

Session 3: Parenting when there is a disability or illness or trauma

CHARLIE MITCHELL



Today we are exploring

- Parenting when there is a disability or illness or trauma
- Biggest challenges
- There are solutions
- Different possible interventions
- The benefits of coaching
- The role coaching has in supporting family life

Parenting a child with a disability, illness or trauma

- Since the coronavirus lockdowns, persistent absenteeism is up 117%, equating to nearly a quarter of all pupils in primary, secondary and special state schools – or 1,615,772 pupils
  - https://metro.co.uk/2023/09/03/why-more-children-than-ever-are-refusing-to-go-to-school-19406159/
- One in five children and young people in England aged eight to 25 had a probable mental disorder in 2023, a new survey shows
  - https://www.england.nhs.uk/2023/11/one-in-five-children-and-young-people-had-a-probable-mental-disorder-in-2023

Parenting a child with a disability, illness or trauma

- This is no longer a very small minority of children who are struggling
- This is impacting a wide range of parents
- No quick fix
- Less support



A day in the life… parenting a child with different needs

- Dealing with difficult emotions within the family
- Maintaining other responsibilities
- Managing child's medical care
- Advocating for your child
- Learning about what you child needs
- Managing own stress and emotions
- Making time for self-care (?)
- Balancing the needs of the family
- Looking for support



https://www.helpguide.org/articles/family-caregiving/parenting-a-child-with-a-disability.htm

Biggest challenges

- Need a specific piece of information
- Overwhelm
- I’m not cut out for this – I am the wrong person for this job
- Fear for the future
- Guilt, blame, shame
- Triggered by previous experiences



There are solutions! We can…

- Signpost to a specific piece of information
- Calm the nervous system
- Listen, it makes sense, you matter
- Coaching: explore beliefs and create a new narrative / story
- Plan for the future / be open
- Refer on to other support or explore



Different possible interventions

- Signposting to support:
  - Parent and Carer Alliance for advocacy / legal support
  - Fight4Justice for DLA / PIP support
  - SENDIASS: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service
  - Family Action: financial hardship, mental health problems, social isolation, learning disabilities, domestic abuse, or substance misuse and alcohol problems
  - SOS!SEN: help parents secure the right educational support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
  - SCOPE: support groups for parents https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/support-groups-parents/
  - Young Minds Parent Support around mental health: https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-helpline/

The benefits of coaching for parents

- Much needed support
- Rare space and time for the parent
- Reflect and get insights parents might not get on their own
- Judgement-free zone
- It’s ok to talk about the challenges
- Look for small actions parents can take to make things a little better
- Someone in their corner, cheering them on

The role coaching has in supporting the family

Working with one parent can bring the family more:

- Peace and calm
- Plans and resources for dealing with things
- Capacity for the parent to work with the rest of the family
- Increased self-esteem / confidence / sense of safety
- Hope for the future

TGROW Coaching Model

Target – what is the main thing to be achieved through coaching?

Goal – what is the goal for the session today?

Reality – what is the current reality of the situation?

Options – what could happen?

Will – what one small action will be taken before the next session?