

FRIDAY 27TH MAY 2023

With Lavinia Ponling

Last weekend we were at the Vintage Rally at the Mona showground on the Isle of Anglesey. We met quite a number of people, and many more stopped to see what we do. Some people stopped to ask for advice, others stopped to tell their stories, and a couple of individuals stopped to say thank you for "being out there raising awareness". The weather was really good, although we were indoors, which meant more people came and then came inside to cool off. Part of me is so happy that I can signpost so many people for lots of free support and advice across our social media platform. So many families simply cannot access the right information, even though their gut feeling is telling them the advice they have been given by others is not right.



Q & A WITH LAVINIA

Last Wednesday I was live on Streamyard talking about Mental Health and Autism. I honestly think this is the first time ever where I have been surrounded by people I know and engage with, however briefly. It was such a lovely opportunity to chat and have discussions, as well as be able to answer questions. John and I have interesting discussions within the office - we may talk about a case but he knows the parent really well, whereas I know the parent and young person really well and I have to remember to talk about the parent otherwise I lose John in the discussion with 'who are we talking about now?' Thank you to those that joined me last Wednesday - we will be doing this regularly on a Wednesday at 21:30 when hopefully most parents have an opportunity to join me and ask questions.



I have had such excitement this week. The weather has been sunny but with a cold breeze off the sea. This has been good as the garden has been given some considerable attention by a man called Chris who has fixed the door on my bothy where I can now store all my gardening tools, made the area safe from Monty trying to jump over the wall by the bothy, strimmed and strimmed the secret garden, and put the gate up! The secret garden used to be part of a field and the ground is not flat, but has the most beautiful apple tree that is nearly a 100 yrs old. It took me three years to build the hedges up to a height that invited local birds to come in and nest, so this year I have had to put up 3 bird feeders. I have been trying to grow plants that entice the bees - something that can be a bit of a hazard to Monty, but it appears he does not learn. Chris also put up the gate up that takes you through a tunnel of greenery to the secret garden, so now I am very happy.

Part of the reason why I am so happy is that finding people on the island to do jobs is quite tricky, but who actually want to do the job is even harder, and are they any good in achieving what you need. I am ever reminded of this with my clients who come to me because sometimes schools do not realize what they are dealing with. Parents know something is not right and have their suspicions, but it is only when we complete the Mental Health assessment and Initial Screening that we find there is a lot more that is not right. Recently a young person was diagnosed with Autism, but nobody considered anything else because, yet again, our young person won the outstanding award for the best marker ever. How can anyone help when somebody is so proficient? It really needs somebody with precision and experience to see through all of this. This person since nursery had been described as 'shy' and 'withdrawn' which were the earliest clues, yet on its own meant very little, but with every year there was mounting evidence to build a bigger picture. By the time the young person reached secondary school, the masking was no longer achievable and the young person not only internalized as ever but then started to self-harm. No person should ever be put in a desperate situation like this. Not ever. However, now I have a lot of work to do to repair the damage of not months, but years, which means, despite professionals opinions of a quick fix, a lengthy period of repairing and staying well over 1-2 yrs as a minimum.



PRIVATE DIAGNOSIS NOT THE CORRECT DIAGNOSIS?

This week in the news there has been considerable backlash that private diagnosis are not correct diagnosis. This has probably set many people back. Professor Nancy Doyle at the Royal Society of Medicine stressed a full background history needs to be done first within an assessment and that then the evidence goes to support this. I absolutely agree with this, which is why John will book in for a Mental Health assessment as we sometimes do not know if an Initial Screening for Neuro-diversity is needed. The essence is that whilst people have their suspicions, we need the history to warrant the Initial screening as further evidence. Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) is not yet in the NICE guidelines, but the traits of PDA can be seen in anger and impulsivity within our Initial Screening, but it is the history that shows how it evolves.

I cannot believe we are heading to the last few days of May! I am so hopeful that my writing shed will be up in the next 2-3 weeks in time to celebrate EPS 2nd Birthday!

In the meantime, have a lovely bank
holiday weekend!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lavinia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping initial 'L'.