

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Review

Case study 2

The new CAMHS Out of Home Care Team

Kristy is 17 and has lived in multiple out of home care placements. She has an intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a history of low mood and distress, self-harm and suicidality. Kristy also needs frequent prompting to complete activities due to her intellectual impairment. When Kristy becomes unwell, she is known to run away and attempt self-harm and her placement is at risk of breaking down.

Kristy is admitted to hospital after a serious suicide attempt. While she is in hospital, a decision is made that Kristy will not return to her current placement when she is discharged.

Under the current system:

Kristy is very overwhelmed about being in hospital and on occasion staff have no choice but to restrain her for her own safety and others.

Kristy is discharged to her new home following a week in hospital. A referral is made to CAMHS for outpatient follow-up and she is started on an anti-depressant.

In the new CAMHS Out of Home Care Team:

A long-term treatment plan is developed by a multi-disciplinary team who are experienced in working with young people experiencing trauma. The team work to stabilise Kristy's behaviours at home with a combination of specialist psychological therapies, and medication and behaviour support strategies and training, avoiding the need for her to go to hospital or her placement breaking down.

Kristy is also referred to the CAMHS day program to attend group work around self-management of her behaviour and anxiety with peers around her age.

Kristy's workers are trained in the Connecting with People approach for mitigation of suicidal distress, and after a 6-month period, the staff are becoming more comfortable in how to manage Kristy's behaviours and suicidal ideation when she becomes unwell.

Kristy's Child Protection Worker makes an access request to the NDIS with an aim to build her capacity to live more independently and to transition support for when she eventually leaves out of home care.