



NATP
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF THERAPEUTIC PARENTS



Centre of Excellence in
CHILD TRAUMA

You Matter to Us!

At the NATP, we often hear from birth parents who sometimes feel on the periphery of what we do.

We believe it is vitally important that all parents looking after children with developmental trauma are treated with equal respect and understanding and this includes birth parents.

As a birth parent myself with three adult sons who have experienced developmental trauma, the guilt we often feel is beyond description. That being said, it is important to recognise that we have only ever wanted the very best for our children. Why on earth would we be here seeking advice if that were not true! We often point the finger of 'blame' at ourselves, but this only ever ends in further heartache as our children quickly pick up on feelings of failure, guilt and inadequacy.

The fact is we are NONE of those things! Our children have developmental trauma for a whole range of reasons. Maybe it's one of the following:

1. Trauma experienced in the womb through ill health of the mother, high cortisol levels due to stress, grief, pregnancy complications or living in unsafe or unsettled environments whilst pregnant.
2. Difficult and traumatic births
3. Post Natal Depression
4. Relationship breakdowns
5. Domestic abuse
6. Parental alienation
7. Recovering from their own historical trauma (this was my experience)
8. Loss of or lack of support network
9. Hospitalisation of either parent or child
10. Contact issues if parents have separated

This list is not exhaustive but certainly covers the majority of difficulties reported to us by birth parents.

Many birth parents find it very painful to read about the impact of abuse and neglect as described by other parents on the pages, (we fully understand why it's necessary to discuss). Some have expressed feeling a great wave of shame come upon them and hope that they are not considered abusive or neglectful as a result of their children's difficulties. Others are extremely reticent about posting or even commenting as they fear they are less important and maybe their voice doesn't count.

The majority of birth parents have very little or even zero access to resources such as CAMHS or don't meet the threshold! They cannot access funding for support and are often frowned upon by social services if they reach out to them for help.

There are often extreme feelings of isolation due to fear of judgment which impacts on their own emotional well-being. Schools are also very tricky as their parenting is usually the first thing brought into question. I know this is the experience of the majority of parents, birth or otherwise but the vast majority of birth parents feel blamed and shamed simply for asking for help. The accusatory finger ever-presents. At the NATP, we want Birth Parents to feel included, understood and supported. Free from judgement and blame.

We welcome you to our Listening Circles, our training and conferences.

Your voice counts, your voice matters. You matter!

By Sarah Dillon.

