

Podcast – Youth Voice on Living in Residence

Interviewer: Chad Downes, CPRI E-Learning Trainer and Developer

Interviewee: Youth Resident, CPRI

The following podcast is part of the Children’s Mental Health Week series released by CPRI in London, Ontario for the Week of May 2-6. CPRI – the Child and Parent Resource Institute provides highly specialized assessment and treatment services to children and youth with complex mental health/developmental disabilities. The education and learning services at CPRI supports evidence informed learning for individuals and organizations working in child and youth mental health and developmental services with the goal to improve the lives on Ontario’s children and youth. Children’s Mental Health Week is a provincial initiative aimed at increasing awareness of mental health issues faced by today’s children and youth and decreasing the stigma that may exist. In addition, it is an information sharing initiative to show that treatment can work and there are always possibilities and opportunities to explore. There is always hope and always support.

Disclaimer: Please note the following disclaimer. This podcast series is not intended to be medical advice and all medical concerns and questions should be directed to the appropriate health care professionals

Introduction: Today’s interview is with a young boy who has lived in a residential treatment facility. He will be interviewed by Chad Downes, an education trainer and developer at CPRI who is also a former residential counsellor at the Amethyst School for students with severe learning disabilities.

Interviewer: Thank you for joining us. *Can I get you to tell us a little bit about yourself?*

Interviewee: Hi, I’m 17 and I live in Windsor, Ontario and I am a boy.

Interviewer: *Can you tell us about your journey through residential care?*

Interviewee: When I was in residential care, I had some problems at first because I didn’t really like being away from home. Overtime I got through it and I started making some friends. The staff were very helpful, everyone was very helpful and it just got better and better the longer it happened.

Interviewer: That's great! ***How has your experience in residential care shaped who you are today?***

Interviewee: Well, when I went to residential care, I was in a very bad state of mind, like my thoughts weren't safe and all that kind of stuff. And through my time there, everything just got better and after I left, everything was a lot easier, a lot better and my minds are a lot safer now.

Interviewer: That's good to hear. ***Can you tell us about your future goals?***

Interviewee: My future goal is to be, well my goals are to hopefully one day become a lifeguard and learn to drive and get my boating license and get a nice job.

Interviewer: Those are really good goals, I wish you luck with those. ***Can you give some examples of how the residential staff and clinical team helped you through your experience in residential care?***

Interviewee: Well...when I was in residential care, I've always liked to make connections with the people who work with me the most. When they worked with me we tried to stay in touch and talk like how's it going, is everything okay, how are you doing, do you want to something...stuff like that. And the medical staff were very helpful when one of us had a problem and stuff like that. Basically, it's always good to have friends in places that you don't hate or stand.

Interviewer: ***How did the residential team help you set and meet some of your goals while in care here?***

Interviewee: Some major goals was to feel better...like stay out of trouble, go home to be with my family again. So they helped me out a lot when I was angry, they helped keep me calm, they helped keep my mind safe and stuff like that. It was really helpful, they are all very helpful and if I could see them again, I'd say thank you.

Interviewer: That's nice of you, good manners. One other area that I'm interested in knowing about is ***what are some of the activities that you did here while you were in residential care?***

Interviewee: I remember the barbeques, I loved the barbeques! And I remember when I was in unit 5, me and a few of the kids started to build a fort. It was very fun, we played play station, we played computer games, we hung out, we watched movies and I also remember when it snowed, we found a whole bunch of jewellery in snow

piles down the way. It was really fun!

Interviewer: What were some of your social skills that you worked on while you were here?

Interviewee: I would say being more polite, saying please, thank you, working on not being mean a lot because before I was in residence, I was really, really mean.

Interviewer: Ok – and *how have you found your social life? Have you made some friends and things since leaving residential care?*

Interviewee: Yes I have and I've also started poetry which is really fun.

Interviewer: Oh wow, that's really exciting. *What advice would give people about to start residential treatment who maybe anxious or not know what to expect?*

Interviewee: I would just say if you don't know what to expect just go try it out, see if it appeals to you. If you need it, you should do it.

Interviewer: That's excellent advice. Thank you very much. *Is there anything else you would like to say to young people with mental health issues who may be listening today?*

Interviewee: Basically, if you have mental health and you have people to help you, talk to them. There are always people out there who can help you, talk to you and basically, there's always someone who will help you with something you need.

Interviewer: Yes – I've found the staff here at CPRI to be very helpful as well.

Interviewee: Yes they are. So yeah...

Interviewer: *Do you have anything to share about if another youth feels scared or overwhelmed?*

Interviewee: I would say give them space, give them time to read, compose themselves. Give them some time but keep them in your sight because sometimes when I'm uptight or scared, generally overwhelmed, I prefer people to stay away from me but keep me in their sight because it gives them a sign that you understand.

Interviewer: Last one, *is there anything you would like to say to young people with*

mental health issues who may be listening together?

Interviewee: Pretty much the same thing, if you need someone to talk to don't be afraid to just talk to someone. Because a lot of people who have this stuff, they can be afraid and not understand what people will think - they will see someone and go - I don't want to talk to them about this because I don't know what they will say, that they might get mad at me. No - go talk to them. They can maybe help you and don't be afraid there is always someone here to help.

Interviewer: Excellent answers! Thank you so much for joining us today.

Thank you for listening to this podcast provided by CPRI. Be sure to check out Childrensmentalhealthweek.ca for more resources.