

University of Dundee

Seven tips for practitioners

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7 TIPS FOR PRACTITIONERS

This information is for practitioners and healthcare professionals who work with young people leaving custody. Here are some tips for accessing different healthcare services in Scotland.

by Camila Biazus Dalcin,
Andrea Rodriguez, Fernando Fernandes,
Ann Swinney and Sally Haw



1 EVERY INTERACTION MATTERS

Every time you encounter a young person is a possibility to help them and make sure they engage with services. You are an important gatekeeper to support their health and wellbeing outcomes. For example, if they are mistreated in a healthcare service, they may not want to look for other services, such as housing services.

2 BE AWARE OF THEIR LABELS

Young people face discrimination when trying to access healthcare services. Discrimination is related to their age range as they can be seen as reckless and not engaging. They are also discriminated against because they have been in prison. They feel that practitioners judge them.

3 ASK QUESTIONS

Ask young people what they need and act to solve their issues. What can I do for you? How can we solve this problem? Healthcare practitioners need to remember that not being ill is different from being well.

4 LISTEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people need to be confident to voice their agendas. Have a cup of tea with them, try to find things in common to talk about. Remember that trust and communication are essential for you to interact with young people. They need to feel you care about them.

5 UP TO DATE INFORMATION

Young people may have difficulties understanding how healthcare services work and what services they can access. So registering with the GP is very important. Lack of identification or proof of address is not a reason to refuse or delay registration. If you want further information go to the Citizen Advice Scotland website, NHS inform website and NHS Circular PCA(M)(2018).

6 OFFER EXTRA HELP

Young people need extra support to access healthcare services. For example, the waiting room from a GP practice can cause anxiety. Mentors or patient navigators are essential strategies for young people to access healthcare services.

7 REFLECT UPON PRACTICE

Make sure you ask yourself questions about how you feel related to young people leaving custody and talk with your colleagues or managers about the challenges of working with this specific group. The media can have a significant influence on how we feel about young people that have been in prison.

