through the days and weeks.

SF is making good progress in these areas and her confidence is improving.

During mealtimes SF would become agitated if someone tried to have a conversation with her. To help with this, staff would begin to sit near SF during meal times and have conversations, not directed to her, to get her used to being around people talking whilst she was having her food. Soon, SF started to become more relaxed with other people around and even started listening to the conversations. After some time, this proved to be a very good technique as, although SF will not engage in a full conversation, she will now occasionally ask questions relating to what someone has said. This shows how much SF's social skills have developed since she first started with SWRAC.

During this programme, the learners help to prepare food. When SF first started with SWRAC she hated touching any food other than her own and it would greatly agitate her if she was asked to do something with food. To begin with, the staff encouraged SF to just be in the kitchen with the other learners when they were helping with the food prep but not to be directly involved. This helped SF get used to the kitchen surroundings. With time, SF started to help with cleaning the crockery and cutlery in the dishwasher. She is very good at this and seems to enjoy doing this. With encouragement and support from the staff, SF has begun to help with the food prep such as cutting up the vegetables and blending the soup. Rachel believes this is one of SF's biggest achievements and shows how far she has progressed since starting with SWRAC. SF will now often ask when she is next working in the kitchen and seems to look forward to it.

SF is gradually getting used to change providing she has notice. The staff are introducing change into her routine more and more and are supporting her with this by ensuring she has warning when something is going to change. This will help prepare her for future situations she may encounter that do not always follow a routine.

SF does have limited communication skills, but this is improving. One of the ways Rachel is encouraging this is by having 'reflection time' at the end of each day. During this, SF will say what she has and has not enjoyed in the day, what she has learnt and often she will acknowledge if she has been out of character on that day. This is helping her with her communication skills but also allowing her to be aware of her actions.

SF's patience is improving, and she is beginning to recognise when she is getting frustrated. Rachel and the other staff are also able to see the indicators that show that SF is beginning to get frustrated. This is often when she starts to talk in 'third person'. At SWRAC the learners have access to the sensory/quiet room, and this is very beneficial to SF. Often when SF is feeling frustrated, she can go into this room to relax and re focus. Initially, Rachel would help SF relax by doing deep breathing exercises with her but SF is able to calm herself a lot easier than she used to so this is no longer needed. SWRAC has also provided SF with fidget toys which help relax her.

The outcome for the learner (including how this will help them in their future)

During SF's time at SWRAC she is able to deal with change better. This is helping her build up the resilience for future situations she may encounter.

Although SF still has limited communication skills she is improving in this area. This includes being able to enjoy her lunch whilst other people are talking around her. This will help her with her with her current and future relationships and potential work opportunities.

SF has learnt how to use the dishwasher and how to prepare some food items. This is a very important skill to have and will help her become more independent in the future.

SF is learning how to deal with her frustrations and change to routine. This will help SF build up resilience which will support her in future situations she may encounter.

The learner voice (where their comments will be added)

On the 11th June 2021 SF's mum sent the following email to Rachel:

"When SF first started at Thrive she had been out of education for nearly 18 months, she was very anxious and had become very reliant on me for any decisions she had to make even very small ones. Since being at Thrive SF has become more independent over the last 9 months. SF enjoys going into thrive and comes out happy almost everyday. Her meltdowns are now few and she has learnt to manage them a lot better, I think this is due to Thrive having the quiet room and also down to the Thrive team meeting her needs and also due the understanding and trust from both sides. SF still has issues with going out but think is to the fact of her obsession with time but lately at home we have been able to relax it a little at lunch times but still has a very rigid routine at teatime. She really enjoys all the projects that Thrive do, the environment, community and others."