

Case studies

Case study 1: Mr Y

Mr Y first came to the attention of the BIG team (see Appendix II Further resources) after being moved into Chestnut unit for fighting and regular violent outbursts. He had a long history of violence and had been subject to many inter-prison moves, which further exacerbated his issues and prevented him from settling into any kind of normal routine.

As part of his BIG plan he spent the following 28 days working through his programme, which included one-to-one sessions with mentors and taking part in restorative working parties and group discussions on why people engaged in poor and often antisocial behaviour.

Mr Y declared a problem with substance use and so was referred to the drug support wing on Elm unit where he completed a further 16-week intervention throughout which he fully engaged and began to build a better self-portrayal. Fourteen months later, Mr Y had remained fully engaged with the positive regime opportunities at Oakwood and was approached by the BIG team to train as a mentor in order to use his real-life experience to assist and support other prisoners with a similar history. He has remained adjudication free, remains fully committed to his new role and has begun to rebuild his personal life building a relationship with his daughter and mother.

Case study 2: Mr O

Mr O arrived at Oakwood with an almost life-long history of drug abuse and drug-related offending. He said that he liked the way drugs made him feel until he reached 'rock bottom', lost his job, his family and ultimately his freedom as he once again returned to custody due to drug-related offending.

Continued poor behaviour led him to the door of the BIG team, who undertook to help him. During group and one-to-one sessions, he began to talk openly about his addiction, cravings, unpredictable behaviour and mood swings. Focusing on the importance of humility, acceptance and the potential to make amends for past behaviour, he completed a range of modules on NPS (see Glossary of terms), cocaine, and heroin use, which slowly began to help him understand the effects and damage his drug taking was having on him and those around him.

Mr O left Oakwood on a sentence progression move in a far better state of mind and in a position to help himself to rebuild his life.

Case study 3: Mr P

Mr P signed up to work with the recovery champions (see Appendix II Further resources) due to his long history of drug use. He had spent over 20 years in and out of prison due to crimes committed to fund his addiction or due to the violent acts he carried out while under the influence of illegal drugs and alcohol.

Mr P suffered greatly with low-esteem and a general lack of confidence, mainly due to unpleasant experiences during a troubled childhood. His first module was on heroin awareness, which he completed, receiving a certificate to say so. He stated: 'This is the first certificate I have ever had' (Mr P was 40 years old at this point). From then on, he fully committed himself to becoming substance free.

Over the following 12 months, he completed all the modules available and developed a great insight into why he used drugs to the extent he had over many years. He gained skills in dealing with issues that previously would have led to further drug use and that had led him to prison on so many occasions.

Mr P continued his recovery and, over the following 14 months, he trained as a mentor and became a recovery champion in his own right, a role that he undertook for the next seven months until his release from custody in 2019.

To date (June 2021) Mr P has not returned to prison, the longest period of freedom he has enjoyed since the age of 15.