



SITUATION

Melissa has come to you looking for support with applying to her chosen university.

She has told you she is staying with her friend for a while and seems concerned about the student finance and if she needs a reference / family details.

You've also noticed she looks tired and is often coming to college/youth club in her work uniform.

QUESTIONS

1. How may you recognise Melissa is estranged?
2. What would you do next within your organisation/role?
3. What are the gaps of support within your organisation?

CASE STUDY 1

Melissa (17) is a sociable person who was always very popular at school. She passed her GCSEs with 9s and 8s throughout. She has gone to her local college with many of her friends to study A-Levels. Melissa knows she needs to work hard to get the grades to go to university. Her dream is to study law at either Oxford or Cambridge.

Melissa struggled when her friends started dating boys. She felt confused about her sexuality and didn't feel like she could talk to her family about it. She didn't know who else to turn to and felt very lonely. She started to feel depressed and fed up with hiding her sexuality.

After struggling through her first year of A-Levels and with the support of her closest friend who she could confide in, Melissa told her parents she was gay. She had predicted they would be shocked; however, she hadn't expected that they would throw her out of the house and refuse to accept her as their daughter anymore until she 'returned to her senses'.

Devastated, Melissa has been staying with her best friend's family for the rest of the summer. They are helping her find somewhere to live during her final year at college, but it looks like she will have to move every few months. She has had to get a job to keep herself financially afloat. It has been a huge shock and although relieved to have come out she battles with depression, stress and worries about her living arrangements and future. Her determination to hold on to her dream of becoming a solicitor is keeping her going.

She has been making use of the extracurricular opportunities offered by her college to enhance her chances of progressing to her chosen universities.

She is worrying about a load of questions she doesn't know the answers to: how is she going to afford to live while at uni? And where can she go during the summer holidays? What about student finance? She hasn't spoken to her parents over the past year and they certainly aren't going to change their minds! Melissa also doesn't want anybody to know that her parents aren't supporting her.



SITUATION

Alex has approached the wellbeing services and said that they are no longer living at home after a fall out with their parents.

They are worried about how to finance university as their parents are refusing to speak to them which is really upsetting.

Alex lives in the South East but wants to go to university in the North to distance themselves from their family.

QUESTIONS

4. How may you recognise Alex is estranged?
5. What would you do next within your organisation/role?
6. What are the gaps of support within your organisation?

CASE STUDY 2

Alex (18) lived with their mum and sister. Alex's parents divorced before college. They found this life change very difficult and still experience high levels of anxiety which affect their attendance and performance at college. Alex is also a non-binary student who is very involved with LGBTQIA+ rights and the political society at the college.

Staff at the college have flagged that during the politics society meetings Alex has said they had a big fall out with their mum and stepdad after a discussion about LGBTQIA+ rights and that they made homophobic and inappropriate comments. Since then, this is all Alex wants to discuss at the society meetings and often gets distressed when talking about it. The politics society tutor suggested Alex speak to the wellbeing services as they were concerned about them.

Alex has approached the wellbeing services to discuss going to university. They are worried it will be too difficult without parental support to pay the fees, and without having somewhere to live. Will the university understand their circumstances? Is there someone at the college they can talk to about applying to university who understands what it's like being LGBTQIA+ or without family support? Have others in similar situations like Alex managed to get to university and are they doing well?



SITUATION

Mo is not talking to you directly about applying to university. You know he wants to study Fine Art but recently he has stopped engaging with UCAS sessions and his mum has contacted the college saying Mo is applying for Business and Law.

His mum is calling the college a lot and becoming increasingly involved in the application process whilst Mo is withdrawing more.

QUESTIONS

7. How may you recognise Mo is estranged?
8. What would you do next within your organisation/role?
9. What are the gaps of support within your organisation?

CASE STUDY 3

Mo (18) lives with his mum and half-sister in Bradford, his half-sister Mira is 17 and goes to the same college. He never mentions his dad but is close to his aunt. Mo studies art, business and law and always gets good grades especially in art. He is on track to go to university at Norwich University of the Arts which he mentioned a lot to his art teacher in his first year.

Mo is a quiet student who seems to have very few friends at college. He spends a lot of time in the art studios painting and creating. He appears to have low self-esteem; he isn't able to accept when his work is good and always seems to have something on his mind. He dresses in the same clothes a few days at a time and you've never noticed him taking lunch, buying drinks at college or taking part in extracurricular activities.

His half-sister Mira is the opposite of Mo: she is into fashion and outgoing with a lot of friends. She does okay in college but will need to work a little harder if she wants to get the grades to go to university. Mira is part of many college teams/societies and often misses classes to see her friends. Mira and Mo do not talk or interact with each other at college and do not travel in together either.

Mo was talking about studying Fine Art last year but recently has stopped talking about university at all. His mum has started contacting you to talk about Mo applying to Business and Law courses at Bradford or Leeds University and wants to know more about the application process. She is also asking if he can live from home and still work part time whilst studying and if studying will affect their household income.

When his progression coach talks to him about university and the call with his mum, Mo seems reluctant to talk and becomes depressed. He says he no longer wants to go to university but may as well put in an application for Business and Law if that's what his mum wants him to do. He says he just wishes he could be independent for once.