



Tackling Bullying in the Community Case Study

IfUCareShare

Background - A website was set up called IfUCareShare to assist children and young people who are self harming or suicidal, through issues which affect them including bullying and friendship problems either in school or in any other settings.

What was the issue? The founders of the website, Dean and Shirley Smith, unfortunately lost their son, aged 19 years, suddenly when he committed suicide, without any prior warning that there were any issues. Their children, Matthew and Ben along with cousin Sarah, decided that the family should do something positive to help other desperate children and young people. They thought that if Daniel had been able to talk to someone, he may not have taken such tragic action. They realised that there was a need for support for young people who may feel suicidal, and came up with the name of the organisation IfUCareShare themselves. Dean and Shirley live in Chester le Street in County Durham. I found out about them through Esther Rantzen who they contacted about a very urgent case, I have been advising and assisting them with this case.

What action was taken? The IfUCareShare website (www.ifucareshare.co.uk) was founded and has supported many children and young people who are desperate for help. They also act as a signpost to other organisations who can help children and young people and their families.

What impact has this had (so far)? The website has been very successful, Shirley and Dean have undertaken various training courses so that they can give our realistic advice and support, and they have helped many children and young people to have a much better outcome and to deal with their issues without resorting to self harm or suicide. I have been in liaison with Shirley about a young person in the NE Region who is currently under child protection as she is suicidal and desperate for help. Shirley and Dean also speak at conferences and events, and they are attending my next NE ABA meeting on 20th January 2010 to give a presentation about their work. Shirley and Dean have told me about at least three young people whose lives have been saved through IfUCareShare, and there could be many more. Their children have also been nominated for a Diana Award.

How did the above action help to embed anti-bullying work the area? This website is available to all children and young people, and can be used as a signpost to other sources of advice and support for if they have concerns about bullying and friendship issues and feel too desperate to cope on their own. Shirley and Dean spoke at my

last network meeting to raise awareness about their work in the region, and I am assisting them with a media campaign in the NE to spread the word about the website and the support they offer.

Contact details of author: Further details and contact numbers and addresses for Shirley and Dean can be found on the website - www.ifucare.co.uk.