

Chit Chat

maternity support group for parents with a learning disability

Chit Chat is a maternity support group for mums and dads with additional needs they may have:-

- A learning disability
- A learning difficulty
- Asperger's
- High levels of anxiety

Why is this so important....

Hidden Voices of Maternity, Parents With Learning Disabilities Speak Out – August 2015

Many parents with learning disabilities face stereotyped beliefs that:

- they could never be good enough parents
- that any parenting difficulties are automatically linked to their learning disability without considering other environmental or social factors.

Experience shows that some women with Learning Disabilities may avoid maternity care because of

- Lack of confidence
- Negative staff attitudes
- Lack of clear explanations
- Inaccessible leaflets
- Fear of the involvement of social services

Social worker was always at the top: Most parents had a bad experience “as they have the power to take your children off you” Comments ranged from: “they have all the power”, “they decide, you have to prove you are good enough to look after your child”, to “mine wasn’t that bad” In many cases parents did not feel they had a reasonable explanation of why their child was taken away. The concept of neglect is a difficult one to



Mum with learning disability was at the bottom – just above the dad in most cases. This is not where they felt they should be - “the mother should have the most power – she should have a voice”. They felt they were “treated like they were daft, stupid or a two year old”, “they made you feel horrible”

Dad with learning disability was usually right at the bottom as they “do not get a say”. They are often told they cannot come to see their baby being born. The exception was where the relationship was abusive or the Dad was manipulative in other ways. “The father can walk off and leave the mother with the baby”. “If the mother has a LD then social services require

1/. A new and innovative way of working with parents bridging a gap in service, that makes a real difference to the families involved.

- Care tailored to their individual needs
- Safe environment to share concerns
- Hidden voices – they feel the lowest of everybody but in our group they are the most important
- Opportunity to share good and bad experiences, sharing emotional conversations
- Peer support
- Not easily identified can often slip under the radar
- Don't easily engage with other services
- Care often goes beyond the postnatal period
- Increased support from us and peers regardless of outcome
- Supported to midwives who understand their needs
- Feeling they belong
- Acknowledging and working on their strengths

Service user feedback

“ It helped me to know what labour is, I really liked Angela and Sally and talking about Jaffa cakes”

“I like meeting new people it makes me more confident”

I don't feel out of place and enjoy meeting people to talk about my worries”

“As a Dad I like the fact that Dad's are welcome”

“It makes labour ward feel familiar and I feel less scared”

2/. A simple cost effective service
that is easily replicated in every
trust.



3/. It's not over.....

Involvement from other professionals ie Health visitors and learning disability nurses

Bespoke Freedom Programmes –working with IDVA

Easy read leaflets for all aspects of care

Maternity Passport

Working alongside social care to ensure correct assessments, are in place, reports are easy read and advocates are available

The Pause Project, contraception advice

<https://youtu.be/7pf8-02qQ6U>