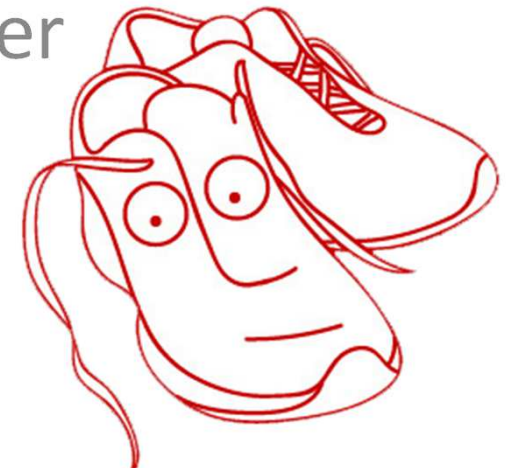


Children's experiences of living with a parent with bipolar disorder

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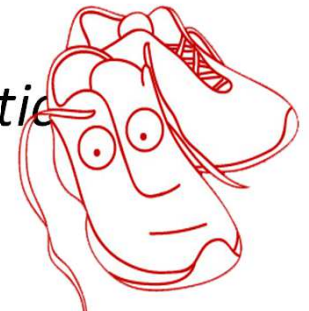


Children's experiences of living with a parent with bipolar disorder

- Qualitative interviews with ten children aged 4-10 using In My Shoes
- All recruited via self-help organisations for bipolar disorder
- Thematic analysis

Backer, Murphy, Fox, Ulph & Calam (2017)

Psychology and Psychotherapy Theory, Research and Practice

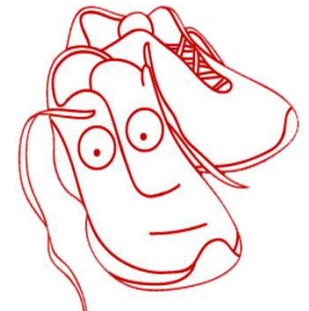


Main findings using IMS

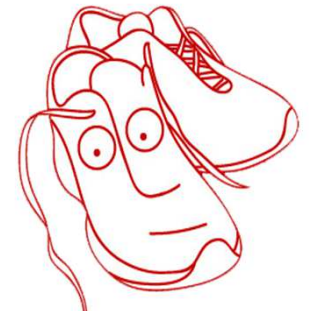
- Four-year-old children could participate in the IMS interviews and discuss their parent's mood, behaviour, and mental health
- Children had candid and insightful discussions about their parent's BD including symptoms and parenting
- Could reflect on how having a parent with BD affected them emotionally and practically
- Older children were better able to articulate their parent's illness and its impact

Daddy's normally erm with us looking after us by his self...especially when she went in hospital (Michael, aged 7)

- *It's the same when she's unwell she gets she sleeps for the whole day...and then she gets more sleep at night (Connor, aged 6)*



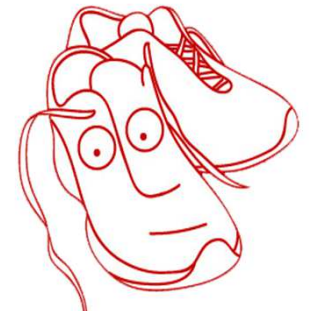
... she'd tell off [brother's name] but she wouldn't entire entirely be too comforting to me, she'd still comfort, but not as much as maybe another mother would. I don't mind that cos I don't like too much comforting, it makes me feel uncomfortable (Jake, aged 9)



Well when he's erm sad and depressed he erm tells us...but when he's giddy I don't think he can really tell... We can, but he can't

...he thought I had it...I was having more and more things to do with Bipolar and he's told me that I might have it...And that's when he told me about what it does

(Thomas, aged 9)



Conclusion

- Children can provide important insights into family life, given the opportunity
- Using IMS is valuable both in generating hypotheses and in planning services and interventions
- Hearing the child's voice directly is a good way to ensure that key information is not overlooked, and needs are identified

