

Selective Mutism

Initial meeting ('pep talk') with child

Set up environment

- Hand information to parent in envelope (previously discussed on phone so doesn't need discussing in front of child)
- Promote relaxed chat with parent
- Compliment child's drawings/ skills/ choice of toys etc
- Ask parent to set up favourite activities that therapist could join in with
- Therapist to relax into setting and ask to join in activities
- Rapport building
- Consider "happy video/dvd recording"

??Transition

Discussion with child

- "Mummy tells me you've been finding it hard to talk to people at school"
- "You're not the only little boy I know that has difficulty talking to people at school. I know a few people and it doesn't last forever"
- "I know it's not because you don't want to talk, I know you are a very chatty boy and love to talk to people. I understand you try to talk at school and it gets stuck in your throat"
- "When you are scared, you worry and worry makes your words get stuck in your throat"
- "I'm going to help make that nasty feeling go away"
- "We'll call it the "Mr worry" feeling"
- "I'm also going to make sure your teachers know that "Mr Worry" is getting in the way of you talking"
- "Mummy told me someone shouted at you once very loudly and told you to "shut up". You must have been very scared and I can see why you feel scared now"
- "so we're going to learn to not be scared"
- "No one will make you talk until you feel less scared and more happy"
- "Then you will feel more ready to talk"
- "We're going to do it in very tiny steps"
- "Remember you are not the only one who is scared to talk at school"
- "It won't be like this forever"

Look at talking map

- Draw home – ask child to help draw the people in the home and put a bit smiley face that shows child is happy to talk at home

- Add other areas onto talking map
 - School – very anxious face
 - Playground – ask child to put face on
 - Supermarket
- Explain you will add more to the drawing next time

Talking to child about how you will help in school

- Explain you are going to tell the teacher and other adults that “Mr Worry” is getting in the way of talking at school and that we all need to help you to help “Mr Worry” disappear. They will not ask you to talk until you are feeling happier and less scared”