

School Nursing Emotional Wellbeing Support Service Case Study

XX is a 7-year-old boy referred into the emotional wellbeing team for low mood. In assessment, Mum identifies that he struggles with his younger brother (YY) who has additional needs as YY often takes out his frustration on XX and this makes XX feel sad.

Mother would like a safe space for XX to be able to express himself and for him to learn some coping skills for when he feels overwhelmed. In sessions we discussed XX's family and how he would like things to be different. XX identifies that as well as YY, he gets upset at his older Brother (ZZ) as he says ZZ always acts disrespectfully to his parents and screams and shouts at them all the time and that his parents are always 'grumpy and have no time for me because they are always dealing with my brothers'. XX said he felt left out and lonely because he is not causing any issues for his parents. He said sometimes his parents often ended up ranting to him about his brothers and XX often felt like he didn't know what to say and they were giving him problems to deal with that he wasn't in a position to do anything about.

It became clear from sessions that giving XX a space to think through his feelings and giving him some skills to cope that he was still in a position where his difficulties were being caused by the family dynamic and this is what really needed to change to help XX.

XX and I had a discussion together about what he would like his parents to know so that his voice was heard and we were working together, rather than being told what was going to happen. We then invited Mum into our next session. We had a frank and honest conversation about the difficulties within the family. Mum admitted that often her and her Husband did tell XX things that were not helpful to him and that they were often short fused because they were so tired and at their wits end trying to manage. What they hadn't realised is the impact this was having on XX as he was absorbing all the difficulties from every family member and they were able to understand why XX was feeling the way he was.

Through the conversation they were able to see that the whole family needed support and that XX needed some time from his parents that was nurturing and just for him. Parents agreed to a referral to Early Help which they had previously not wanted to do as they felt it was a sign of weakness to admit they needed extra help.

We also discussed boundaries with things they shared with XX and things they could do together to make XX feel included and to make him feel like he was just as important as his brothers. We then agreed to review together how things were going once Early Help had become involved and once they had had some protected time with XX.

XX continued to have sessions in between where we worked on teaching him coping skills to help manage difficult emotions. On review with Mum, things had improved greatly. The Early Help worker had been working with Mum and Dad about effectively

managing challenging behaviour and de-escalating the situation. They were also now calling on their wider support network for help, whereas before they were trying to cope on their own.

XX was also feeling happier as he felt the family were getting on better and his parents seemed less stressed out. He was really valuing time with his parents and was not reporting feeling low in mood anymore and was hopeful for the future