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SCOTLAND

GIVING CHILDREN BACK THEIR FUTURE

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Confidential Psychotherapy Report

Re: Ryan Mudie (D.O.B – 16.10.94)

Ryan has been in therapy since August 2005 and has found his sessions pleasant and lively which bespeaks his evident relish in having personal time to be with an interested adult. He has attended whenever possible with some gaps due to Helena's schedule and the odd clash with important school events and holidays.

Ryan was referred initially because of concerns around anger, depression, social skills and esteem issues and tendencies towards oppositional and deviant behaviour. Alongside these were concerns about the impact of loss and rejection leading to him having tendencies to shut people out. He conveyed a sense of emotional baggage that disturbed people, alongside a capacity to hold his own at school, and to respond positively to nurturing care in his foster home. So it was with some degree of hopefulness that he would benefit from psychotherapeutic support that he came to me.

My impression is that in the external world Ryan continues to make progress and that his relationship with Helena in particular has deepened over the months.

Observations from the sessions

Ryan loves to play hide and seek games in which he is highly invested and very skilful in making himself as invisible as possible. We have used this play to talk about his tendency to repress his needs when he feels threatened. Clearly for Ryan being resilient, independent and minimalist in relation to feelings that bring him into touch with his neediness is an important defence. He knows how to hide himself emotionally and this avoids the pain of wanting and needing.

We have talked also about how he might be out of touch with his own sense of himself and to be putting himself down protectively to such an extent that he is impoverishing himself. Ryan acknowledges that he does this and is also making connection with his need to deaden any thought about his mum whether about his care for her or her for him. Yet his play has seeking out of involvement and contact aspects to it and has felt regressed at times as if providing some of the mother-son playfulness that foreshadows emotional development.

Patron
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He needs lots of play of this sort – one-to-one – and it feels to have the quality of an urgent physical need and to be in relation to attempts to establish contact with adults. More recently his play has become more forceful and demanding. There is aggression at times in the forcefulness he throws a ball at me. We have talked about the control he has in hiding and finding and how that saves him from feeling lost and hoping for someone to rescue him, although clearly underneath these are feelings waiting to surface that he represses.

He is matter of fact about his placement with Helena and Alistair. He doesn't want to context it or give it shape in terms of his future hopes for home and belonging. He shuts down on articulating and expressing any expectation of claiming or future long-term enduring relationships.

He is trying hard to restrict himself to the present and not make links with his past or future or have something to live up to. He seems to cope fairly well within these self-imposed constraints and seems likeable and personable as if he can really enjoy the present for its own sake. I am impressed by his capacity to split off from both his deep needs and his pain.

As I have got to know him better there is more of an edge about his throw away comments trying to obliterate his absent mother in his refusal to give her space in his mind. A retaliating counter rejection seems in play.

This contrasts with his capacity to engage and enjoy our play together which has a real sense of seeking for reciprocation. Perhaps he experiences momentary nourishment and takes it in but feels articulation or extension will threaten it and it is best just to enjoy the moment without making it the precursor of greater depths and risk. He has learnt to settle for little.

How does he experience gaps and separations? Tentatively I think. He blurts out statements about change and loss that seem to raise issues around attachment – i.e. change of teachers, losing a football game. Gradually it is becoming more possible to make more of these comments in terms of his overall experience of life and the impact of chronic uncertainty and insecurity for so long.

I feel he values his sessions and that their predictability and availability for him is allowing some integration to happen which is increasing his sense of well-being and safety. He is becoming both more humorous and more readily assertive. He has also been allowing himself some pleasure at his recent positive reviews which strikes me as a significant commitment to his placement as a place where growth and improvement can happen.

Ros Wass
Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist
2nd June 2006

SESSION WITH RYAN MUDIE
AT LOCKERBIE
TUESDAY 19TH AUGUST 2008

Ryan was in his bed and reluctant to see anyone. He had been involved in an incident last night where 3 of the 4 boys had barricaded themselves into the front room and Ryan had been violent towards the newest arrival a 10 year old boy.

Ryan was not showing any enthusiasm or willingness to talk to me but was not aggressive either – rather, passively listened to my comments and suggestions about him returning to therapy and was non-committal. I left it that I would write to him inviting him to resume his sessions and it was then up to him but I would keep his place.

I wrote to Ryan in September but he declined to return to therapy.

Ros Wass-O'Donnell

13th October 2008

RWO/JR

BELIEVE IN CHILDREN



RW/PW

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8th April 2008

Confidential Psychotherapy Review Report

Regarding Ryan Mudie (16/10/1994)

I have been meeting with Ryan for a number of years now but there was a period when his sessions were difficult to manage and an effort was made to see him in Larbert which proved impossible to sustain for a number of reasons. This resulted in considerable disruption in his therapy. More recently Ryan has started coming back for his sessions in Edinburgh and a more acceptable flow and predictability has been re-established. However, these gaps and disruptions have played into the sense in which Ryan sees all his life as uncertain, and difficult to hold on to. His sessions this year have also occurred against a background of serious issues at school and also periods when his placement seemed on the point of collapse and his carers had given notice.

My understanding is that it is now planned to end his placement and his workers are actively looking at alternatives for him. This precariousness is highly important since it echoes powerful themes in Ryan's inner world. There have been periods when he has seemed quite beset with depressive ideas for instance making a tomb for himself in the therapy room which seemed to indicate both his sense of despair and aloneness but also his feeling that he is dispensable and can, as it were, literally die in people's minds. During such moments, and they come with increased regularity at the moment, I have felt his therapy is an indispensable support to him in that he can feel his sense of emptiness and lack of value carried and shared by someone who cares.

He does feel known by me and recognises that I can tolerate his difficulties understanding and supporting himself.

Ryan has a playful side and a very personable side which allows him to enjoy my interest in him and banter and play with it. Increasingly however he is letting me challenge him about his worrying tendencies to damp down and cut off emotional connections. Recently for instance, we have been discussing his grandfather and mother and how he deals with their abandonment of him by severing them in his mind and blanking out their significance.

We have also been able to look at how he denies his real needs to obliterate the risks that might follow from holding out any hope. Hope has been dashed too much in the past that he expects he will not be held on to and to survive he needs to make it not

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matter. He lives therefore largely in the present disconnected from any continuity with his past and devoid of any sense of where he is going to be in the future. He conveys this characteristically in his response of not knowing what he wants or not being able to be responsible in managing his behaviour. It is important to understand the serious attacks he makes on conscious self awareness as a deep defence mechanism to avoid his profound sense of precariousness and deep uncertainty about to whom or where he belongs. As his doesn't feel rooted there is only day to day survival to hang on to.

He is resilient enough to attempt to make something of his present which he does sometimes with humour and charm but this has the feel of a residue stemming from some important playful engagement he had with his grandfather which then was ruptured, so that this playfulness has a regressed feel to it and seems encapsulated in an immaturity, and unable to be a basis for him to progress.

I have felt strongly in relation to Ryan that he contends with a profound inner collapse which he often displays graphically in his sleepiness and curled up postures. He lacks the inner nurturing objects that would enable him to grow from his immaturity towards more capacity to face his reality and embrace a future and this is why he often seems stuck.

His therapy does give him a sense of adult attention and interest and he values the warmth it gives him without really knowing why it helps. Once weekly therapy however cannot compensate for profound inner abandonment, although it can be a crucial support for a weak ego, and hold back depression. Without it I would feel that Ryan could easily intensify his drift towards depression and flounder. He often finds it hard to leave his session, wanting to stay enmeshed with me as if he resists being forced back into reality and I have thought with him about this in terms of his loss of his mother and his loneliness.

We have also had occasion to talk about his outbursts at school which seem related a lot to reactions to perceived slights from adult teachers. Ryan has such a precarious sense of himself that he is likely to be more sensitive to this and also more stubborn, but also he carries profound grievance in relation to adult neglect and this he represses so that it is likely to show itself in thoughtless responses. He has a need to expel angry feelings and this again suggests that outlets like long distance running might be particularly helpful for him to help him to regulate himself.

His apathy also relates to his fear of failure and his awareness that he has little capacity to preserve himself.

Concluding Thoughts

I do think that therapy for Ryan hasn't the option of helping him directly manage better at school because Ryan is not able to adequately regulate his emotions rationally – his ego strength has been too severely curtailed by severe emotional neglect.

What it does do is provide a crucial emotional support which could sustain him through the inevitable pressures of adolescence and the likely problems he will have when he deals with identity issues and the transition to adulthood. It develops his capacity for relationships in the long term.

I would consider Ryan to be at high risk of both developing depression and continuing to ride a tightrope at school where he will not manage to sustain the demands of the school authority for greater maturity. The question here is whether the school can embrace Ryan's weakness or continue to condemn him for it. This doesn't preclude making efforts to manage the behaviour better, but to be more realistic about what Ryan can be expected to manage and more tolerant of his situation.

It is regrettable that his placement seems in some ways to reflect the inner precariousness that is Ryan's constant inner state. He really needs firm, certain, predictable commitment although it is easy to see how his inner expectations lead to him tending to shape similar uncertainty in his environment and with others.

He knows that I will be on leave for 3 months and that therapy will need to be suspended during this time. He is lukewarm and dismissive about meeting with someone else because he has so little sense of his own value. However I do feel it would be helpful for him to see someone perhaps in Larbert just so that he has an experience of being kept in mind and valued by others. I also think that we need to look to building on any connections with family that might be possible.

On my return I do think his therapy should continue on a weekly basis long term for the reasons I have outlined about his depressive drift and inner collapse.

Ryan is a child who is critically weak and who will require adult scaffolding to help him negotiate his way. In terms of future placement I would wonder about a younger more dynamic male figure in the family, or at least a carer who can commit to prolonged periods of immaturity without wavering in their commitment. He is a child who can elicit warmth but who is exceedingly needy and there is need to reflect on how his emotional state will impact on his transitional and developmental trajectory. He will need a lot of supports both in terms of his care situation and his schooling.

Ros Wass-O'Donnell

Ros Wass-O'Donnell
Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist

cc. Louise Kyles SW
Mandy Lines SSW
Jan Skinner
Helena Douglas

Form for Children

(1) Do you think coming to see Ros has been a help to you?

yes

(2) Is there anything you would like to say about your sessions with Ros?

no

Signed Ryan Mudie
Date 26/2/08

RW/JR

11 December 2007

Helena Douglas and Ryan
3rd party
information

Dear Helena and Ryan

I am on leave from 13th December until January 7th 2008.

I will be looking forward to seeing Ryan after the break at his usual time of 11 o'clock on Tuesday January 8th.

I hope you have a good Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Jan Rintoul

Pp Ros Wass
Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist

Session with Ryan 13/11/2007

He was curled up in reception, seemed sleepy – and curled up under the blanket once in the therapy room. This was an interesting session with the theme of lifelessness – or womb state pre birth (Ryan built a tomb in the middle of the room).

Discussed what blunted life for him, and his determination to obliterate memories, and not think of himself in his history – I also connected some of his comments about betrayal in history (i.e. Jesus), and his own anger at his treatment by his family and how he seeks a death like suppression of these feelings to avoid pain and upset.

He bubbled up at this and became quite lively – with some barely contained aggression showing a slight presence in kicked around bean bags and resistance to leaving!

Ros Wass

Session with Ryan – 23/10/2007

This was the first session for 3 weeks and he was tired looking – but as normal pleasant and keen to play football with a tennis ball.

He mentioned going to the pictures with Ross his friend – but was keen to clarify he wasn't gay!

He opened a discussion about sexuality and also his aversion to girls – they are too expensive – use and abuse you etc. He has no wish to get married and have a family. He said – “I don't know why?” I commented on his wish not to think about himself – wondered about his loss of his mum in this context of 'dumping girls' and suggested that it would be difficult for him to work out his relationship with girls and friends if he shut down on exploring his relationships with significant adults.

He continues to be content with protecting himself but was listening I think to my comments about how at sea he is in managing emotionally, despite his very pleasant and affable way of being with people.

Ros Wass
RW/PW

Session with Ryan Mudie – 26/09/2007

Pleasant meeting – exploration of his avoidance – his not caring to think – his living in the future without context. So much invested in not getting hurt but is playful too. Active boy – affectionate, likes to get what he needs from you and takes his humour positively. Is guarded against worries.

Ros Wass

Session with Ryan Mudie**28.08.07**

This was our first session since he started back to school and there was anxiety about this and a meeting arranged at school to look at how to help.

-Ryan felt uncertain – not knowing what he wanted or what others would want – I took this up with him in terms of the risk of having no focus, desires or self motivation, how drift leads to powerlessness, powerlessness to anger etc.

He asked questions about IQ then commented on where does it come from, and that his dad was in Perth prison and stupid. He denied curiosity about dad but I suggested he was wondering about his inheritance and I thought the non-interest was about fears about what he would find and more importantly feel. He was running away.

Ryan was very pleasant and playful.