

Role: Clinician
Agency: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Background

Thomas*, aged 17, was receiving support from CAMHS due to significant mental ill health.

Thomas had experienced sexual abuse and neglect throughout childhood and was experiencing low self-worth.

Professionals described Thomas as being reluctant to engage.



Action taken

During one of his sessions with his CAMHS clinician, Thomas discussed an argument that he recently had with his mother. He shared the challenges impacting on his relationship with his mother and how he felt about this. The clinician supported Thomas to explore his future aspirations and what he hoped for in the future especially around his relationship with this mother. During family sessions the clinician worked with Thomas and his mother to discuss potential difficulties and how these might be managed to avoid any further conflict.

During a separate session, Thomas reached out to his clinician asking for advice regarding sexual health and then made a disclosure of rape. Thomas expressed to his clinician that he did not want his mother or the police to be involved. The clinician explained that they would have to report the disclosure to Thomas's social worker and the reasons for this.

Building upon their conversation with Thomas, his clinician was able to convey Thomas's views to his social worker. As a result, the social work team decided not to initiate a Section 47 enquiry. When his clinician explained to Thomas that no further action would be taken by Children's Services, it was explained that this decision was based on Thomas's wishes and not because he was undeserving of being listened to.

Outcome

Supported by the involvement of his clinician, Thomas's relationship with his mother is now going well. Thomas has shared with his clinician that he has felt that some professionals have questioned the truthfulness of previous disclosures but that he now feels valued and that his voice is being heard.

SAFEGUARDING ADOLESCENTS CASE STUDY: THOMAS

Thomas's positive, regular, accessible working relationship with his clinician, built on trust, has been beneficial to Thomas and has provided him with an opportunity to express his wishes and feelings.

**Pseudonym*