

# Anonymous Service User Case Study: Kooth

## Background and Initial Engagement

**Justin, a 17 year old young male** heard about Kooth at college. Thinking this seemed like something he had not come across before, he decided to give it a try and set up an account. Justin chose not to complete the initial Measure of Need at this time.

A few weeks later, Justin wrote in the **online journal** for the first time. His entry mentioned that he was 'tired' that 'life was becoming increasingly hard' and he had 'had enough'. This was highlighted by the Kooth moderation team as a potential risk, indicating hopelessness which the team knew from the **evidence base** can be connected with suicide. A proactive message was sent to Justin, asking him if we would like to chat to a member of the Kooth team and sharing information of crisis service should he need this.

Justin messaged back to say that he didn't feel the need for either of these and was just a bit fed up. A practitioner sent him a follow up message suggesting he might benefit from connecting with other like minded people within the Kooth community and recommended he view the upcoming **forums**.



## Intervention

A month after registering with Kooth and following some brief **asynchronous messaging** with a practitioner regarding what he might find helpful, Justin became a member within the Kooth **community**. Initially, he read **articles** written by other young people and joined a couple of **discussion forums**, however, whilst he 'liked' other peoples' comments and contributions, he rarely shared anything himself.

In month 2, Justin decided it might be helpful for him to talk to someone and joined the chat queue. After a short wait, he was able to connect with a Kooth wellbeing practitioner who shared the Session Needs and Wants Outcome Measure (**SWAN-OM**) to help understand what he was hoping to get out of the session. Justin identified through the SWAN-OM that he wanted to 'feel listened to'.

The practitioner used a **person centred, non judgemental approach** to encourage Justin to 'talk' to her, making sure she checked in about any potential risks to self or others (focus on '**safe**' - none were identified). Justin talked generally about his relationships with friends and family but did not identify anything specific to work on. The practitioner talked to Justin about the **goal setting tool** to see if this would be useful and in line with the Kooth **outcome focussed** approach. Justin said that he would like to 'increase my self confidence around others' and this was identified as a goal he would work on. The practitioner recommended some **content** that Justin might find useful to help with this and encouraged him to make a list of all the things that other people would identify as positive about him (to help counter his own negative self view) in line with our **strengths based approach**.

Over the next few weeks, Justin continued to engage with the Kooth community, increasingly submitting his own content around the themes of 'identity' and 'self confidence'. He also continued to write in his journal.

In month 3, he dropped in for another 'in the moment' chat session. This time, a male practitioner responded to the chat requested, and like before, asked Justin to complete the SWAN-OM. Justin identified that he wanted to 'talk about something I haven't told anyone before'.

Justin talked to the practitioner about his sexuality and feelings that he might be bi-sexual. The practitioner reassured Justin that he wasn't alone and asked whether his set goal (which the practitioner could see via the central **case management system**) to increase his self confidence was related to this. Justin agreed that it was and they spent the session working through steps he could take to work towards this goal.

In Justin's final session (again a drop in chat), he identified via SWAN-OM that he wanted to 'be able to open up to people in my life'. This related to a desire to share with his close friends and family that he was gay. The therapist noticed that in between sessions, Justin had continued to use the goal setting function and indeed had set himself a number of goals that had helped him to get to this stage. These included high level goals such as 'increased confidence' as well as lower level sub goals, such as 'joining a peer forum for young gay men'.

## Outcomes: measures and observed outcomes

Justin had 3 drop in sessions with a practitioner and in between he made use of a number of the Kooth self help and community tools available to him.

His repeat SWAN-OM measures after the 3 chat sessions indicated that Justin got what he wanted and needed from the session (in other words he felt listened to; was able to share something he had never told anyone previously and he was able to open up to those closest to him regarding his sexuality).

Justin set 4 goals during this period:

- To increase his self confidence
- To join a peer forum for young gay men
- To take a new hobby that he had always wanted to do
- To express his feelings more openly through creative writing

Goals 2 & 3 were identified by Justin as being fully met (he moved from a score of 0-10) whilst 1 and 4 moved at least 5 points (a positive move of 3 points is considered significant within the clinical domain) and these continue to be work in progress for him.

Justin has not dropped in for further chat sessions, however, he continues to use the online journal and is a regular contributor to the discussion forums, with a particular focus on supporting young men who are anxious about 'coming out' but also regarding self expression more generally. He is a true ambassador for Kooth and should he need 1:1 support in the future, will hopefully have the confidence to reach out to us given his positive experience.