

## Making children visible in work with parents

### Case study – Clare

Clare is a parent to two sons – Ethan (9) and Harry (11). She is separated from her husband, Jeremy, and has full custody of the kids.

Clare has a history of anxiety and panic attacks. She used to drink after work every night to calm herself down, but her GP referred her to an AOD counsellor after Clare mentioned she wants to ‘get her act together’ and ‘sort out’ her drinking.

As a teenager, Clare was ‘the quiet one’ who was never invited to parties – that is, until she discovered wine. Drinking made her feel more confident and expanded her social circle. She met Jeremy at a party, and alcohol played a key role in their relationship until Jeremy made the decision to give up drinking.

Jeremy has a history of abusive behaviour, which didn’t stop when he quit drinking. Instead, he became moody and would frequently lecture and insult Clare about her drinking habits. Clare mustered up the courage to leave Jeremy, but he would still come over to her new house and verbally abuse her in front of the boys. Then, Clare lost her job unexpectedly. She called Jeremy to chase up his parenting support payment, and he came over to the house in a rage and physically assaulted her in front of Ethan and Harry.

Clare is concerned about the impact of Jeremy’s violence on their sons. She says Ethan is a sensitive boy, who has been very clingy since the attack. She’s also worried about Harry, who has started spending time with a new group of friends (‘a bunch of complete morons’). Clare suspects they may be getting into trouble on the weekends, possibly even shoplifting, but when she tries to speak to Harry, he just snaps at her or shuts her down. She is also worried about what the boys think when they see her with a drink in her hand.

Access video: <https://vimeo.com/565499123/d6e5be84da>