Case Study - Behavioural Evaluation Support Team (BEST) project, Bradford

The BEST project is provided by Bradford City Council and supports children and young people aged 5-18 with a severe learning disability and behaviour that challenges to remain at home with their families.

*Names have been changed.*

What was the challenge?

Ali* is seven years old and has autism and learning disabilities. Ali’s parents were struggling to understand and manage his behaviours.

Ali is a non-verbal child and some of his behaviours were linked to difficulties communicating. When distressed, his behaviour could become challenging, including aggressive outbursts and self-injurious behaviour. Ali didn’t understand meal times and wore a weighted vest during meals due to his behaviours. He also wore a pad during toileting.

Both parents had given up their careers to take care of Ali and his younger sibling, who also has autism. The family was isolated: relatives didn’t understand Ali’s behaviours, and the family received limited family support. Ali’s parents were also reluctant to seek help from professionals due to negative past experiences.

How did we address it?

Ali was referred to the BEST project, based at the Valley View Respite Unit. The BEST team, supported by a psychiatrist and clinical psychologist, worked together with the family to deliver Positive Behaviour Support through a process of assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

The BEST team spent time observing Ali and the family at the Unit to identify triggers for Ali’s challenging behaviours, sharing their findings with Ali’s parents. Ali’s parents then worked with the team to set three areas to focus on.

These three areas were:

- Communication
  - Object of reference training (where different objects are given meanings to enable communication by reaching or touch) was undertaken by the BEST team to support Ali to express himself and to understand others.

- Meal times
  - The team supported Ali to sit at the table throughout meal times through object of reference training and also by using templates (e.g. showing where his cup and plate would go, and characters he liked) to help Ali understand and enjoy meal times.
• **Community Goal**
  
  - The team worked with Ali to support him to undertake a short walk holding a staff member’s hand throughout. Communication and pictorial aids were put in place to support this.

  The BEST team worked with the family, CAMHS, the school and other professionals to implement this approach at home, school and in community settings, using PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) and attachment-based approaches. Routines and structure were put in place and passed over to family and school. Ali’s work with the team was filmed as evidence of how the goals were achieved, and as a resource to support the family at home.

**What was the impact/outcomes of implementing the change?**

The BEST project has made a significant difference to Ali’s ability to express himself and his family’s ability to manage his challenging behaviours.

Ali can now sit and eat with the family at mealtimes and no longer wears a weighted vest. Object of reference training has also supported Ali to let carers know when he needs to go to the toilet, and to stop using pads. Ali has also started using a few words following object of reference training, including ‘snack’. By the end of the project, Ali was also walking safely to and from the park with a support worker, listening to instructions and waiting at traffic lights.

Ali’s parents have also built trust with the BEST project team, which may help them trust other services.

**Want to know more? For more information contact Balvinder Kaur Gill at balvinder.gill@bradford.gov.uk**