

Working with Parents and Children Affected by Intergenerational Disadvantage

Maxine's story

Maxine is a twenty-nine year old woman who presents to your service with co-existing issues including family violence, poverty and depression.

Maxine tells you that she has three children; Jai, 13, Lucy, 6, and Mabel, who is three-months old. Maxine and the three children have recently fled from a violent relationship with Mabel's father, Troy. Besides occasionally physical assaulting Maxine, Troy's abuse extended to a pattern of threats, belittling and undermining of Maxine's parenting, and isolating her from her friends. Maxine has now found some medium-term accommodation through a housing cooperative.

Maxine says she is having trouble looking after Mabel as a result of feeling depressed and anxious, and she is also having trouble with Jai who has started to become verbally aggressive, and has twice punched her.

Maxine says that Jai's aggression feels like the last straw and can't believe it's happening all over again. She worries about what will happen when he gets older. Maxine explains that she spent time in foster care placements as a child due to abuse from her step-father and her mother being "all over the place".

Maxine reunified with her mother when she was fourteen and her mother is currently living with her after being evicted from her housing trust property.

Maxine suspects her mother recently stole some cash from her, so things are not looking good there either. Maxine's mother has a significant drug and

alcohol issue and Maxine worries that child welfare will be knocking on the door at any day.

She had a couple of visits from social workers when she was pregnant with Mabel, and when Troy was making things particularly tough.

Maxine says she has not been the best mum in the world but tries her best and feels some consolation that her kids have never spent one day in foster care.

This reminds her to tell you that Lucy's school is also "on her back". Her class teacher has made three appointments to talk about Lucy's lack of lunch and school uniform. The teacher also says that Lucy has delayed speech.

Maxine is not sure how long she can keep this up. She says that things are inches from falling apart.