

PACC 'In Touch' Course for parent carers supporting Young people with Learning Disabilities or Autism aged 13 – 19 at Severndale School

13th January – 31st March weekly online sessions (10am – 12pm)

We know that supporting a young person with Learning Disabilities or Autism can be challenging at times. Young people who have difficulties with communication and understanding can significantly impact family life and even the most simple family activity can become difficult.

We also know that these young people can develop behaviours that are difficult to manage, which can become more of an issue as they grow and can result in a poorer quality of life in adulthood.

Living with both behaviours that challenge and worries about the future can be difficult for parent carers of young people with learning disabilities or autism, resulting in feeling isolated and a sense that they are failing as parents. Receiving the right support and advice is essential and can make a big difference to both the experience of parent carers and the outcomes for young people with learning disabilities or autism. This is why, with funding from Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, we have developed the 'In Touch' course, which we are offering to Severndale parent carers, of young people with a learning disability or autism aged 13-19 years.

'In Touch' aims to provide parent carers of young people with learning disabilities or autism with an opportunity to talk with others who understand their family life, to share experiences and to know that they are not alone. It will also provide specialist advice from practitioners who understand the impact of behaviours that challenge and the importance of supporting families in their caring role. Every other session will focus on a particular theme, which will enable parent carers to develop the skills and knowledge to reduce the impact of these behaviours and to plan positively for the future. The sessions in between the advice sessions will be a facilitated chat, lead by PACC, providing a chance to talk about the themes covered in previous sessions or just to share how you are feeling or any worries you may have. The timetable for the 'In Touch' course is below, we will use Zoom to deliver these sessions.

The online chat sessions will continue to be offered on a monthly basis, once the initial course is completed. This first course will be run as a pilot and will hopefully enable us to attract funding for further courses to be offered.

If you are interested in joining the course and benefiting from this support and advice please contact Sarah Thomas at PACC as soon as possible, on enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk or 07398120311. We are limiting the places to 12 parent carers per course, so if you are interested please contact us soon. If you have any questions Sarah will be happy to chat with you about the course.

‘In Touch’ Course Timetable – Jan to March 2020 (10am – 12pm)

Date	Theme	Delivered By
13 th January	Introduction Chat	Sarah Thomas - PACC
20 st January	Planning with your young person: a person-centred approach. Christine will introduce the Thinking Ahead guides and the use of person-centred tools to think about what helps things to go well and what can cause things to go wrong in your young person’s life.	CHRISTINE TOWERS
27 th January	Chat session	Sarah Thomas -PACC
3 rd February	Planning for changes and possible emergencies. Christine will talk about building a support network for yourself and your young person to help with planning, making choices, finding opportunities and putting things in place in case of emergencies.	CHRISTINE TOWERS
10 th February	Chat session	Sarah Thomas - PACC
Half term		
24 th February	Planning for health and well-being. Christine will talk about using Annual Health Checks, Health Action Plans, Hospital Passports and other resources to help your young person get support to be healthy.	CHRISTINE TOWERS
3 rd March	Chat session	Sarah Thomas - PACC
10 th March	Behaviour as communication- an introduction to understanding why behaviours of concern happen, what keeps them going and how to make sense of them	Dr Steve Farmer – Clinical Psychologist, CAMHS LD Team
17 th March	Chat session	Sarah Thomas - PACC
24 th March	Introducing Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). Some demystifying of the myths around this approach and taking first steps towards using PBS as a means to improve everyone’s quality of life	Dr Steve Farmer – Clinical Psychologist, CAMHS LD Team
31 st March	Final session	Sarah Thomas - PACC

Christine Towers – Christine has worked with people with learning disabilities and their families for over 35 years in different types of services and organisations. Central to her work has been developing ideas alongside people with learning disabilities and their families, improving the quality of support and person-centred approaches.

She worked at the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities for 10 years and over four years ago set up Together Matters (www.togethertomatters.org.uk). She has written resources for people

with learning disabilities, their families and support organisations, including the Thinking Ahead guides.

Steve Farmer – I'm a husband, father, daft dog owner and I also work as a Clinical Psychologist. I recently joined the BeeU Learning Disabilities service in Shrewsbury and prior to this worked in the Wolverhampton NHS Learning Disabilities team. I have been specialising in work around behaviours of concern for the past ten years and have a real passion for supporting families, staff teams and wider organisations who care for young people who behave in ways that challenge others. I have a real passion for Mindfulness based approaches, adapted communication and Positive Behaviour Support (or PBS). I work as a practitioner, coach and advisor in PBS and I continue to be a student of this approach. I look forward to meeting you all.

Sarah Thomas - first and foremost I am a parent carer to five boys, all of whom have some level of SEND. I have been involved in developing parent carer participation both locally, regionally and nationally when in 2007 I was a founder member of the Shropshire Parent and Carer Council (PACC) and supported the development of the National Network of Parent Carer National Steering Group in 2010. I have worked with other Shropshire parent carers to develop Shropshire PACC into a well-established and respected organisation that makes an important contribution to SEND decision making in Shropshire. I am currently the lead on participation co-ordination for PACC. I also provide a SEND Consultancy support throughout England as an Associate for Contact, working with other Forums to influence strategic decision making across education, health and social care. I have a particular interest in promoting family resilience, person centred approaches and enabling those with learning disabilities and/or autism to live self-directed lives.