

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT REPORT

2020 - Review of the year in role



JANUARY 2020



MARCH 2020



YP'S RESPONSE TO COVID

- When the Lockdown announcement was made on 16th March 2020, I received several texts from some of the young people I have been working with in Sheffield

“Hi Lee, my school has closed and I am feeling really worried. I have my exams this year so I dunno what's going to happen. What is going to happen with SYFAN? Feeling anxious sorry.”

These messages all expressed feelings of anxiety and confusion about the new Government measures and it was important that I acted quickly to reassure these young people and offer them some support.



MOVING ONLINE!



- After speaking with My line manager and colleague in Bristol, it was decided we would move our work online and would begin offering weekly sessions **via Zoom**
- My zoom experience was **very** limited so it was a case of trial and error and learning on the job.
- The first SYFAN online session was very nerve-wrecking and not without teething problems! However, it went well and was attended by **12 young people** which was more than I had ever achieved at the monthly face to face sessions!
- Feedback was positive and it was clear we needed to offer more!
- From this initial work, the scope of the project snowballed and within a few months, I was linking with my colleague in Bristol and my line Manager at BYM to offer youth work sessions on a national level and organising online Residentials!



WHAT I OFFERED OVER THE YEAR

- Weekly SYFAN group online (Sheffield) Games, discussions and well-being check ins with young people aged 11-17 from Sheffield Meeting
- Fortnightly Co-facilitating of an online group for young people from Sheffield and Bath/Bristol combined
- Summer and Half term online events based on themes such as gender roles, fear and nature.
- Supporting on National youth groups ran by BYM - weekly or fortnightly groups for young people aged 11-17 across the UK
- Organising and delivering two online residentials for children involved in Junior Holidays – June and October.
- Co-delivering a fortnightly online group for young adults. Games, discussions and well-being check ins for young adults aged 18+
- Supporting Quaker Life and QPSW on a 'Activist Gathering' National event
- Supporting Turning the Tide on a 'Racial Justice' National Event
- Running an SYFAN games session for all ages
- Facilitating SYFAN young people to run an online games morning for children's meeting.
- Running a fortnightly creative writing group (all age)
- Devising and facilitating a national online Quaker 'Dungeons and Dragons' group
- Working with Quaker Youth Groups across the UK offering zoom experience and expertise.
- Launching a monthly Yorkshire wide online youth group (TYFON Teenage Young Friends Online Network)
- Planning online Easter Settlement event for 2021



FEEDBACK FROM YP, PARENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- *“SYFAN turned one of the potentially worst years of my life into one of the best of my life! I am so grateful I can attend each week.*
- *“During this crazy time, SYFAN/YFAN has been an Anchor for me”*
- *“Thanks so much for all the things you are offering online for the yp. Its really helped bring some normality and stability and its very much appreciated.*
- *“I just wanted to say that all your online support for ***** has been a light in the darkness. I was deeply worried about how he would negotiate this difficult time and being able to have a safe, familiar place to come each week has made SUCH a difference.”*



PROS OF ONLINE YOUTH WORK



- Fully safe during pandemic, zero risk of infection. Adhering to Gov Guidelines
- -Geography is no longer a factor preventing people from attending groups.
- -Reported as less stressful than face to face meeting as no travelling, spending money, able to be in comfort of own home, can turn off camera if feeling overwhelmed
- -Sense of creating something special – an online community supporting each other through a difficult time.
- - Can create more inclusivity, helping those with additional needs be more involved. For some a less intimidating way of communicating as can use chat features to be involved and share opinions.
- -Involving external speakers/volunteers/guests easily despite geography
- -More collaboration and sharing good practice between CYP team and between youth project areas
- - Very formulaic which makes planning easier and helps manage the expectations of the group
- - Can use creative tools to make sessions engaging and visually appealing i.e break out rooms, drawing board, screen share.



CONS OF ONLINE YOUTH WORK

- - Zoom 'Burnout' Extended use of screens is tiring physically and mentally and can leave people feeling overwhelmed.
- -Some young people have distracting home environments/no privacy
- - Doesn't suit all young people's learning style
- -Sometimes can feel unprofessional and intimate (seeing into each other's homes)
- -Limited range of activities possible
- -Some people feel very uncomfortable interacting on zoom and so may feel excluded from activities.
- -Young people's interactions are much more mediated by youthworker/facilitators and so harder for them to develop independent/lasting relationships
- -Formulaic sessions can be repetitive and maybe boring socially with the same youth worker hosting all activities.
- -Harder to hold groups and individuals in the same way (or with follow up) and therefore harder to go into deeper/more personal issues safely and supportively
- -Poor internet connections are inevitable sometimes, and make it hard for affected individuals to connect
- -More concerns around safety, young people sharing information, 'zoom bombing', sharing of passwords.



ANY QUESTIONS?

