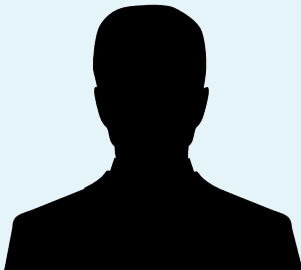




Case study two

Josef



My name is Josef, I live with my mum Darota. My mum and dad are Polish but I was born in England. We speak Polish at home. Mum has bipolar. It's hard for us. She can't work at the moment as she's all over the place. My dad walked out. He just left us to it. He still lives in the same town as us. I see him every few weeks. It's nice to see him but he's not much help.

Mum is at home most of the time. She doesn't like to leave the house because she says it makes her feel ill. She has to take medication all the time. A nurse from the community mental health team comes to the house every so often. Her bipolar stops her from doing stuff. Like when she first got ill she wasn't paying any of the bills. The mental health team helped us sort the money out though.

At college I'm studying art. It's a foundation course. I love it. I love the freedom that I get from creating stuff. I missed a bit of college lately. Mum has not been so great so I have to stay at home with her much more. She gets worried when I'm out. She's been particularly low recently so I stay with her when she's like that. The problem is the college has noticed. I've got a meeting with my tutor next week. I hope they don't kick me out. I haven't told them about mum. I guess I'm a bit embarrassed.

Some kids tease me about my crazy mother. To be fair some of the stuff she does is a bit out there. I'm most stressed when she's going high. It's so obvious that she's got bipolar. She stays up all night which means I can't get any sleep which means it's harder to focus in college. She does stupid stuff as well like buy expensive stuff that we don't even need when we can't even pay the electric. It really does my head in.

Sometimes I could do with someone to talk to but it's embarrassing, but the other day I was online and I saw a phone number that kids like me could ring to get support. The guy who answered seemed all right. He gave me an address for the young carers team. I went there on the way back from the shops. I met the guy David, he's a social worker. He asked me a few questions about what I needed. I liked him. It's the first time I've spoken to someone about my situation but it felt good.