



### 'Liam' takes the pressure out of growing up

"C'mon everybody's doing it. Take a pull on it you pussy."

So, I thought, "Why not?"

I was 15, and had many friends. I didn't want to turn into a loner by alienating myself. I gave into peer pressure because I thought if I didn't say 'yes' to my so-called friends then they would disown me. I'd go from Mr Popular to the kid that people picked on.

Being a part of a group and fitting in is what most teenagers want; being picked on is the worst - no one wanted to be that guy. So you'd join a group to avoid being bullied, but other problems arise. To avoid being singled out you'd do what others do, even if it is something bad.

Crime took a hold of my life. The police quickly new my face and name, due to all the things my group was up to. I'd wake up, meet my friends and go to school. As soon as we'd get out we'd smoke weed, and do stupid stuff. And because we were high we got the munchies, so we'd go to the local supermarket and steal stuff.

This was also the time when I started lying to my mum. I never wanted her to see me high, so I'd stay out until the effects of the weed wore off. It hurt to look my mum in the eyes and lie about where I'd been and what I was doing. I was too ashamed to tell her the truth.

It carried on and on. The same pattern: smoke weed... steal stuff... it was getting to the stage where I thought I was getting very good at shoplifting. I wasn't getting caught, and becoming brazen. I'd take more than everyone else and then give it to them to make me more popular.

Then one day, I got caught as I was leaving one supermarket. I felt a cold hand touch my shoulder and saw the guard. In my head all I could think about was how upset my mum would be?

This was the best day of my life.

because I realised that these people I was hanging with were not my friends. They didn't care about me. They didn't come and see me at the police station, they didn't call me to make sure I was all right, or if I'd been released, or arrested and

to get home, apologise to my mum and accept my punishment.

I did other things with my time from that point onward. I went to my local youth club where I met some real friends, who encouraged me to take advantage of

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charged, they didn't care or know if I was going to court... nothing. Just nothing.

But when I had sweats and crisps and drinks they were all over me. And it got me thinking if they were friends they would have been concerned. Maybe real friends would have encouraged me not to steal in the first place.

While at the police station I just wanted

positive opportunities like Exposure.

Peer pressure happens to everyone, and can be harmless. You just have to realise when you're being encouraged to do things that will make your life worse. It's also important to understand the motives of the people around you. The hardest part is saying 'no, I won't do that', but if you can, you should.

### Real life Apprentice

Exposure has done it again! Woo hoo! Our innovative programme 'North London Apprentice' enabling young people to pitch ideas to local bosses, and generate business, has received backing from Deutsche Bank, meaning the project can continue into a second series.

With the support of The London Community Foundation and Deutsche Bank Small Grants Fund, the real life version of TV's 'The Apprentice' will now be going into secondary schools in Haringey.

Larena Hilton, Head of Corporate Citizenship at Deutsche Bank UK, said: "I'm delighted that Exposure's grant application was approved in a unanimous decision by our grants panel... their Apprentice programme will continue helping young people to fulfil their potential in life by developing entrepreneurial mindsets and skills."

We consider this to be one of our most exciting projects yet and the perfect opportunity to learn business and communication skills, how to plan a pitch, develop an argument and present it to business owners.

Sound exciting? Then why not get involved.

Email [stephen@exposure.org.uk](mailto:stephen@exposure.org.uk)

### Value Life Award



Exposure has received the honour of being voted 'Outstanding Organisation' by Gladesmore Community School in Tottenham and presented with a 'Value Life' award. Out of everything we've won over our 17-year-long reign in north London, this is the most gratifying. It's wonderful to know Gladesmore think so highly of us; the feeling is mutual!

To spice things up, Exposure's Development Officer, Flo Codjoe picked up the award from none other than Tottenham Hotspur legend Ledley King, ooh la la!

Our connection with Gladesmore goes back a long way. Their music teacher-maestro, Ty Lowe, who was behind 'Everybody Dreams', the inspiring response to the Tottenham Riots, volunteered with us as a youngster!

We are humbled to receive such tremendous endorsement of our work. We'll endeavour to keep it up!

