

## Appendix 1: Case Study – With Me in Mind

Katie Jones (pseudo name) was referred to WMIM because her form tutor had passed on some concerns about her wellbeing to the pastoral head of year.

The mental health lead discussed Katie's needs in consultation with a senior WMIM practitioner. It was agreed together that Katie's needs appeared to be appropriate for an EMHP intervention.

At consultation, the presenting difficulties were described as feeling anxious, particularly on school days. Katie reported feeling sick in the morning before school and was finding the crowds in the dinner hall a challenge. School had issued Katie with an early lunch pass and her mum had started sending Katie to school with a packed lunch so she could avoid the dinner hall. Katie also had not been going out very much at all since the pandemic.

At initial assessment with an EMHP, Katie shared that she had experienced this anxiety around school since primary school. She recalled saying she felt sick when she was little, and that school would often respond to this by sending her home. The butterflies and sick feeling were always worse after a school holiday, or when doing something out of the ordinary like going on a school trip. Katie reported that once in school each day, after a brief period, the anxiety would settle. These anxiety symptoms extended beyond school and into the community in general, for example, visiting Meadowhall.

Katie had developed certain behaviours to help her cope with the anxiety feeling, including distracting herself or avoiding situations that caused these anxious feelings. She would use her headphones, or her mum and dad would try to distract her through humour in the morning. She had also been carrying around a big ball of blue tac to fidget with since returning to school after the pandemic. Katie would experience physical symptoms of anxiety, such as feeling shaky, nauseous, fast breathing and increased heartrate. There were no risks identified toward herself or others.

Katie had moved from Sheffield to Rotherham at the start of secondary school which was described as a significant event as Katie had a change in friendship groups at the time of this transition, leaving her friends behind in Sheffield. In Sheffield Katie went to dancing classes however she did not re-establish this in Rotherham. She also used to go to a Youth Club prior to the pandemic but this also was not reconvened once the restrictions had lifted. Katie's grandma died suddenly two years ago and had cancer.

Katie identified two treatment goals together with her EMHP, one was to feel sick less frequently and the other was to be more connected socially. They discussed together that if her anxiety were reduced then her goals would likely be met, therefore the focus was on a graded exposure treatment to tackle her avoidance of feared situations through habituation which saw a gradual reduction in her physical sensations of anxiety.

At the start of treatment Katie rated both her goals at 1 (on a scale of 1-10, 1 not at all achieved to 10 totally achieved).

Together Katie and her EMHP looked at psychoeducation around the cycle of anxiety and how avoidance can keep the anxiety cycle going. Then they had seven remaining sessions where they worked on a hierarchy of feared situations, gradually seeing the anxiety reduce and confidence increase. The timeline for this piece of work lasted around 12 weeks from assessment to discharge, with a couple of school holidays in-between.

## Before Treatment

Before treatment Katie did not see any friends out of school on evenings or weekends. If Katie did do anything, it was either with her mum or her cousin (a very small circle of people she felt comfortable with). Katie would not initiate conversations or engage in facetime or telephone calls, she only felt comfortable texting. Katie would seek a lot of reassurance from mum and reached out to mum to help her make decisions, which were often small decisions. Katie walked to school with her headphones in for distraction.

## Before Treatment RCADS 7

After Treatment RCADS On her last session Katie scored her goal at 10 (totally achieved).

Katie had a much wider circle of friends and spends hours on the phone to them, on facetime and playing games. She had been going to Meadowhall with groups of other children, having sleepover at friends, eating out, going ice skating, going to birthday parties, and has applied to be a school prefect. Katie no longer carries the blue tac around and she leaves her headphones at home. The lunch and early passes at school have expired and she no longer needs them. Katie reflected on her journey pre and post treatment stating, "My habits and behaviours were holding me back".