

4) Case Study: Building trust

This case study illustrates how powerful a few words of reassurance can be to a parent who is afraid of letting her son down.

Anabel's Story

From my first contact with Anabel it was clear that she was very stressed right from the start as she was struggling to speak and was stuttering very badly. As the single mum of two boys Anabel was having difficulties managing her eldest son's behaviour and desperate for him to get the support he needed in school. Although Anabel was well supported by the school and had a good relationship with the SENCo she felt totally overwhelmed by the process.

Having done some background reading Anabel had picked up on the idea that any supporting reports submitted had to be less than two years old. Being a single mum Anabel didn't have the resources to commission private reports but her son's Godfather had done so two years previously. In fact this was what had prompted her call to request an IS as the report would "expire" in a couple of days. We quickly established that this wouldn't be a show-stopping issue. It was amazing the impact that simple statement had, although Anabel still stuttered occasionally during the remainder of the conversation the crippling panic seemed to have eased.

On our subsequent meeting to complete Anabel's input to section A, although she was still very apprehensive about the process and the possible implications of revealing incidents, she found the courage to open up about things which had not even been mentioned to the school because she feared judgment on her performance as a single mum and "... having the children taken away because I'm a bad mother...".

By the end of a second session to review the input for section A, we had discussed pretty much every aspect of her son's behaviour and issues around school, home life and social interactions as well as the break-up of the marriage.

A couple of days after we had completed section A, Anabel called to discuss the way forward with the school and the next steps and in the course of the discussion said that she felt that the help of an IS was so important because it had supported her to explore her son's history and to include many issues which she was either uncomfortable to mention or hadn't thought would be relevant. She did admit that reading the whole thing together in one place was a bit of a challenge, as she had never put all the elements together in one place before. She also said that without help she would have never got past the "demon" of the unknown and felt that without doing that her son would have not been best represented. She also said that although she is still stressed out by the whole process, knowing that there is someone she can email or phone who will listen and support her, has made it a much easier challenge to deal with.