

Supporting children with Selective Mutism in Northamptonshire

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Access to SLT services within Northamptonshire

- * As a SLT service we are completely funded by health
- * Recognised within the team that we needed to establish a more robust care pathway for children with SM
- * NHFT does not offer a specialist pathway for children with SM –this pathway is what we can offer via the local speech and language therapy service.

Northamptonshire SM caseload

- * Significant increase in referrals over last 2 years
- * Approx. 4 amount of new referrals per month
- * Current SM caseload constitutes 1.8% of the overall caseload – which equates to 75 children

Review of the evidence

- * Importance of early identification and intervention
- * Importance of collaborative approach to supporting the child with SM - information sharing/educating others
- * Providing a support system for parents and teaching staff

As a result, our sessions put a real focus upon.....

- * The importance of early intervention
- * The value of social comfort and environmental adaptations before a small steps programme
- * The importance of the key person and agreement re everyone's role

Then and Now

THEN

- Child came to initial session in clinic with parents
- Initial advice given
- Review X amount of months/years (☹️) later
- On generic caseload

NOW

- Total revamp!
- Please refer to handout

Initial Assessment


- * Initial meeting with parent – child not present!
- * Information gathered
- * Diagnosis of SM discussed
- * SM pathway advised

The SM Care Pathway

- * Rolling programme, 4x sessions per year, starting approximately every 3 months
- * Work in progress
- * Informal style (tea, coffee, biscuits & sweets!)

Firm Foundations

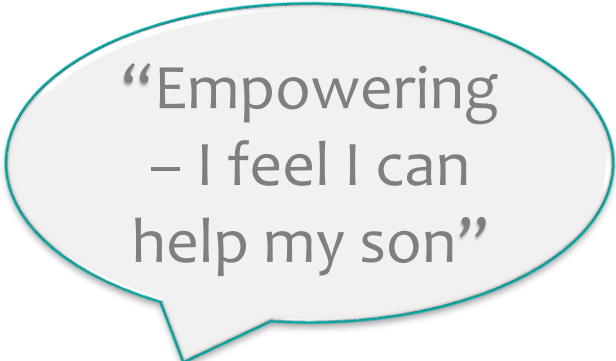
- * What is SM (and what it isn't!)
- * Risks, triggers and maintaining factors
- * Creating the right environment; at home and at school
- * The role of the keyworker
- * 'The Pep Talk'
- * Action planning



“Thank you for providing a clear starting point ”

Intervention: Strategies

- * Indirect strategies e.g.
Commentary style of talk, Triangle Tactic, Graded questions, Talking Bridge, Do I answer for my child?
- * Graded exposure– Low versus high risk activities/communication load
- * Action planning with focus on child’s priorities



“Empowering
– I feel I can
help my son”

Intervention: Small Steps programme


- * Sliding in approach
- * Other intervention approaches e.g. reading route, telephone, email and text
- * Model of confident talking
- * Action planning



“Research led
and personal
approach”

Monitoring progress and Troubleshooting

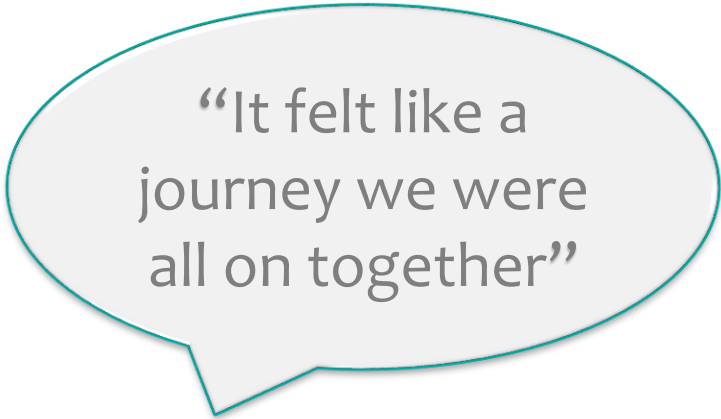
- * Sharing resources and good practice
- * Troubleshooting specific questions
- * Case studies and practical activities
- * Review of maintaining factors if progress stalled
- * Action planning



“Friendly and supportive group”

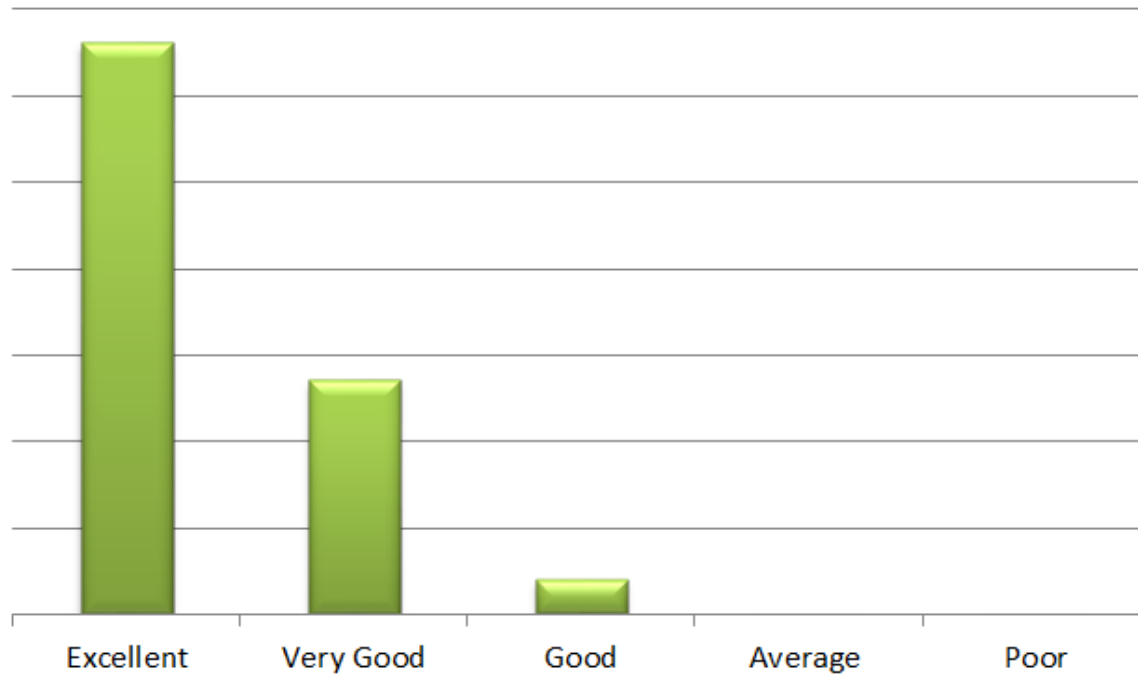
Generalisation and Transitions

- * Facing fears in school
- * Facing fears in the community
- * Social functioning; moving towards spontaneous speech
- * Supporting transitions
- * Action planning



“It felt like a journey we were all on together”

Feedback



100% of attendees would recommend sessions to a colleague or family member

Meet Holly

Before:

- * 9 years old
- * Mute since pre-school
- * No verbal communication with Father
- * Good non-verbal communication in school
- * Maintaining factors

After:

- * 10 years old
- * Freely communicates with Father
- * Communicates to every peer in class (within small groups)
- * Working towards spontaneous communication

Meet Miley

Before:

- * 5 years old
- * Mute since pre-school
- * Very supportive parents
- * Lack of social comfort in school
- * Bullying in school
- * Maintaining factors

After:

- * 7 years old
- * New school
- * Communicates to key worker, small groups of peers in small steps programme
- * Working towards communicating with a range of people in a range of places

What next?

- * On-going development of SM pathway
- * Improving liaison with other services
- * Up-skilling the wider SLT team
- * Raising awareness of Selective Mutism
- * Continuing to support a wide range of children with Selective Mutism and their families and educational settings