
SECTION

4

Case Studies

Introduction

In many ways this was the hardest part of my book to write. How could I select a handful of young people from all the hundreds I have treated over time? Once I had gathered all the consents from schools, academies, parents and the young people themselves, I set about trying to get their voices heard – their stories told. I had to decide where to put them within these pages: should I slip case studies into different parts of the book to illustrate ‘points’, or should I devote a separate chapter to these people? In the end, as you can see, I dedicated a whole chapter to them. For these human beings are not ‘case studies’ or examples but real people with stories to tell, who were helped on their journeys by my massage techniques. These are their voices, not mine, and as such they deserve to stand alone, in their own right. I am proud of them.

After all, I wouldn’t be here talking to you now if it wasn’t for them.

Harry, Aged 18

Harry was first referred to me at 13 years old. He has Asperger’s, ‘mild’ autism and OCD. He had developed extreme anxiety, as well as having some learning difficulties. He had very limited hearing in one ear. He saw me privately at first and this was twice weekly. After a few months, he was happy to see me at his school and went from having weekly sessions to less frequently and eventually to an ‘as-and-when’ basis. By then the popularity and acceptance of my therapy was growing and lots of young people wanted to be on my books so there was no embarrassment involved.

Harry is a wonderful, open, artistic and creative soul who is very articulate, with high levels of expectations within himself and a perfectionist in all he does. Desperate to blend in but not coping whatsoever on any level, either academically or socially, he had hit

overload and had been referred to the child and adult mental health services. Educational psychologists were also on board. Harry was in meltdown. I was almost the last resort.

My initial approach with Harry was to calm and soothe his skyrocketing levels of anxiety, before tackling the underlying issues. Harry didn't want to talk to any more people about his issues and the way he was feeling. I wanted to reassure him, get him feeling safe and comfortable and then start earning his trust. I never assume I have anyone's trust just because I am a therapist; I always seek to earn it. Because Harry was feeling so 'out of control', the first thing I did was put him in charge of the entire session. I continued this with every subsequent treatment. I showed him where I'd like to work and we determined how much pressure I would use, because he is very sensitive. He immediately relaxed and loved all the areas that calmed and cleared his head, heart and blood pressure, especially around the occiput bone. He really loved it there and always wanted 'loads extra'. It was exactly here that he needed it the most, funnily enough.

Harry also enjoyed being massaged over the pineal area as well as on his temples, which stimulates the pituitary glands and all that wonderful release of serotonin and dopamine. It is not, in my opinion, a coincidence that these areas control how happy we feel. Dopamine, in particular, helps with clear thinking, planning and judgement whilst the parietal and temporal massaging helps with emotional processing, social interaction and all the executive brain functions. Within a week, Harry was calmer, clearer and more able to think and cope. He felt relaxed and in control. As a result, he began to trust me and open up. From the very first session he also began going to bed on time and staying in bed all night; something he had struggled with all his life.

As time went on, the long-term effects of the massage kicked in and Harry did not need to see me so often, so he dropped to weekly sessions then fortnightly at the end of two months. Harry developed

a regular, deeper sleep pattern, and he was coping better and remembering homework tasks. I started to concentrate more on his upper back and shoulders at this point to start to open up his heart and lungs, melt his boundaries further and increase his trust, as well as work on his relationships with others and the world around him. He adored this massage. I noticed he was becoming more confident and expressive as the sessions went on. His family all remarked on the differences they saw.

The sessions gradually decreased over the year and only needed 'topping up' when there were exams or emotional upsets. I taught him techniques to use when he hit overload or was starting to feel anxious – techniques he now uses with confidence. Life is not always easy for Harry. He has learned to live with some of his traits, because they will always be there, but we all have traits, and that is how I encouraged him to see them. This in itself took the pressure off and he became much more self-accepting. He still has flare ups of OCD, but it is much more manageable now and, the way I see it, a little bit of OCD is fine if it helps him cope. He is not hurting anyone and it no longer controls, absorbs or damages his life. That has all changed since having massage. He has opened up socially too, unbelievably so. All this confidence and self-belief have spread to his academic performance. He is no longer defined by other people's limited expectations or by his many labels. He achieves. He has a voice. He is Harry.

Grace, Aged 9

Grace first came to see me when she was eight years old. She was displaying autistic traits, although they were not diagnosed, and had severely high anxiety levels. To her mother's shock and upset, a few months previously, Grace had pulled out all her own eyelashes overnight and this had now become a habit. She had developed

constant 'tummy problems' and sore throats. She had developed very disrupted sleep patterns, both having trouble falling asleep, and then staying asleep. Naturally this was affecting her whole family. Grace was missing a lot of school and had been flagged up to attendance officers. This in turn created more stress, pressure and upset around Grace and as the school stepped in, the family began to feel pressurised and isolated. The situation was spiralling. Grace's mother told me that she felt there was little understanding or support and they had tried 'everything'.

Having heard about my work through other families I had helped, Grace's mother called me. Grace came to see me and I centred the session on her, as I do in every session. I knew she needed to feel safe. I always like to have the child or young person talk to me in their own words, wherever possible, rather than sit there being talked about and probably feeling very self-conscious or uncomfortable. This instantly empowers them and actually I believe that only that person themselves can really know how they feel. Allowing them to speak immediately starts to build trust, because they feel validated, welcome and listened to. There is that immediate sense that I will work with them and not on them. This was so true for Grace. As I have said before, many kids do not feel heard. I always thought I knew how my Ollie felt over all those years struggling at school, because I had walked with him every single day. However, when I did a talk in Belgium, I heard a young author, Marko Ferek, speak about his personal journey as a child with ADHD going through the mainstream system and only then did I grasp the full, inescapable, claustrophobic, lonely horror of every ritualistic school day. I cried for Marko, but I also cried for my son because it was only at that moment that I realised the full and truly awful nightmare that being different brings. So I always make sure that whomever I am working with reclaims their own voice in that first session.

Recognising and feeling Grace's anxiety, and knowing I needed to earn her trust, I put her in the driving seat and in control of her own

treatment. I showed her my techniques and she instinctively knew her favourites; it was these areas that I concentrated on for that first session. She adored being massaged along the occipital bone and actually almost subconsciously pressed her little head against my fingers as I worked. It was little surprise to me that she loved this so much, because it instantly lowered all her anxiety and 'flight or fight' responses. I knew instinctively that her 'tummy upsets' were rooted in undigested emotional and mental issues or anxiety. Her sore throats were, I felt, a result of her inability to talk about what was upsetting her. So working here brought her to a deep level of release and stillness.

Grace also loved the 'raindrops' on her head, particularly around the pineal area. As this helps to regulate sleep, again, it didn't surprise me. I find that many of my young people are so in tune with their bodies – much more so than many adults. She also enjoyed the massaging on her temples, which flooded her with increased levels of serotonin and dopamine.

The other area Grace loved being massaged was on her neck. I was so pleased, because the neck is all about the throat – the centre of our expression and creativity, as I have described – and about finding your voice and feeling heard. It connects where we want to be (in our heads) to where we actually are in our bodies. It connects voice to thought and it is where we speak our truth and where we feel heard.

Grace loved being massaged on these areas so much that I gave her mum a quick lesson to keep Grace topped up. I also showed Grace how to do it for herself. She was thrilled.

Immediately after the session, Grace completely opened up and did not stop talking. She told me all about the night her 'sleep problemed' and the fears that have haunted her since. Her mother was now able to deal with the matter and dialogue had begun.

After that first session, Grace slept like a caterpillar deep inside a cocoon and had trouble staying awake all that evening. Her mum also had her first uninterrupted night's sleep in many months. Grace's eyelashes immediately began to grow back. Grace has never pulled a single one out again and I have to say, those lashes are so thick and beautiful! The whole family began healing just by watching Grace's progress. With better sleep, Grace felt more able to cope and her school attendance also improved. These days I see Grace on an 'as-and-when' basis, usually when she hits a bad patch at school. The head massage gets her so relaxed and floppy, she practically has to be carried home. She has gone from a withdrawn, fearful and anxious girl back to the spirited, wonderful, noisy and cheeky little girl who her family know and love.

Luna, Aged 11

Luna was ten years old when she first started coming to see me. She was clearly at the high functioning end of the autistic spectrum and was suffering from stress, anxiety and nervousness due to changing schools, the pressures of tests and the challenges that being different within the mainstream system brings. She had become very insular, refusing to go out and see friends, and she wouldn't let her mother out of her sight. She had developed such chronic OCD that it was affecting the simplest of everyday tasks. Even getting dressed for school in the mornings was so fraught with routines and rituals that it caused tension, anger, stress and upset to every member of the family, as well as to little Luna. Everything had become a worry to her and it spilled over into her sleep as she became tormented with nightmares. Nights inevitably became broken and disturbed sleep patterns took root. She was in a pretty bad way and the family were at breaking point.

Luna's mother had tried unsuccessfully to gain help from Luna's school and the NHS. Nothing seemed to be working. Running out of ideas and hearing about my work in schools, she rang me and brought Luna to see me privately, as I guessed instantly that this would help Luna feel relaxed and safe. After the first session I gave Luna the choice about where she'd like her treatment and she chose a quiet calm room at her home, so I saw her weekly at first on a Tuesday morning before I was due at my schools.

On that first session, initially I chatted with Luna for a while – I wanted her story in her own words. I explored her life outside of school, her interests and what fuelled her imagination. We had lots in common and I could see Luna immediately start to relax. I then explained the whole treatment, because Luna and her mother had told me she really didn't like being touched, especially by people she didn't know very well. I reassured Luna that she could pick only the techniques she liked and I could leave anything else out. She felt comfortable, within her safety zone and in control. For autistic people and those with OCD, I find this approach invaluable but I actually use it with everyone who comes to see me because it is so important that clients are involved in, and empowered by, their own healing.

Straight away I could feel the tremendous load on Luna's raised and absolutely solid little shoulders. She was overloaded, tense and anxious. I could feel how overwhelmed she was and her inability to cope. Just under her shoulders, the tops of her lungs felt cold and solid, so this told me her relationships with others and her environment were blocked and defensive. The pronounced hollow in her upper back level with where her heart was told me she had buried her emotions deep and she was on full self-protective mode. She needed support.

These are the areas I gently massaged, soothed and eased for the first few weeks. I also focused on her temples and parietal lobes to release all that gorgeous serotonin and dopamine to get her stress

and anxiety levels right down and to promote feelings of wellbeing, calm and clear thinking and the ability to process emotions and social situations and control impulses better. I also concentrated heavily on her occipital bone to lower her heart rate and blood pressure and to make her feel sleepy. Work here also helped to ease and release stored memories and upset or anxiety which were deeply buried, along with other everyday issues or worries. As with Grace, this technique really brought Luna to a wonderful point of 'stillness', and from here she could then release and open up. Work around the pineal area helped pretty much immediately with better, deeper and more restful sleep.

After just a few sessions her mother emailed me, overjoyed, writing that her daughter was 'almost back to the happy little girl she once was'. Luna was smiling much more when I saw her and she eventually began to open up and let me know where she most liked the massage. Previously if I spoke to her, she would press herself into her mother and shrug and make the most endearing little cat-like noises. Now she would speak clearly and interact with me. We were building a lovely solid little relationship. After a while, she would actually receive a whole treatment from me and even endure a spontaneous hug! In time, her little arms would even creep up behind my back and give me a gentle but unmistakable squeeze back. She also built up so much confidence and trust that her mother could leave her with me alone to have her treatment – happy and significant progress indeed!

After a couple of months of almost weekly sessions, Luna had begun sleeping better and the nightmares became less frightening and more like vivid dreams. Her mother wrote to me that she could 'start living again without my little bodyguard by my side.' Luna opened up on all levels, became happier and more confident and started to socialise again. She also began to cope much better at school.

I never tried to 'cure' Luna and always focused on celebrating the wonderful gifts she had: her sensitivity, her wisdom, her gentle

nurturing of the animal kingdom, her extensive knowledge of crystals and her beautiful art and creativity. I helped reduce her OCD and make it more manageable so that it wasn't harming, stopping or defining her life, and I taught her techniques to do on herself. I reassured her that a little bit of OCD when life got overwhelming was absolutely okay and that the perfectionism side to OCD would be a useful quality later in life, whether she set up her own business or worked for someone else. Psychologists who I have been lucky enough to meet and share with have told me that people with OCD almost always tend to be kind, caring, sensitive and intelligent people. I shared this with Luna.

With every 'disorder' or trait, there are always positives, and with every person I work with, I emphasise and focus on these, working through massage on the confidence areas to reinforce that message. That acceptance, support and understanding of who they are – that positive defining rather than negative labelling – goes a long way towards helping them accept themselves and blossom.

Over the weeks I built a fabulous bond with Luna that remains to this day. After three months her sessions were reduced to fortnightly, after four months to monthly and after that to as and when she needed them, normally around exams or times of change. She is a beautiful girl with a wonderful spirit and it was a joy to work with her, watch her fears and boundaries and walls crumble, see her whole body open up to trust and safety and watch her find her voice and her wings. I never forget any of 'my' children and young people but Luna was a true joy. She evolved from a tightly clenched dark little seed, buried deep in a safe place within herself, to a big leafy tree trying to touch the sky. She still has her little quirks and eccentricities and she still has flare ups of OCD, but it is not constant. Life is wholly more manageable and she knows what to do to get it back under control. Both her and her family are in a different place entirely from where they were when I first met them. I also treated both her parents for a while when I first met the family, as so often the parents

and carers who are on the front line also need helping. The focus is often on the child, and the first person a mother tends to neglect is herself. Cases like these make my work hugely worthwhile and rewarding.

James, Aged 17

James has autism and diabetes. He first came to see me at school when he was 13. James attends mainstream school but has been heavily supported throughout that time with a one-on-one learning support assistant (LSA) and occupational therapy, as well as weekly sessions, with me. He is a really personable young man, who has had various passions and interests over the years about which he learns anything and everything related. These have ranged from marine biology ('Giuliana, did you know that a jellyfish has 64 bottoms?') through to Xbox games. This latest obsession has seen him begin to design his own games and I truly believe that, with his level of passion and perfectionism, he would make an amazing designer or employee. I know his dedicated mother has sent off some of his ideas to Xbox.

When James first came to see me he had many of the classic signs of ASD such as these almost obsessive passions, but also repetitive behaviour patterns, a love of routine and, at 13, some emotional detachment with people and also to his surroundings. If there was any sudden or unexpected change to his daily routine, the entire day would be tricky. If his mood was low, this was more pronounced.

As with all 'my' kids, I focused very much on the positive strategies to reinforce his confidence and self-acceptance and to help him survive the school day. James could also misread some social situations and I remember a staff member telling me that a simple nudge in a busy corridor or an accidental elbow in the lunch queue would be taken very personally and not always be handled well. The school would

try to avoid these issues by sending James to lunch early or moving him from classroom to classroom earlier than everyone else.

James's mother told me that the weekly head massages were very important to James's wellbeing, focus, productivity and coping faculties throughout the school day. James always came during lunchtimes, as soon as he had eaten. It was a sort of half way breather in the day. On the first session, he sank back into the chair afterwards and exclaimed, 'That was heaven! When you massage me I can float off in my head and go anywhere and be anyone.'

Within weeks, his mother said he was sleeping better, as sleep had so often been light and very disrupted. My work on the pineal area and the occipital had contributed significantly to this. As James became more acclimatised to touch from someone he didn't know very well, the school noted how he had begun to negotiate busy corridors and packed lunch halls with far more calm and ease. As the weeks turned into months and I had worked on his confidence areas and stimulated his serotonin and dopamine levels, the higher brain functions kicked in, he no longer needed to be permanently shadowed by his LSA. He could come into sessions with me unaccompanied from just four weeks into his sessions. James began talking more – a result of the work on his confidence and speech areas as well as on his neck, the centre of communication. After a few months I noted with great excitement that he had begun talking a lot more about others and what was going on around him, rather than just himself or his current passion. I remember feeling quite emotional when after about a year, I was unusually quiet one day and as he left, he asked with real concern, 'Giuliana, are you alright today?' I certainly was after that!

James is now 17 and has really blossomed into a gorgeous and well-rounded young person. He survived all his exams and did well, has a part-time job alongside his further studies and has a girlfriend. He 'does' hugs now, even from me and even when they take him by surprise. You would never know, to look at him, that he is any

different from anybody else. He is James, with all his gifts and passions.

Elizabeth, Aged 21

Elizabeth is 21 and a student at one of my academies. She has learning difficulties, communication difficulties, Asperger's and ADHD. She is obsessively tidy, takes every word literally and absolutely adores music. She dances beautifully and looks so free when she does it. I have updated my own music downloads frequently thanks to being introduced by Elizabeth to new artists and albums. Her behaviour is characterised by sudden bursts of jumping and I always make her giggle by telling her I adore the free-spirited and beautiful energy that goes into her jumping. It makes me want to do it with her.

Elizabeth was referred to me by staff after experiencing numerous problems at the residential academy where she lives and studies. At the time she was in one of the smaller residential houses. Elizabeth needs space – and plenty of it – and would bounce round this small space like a caged tiger. She displayed some anger management issues towards staff, including physically, and it was soon after this that the house manager emailed me.

Elizabeth was very wary when I first met her. I had seen her many times previously, just to say hello to as I worked around the academy, so I was not a stranger to her. However, I was acutely aware that she had a strong dislike of being touched and had not actually requested to see me herself. It was vital therefore that I engaged with her and built a rapport, as well as earning her trust. It was not going to be easy.

On our first session together, as I showed Elizabeth where I would like to work, she recoiled, burst into laughter or sprang up from her chair and jumped repeatedly every time I approached her. It seemed there was nowhere I could lay my hands.

We were in the front lounge of this particular residential house, so I asked staff if I could work with Elizabeth in her bedroom instead, to get her into her own space – her own comfort zone. As I am thoroughly police checked, this was not an issue at all, although staff suggested I left the door open, for my own safety. I wanted to show Elizabeth I was making myself open to her, that I trusted her, so I left it open just an inch.

Elizabeth was immediately and visibly more relaxed. I also suggested she played her own music, which she couldn't believe at first and we got chatting about her wonderful collection of club hits. At this time she didn't have a CD player and ran it all off her tablet, so I suggested she held this in her lap and watch the music videos at the same time. Staff did question this at first, but I quietly told them where I was coming from – that this would be a great diversion and make the sensory overload much less acute – and they allowed it to go ahead in this way. Within minutes I was able to put my hands on her and she barely noticed, so absorbed was she in her music.

She would only allow me to do gentle massage on her head and nowhere else so I only worked here for several weeks. At first she would get up and jump every five to ten minutes. Then it was around twice a session. She was moved to a bigger house a few weeks later and had a wonderful large room with her own CD player and she was happier. Over the weeks she became much more acclimatised to touch and was also sleeping better, thanks to the extra massage to her pineal and occipital areas. Staff reported early on that her behaviour had calmed noticeably and after a couple of months, staff told me that her performance had increased within the house and in lessons. There were fewer outbursts.

After three months of sessions and the advent of the next term's timetables, Elizabeth then requested to see me herself. I would arrive to find her ready and waiting for me, music chosen. A huge smile and we were off...

Within six weeks after this point, and still only massaging Elizabeth's head, I was amazed one day when she pulled her chair to the window and announced she didn't need her tablet. She sat like a quiet lamb for a full 30 minutes – she no longer needed a distraction. She also began to talk with me and ask me questions about music, and she thrived and glowed every time I praised her progress. As the weeks went on and I focused on her pituitary and dopamine areas, I heard from staff how much happier Elizabeth was, how much better she was in lessons and how she was winning 'student of the month' within her house. I am not suggesting that this was all down to me, as this particular academy has highly skilled and wonderful staff, but many of these changes began to take root around the time Elizabeth began her weekly massages, and I know they substantially helped this progress. She was calmer thanks to work on the occiput and so was resting and sleeping better. She was more able to control her impulses thanks to the weekly stimulation of her dopamine levels, as well as being more able to cope. The massages, along with other supportive techniques put in place by staff, were really paying off.

Occasionally Elizabeth would have to get up and jump but I never minded. She has such grace and energy; I'm quite envious. She would let me work on her shoulders, as well as her forehead and temples. The occipital work and the work she was letting me do around her eyes (progress!) was especially good for reducing her anger and frustration levels. The frontal lobe work really let me get into stimulating the executive brain functions and her confidence and clear thinking areas. The temple work kept her happy hormone levels topped up so she felt more able to cope, as well as being generally more smiley and less anxious. In fact, Elizabeth was 100 per cent more smiley and her new house manager for several weeks would talk with me about what a 'star student' she had become. I also gently pushed the shoulder work, which she slowly acclimatised to, and this work helped to open the tops of her lungs thereby stimulating calmer, deeper breathing and better relationships.

I also suggested to Elizabeth that she join a trampolining club or sports club to concentrate on her beautiful jumping and energy. One of my school students who had ADHD focused his energies on swimming and got to national championship level; as always, it is all about the positives that come with labels and channelling them for the greater good.

Elizabeth continues to thrive a year on from joining my caseload. She is a very special soul. In fact, not long ago her weekly time was suddenly changed meaning her whole lunchtime was thrown out. She quickly adapted and organised herself to have lunch early and all without a fuss – absolutely huge for her!

A very happy day indeed came about after I had been treating Elizabeth for 15 months. She had taken part in an academy talent show at the end of term – something that had taken immense dedication and courage and spoke volumes about how far she had come. During the interval I went up to congratulate her on her winning performance. She spotted me approaching and began squeaking with uncontained joy. As we were chatting she suddenly held out her arms towards me, then stood up. I stood up at her lead and she spontaneously flung her arms tight around me, vigorously rubbing my upper back as she did so and she held me like this for over a minute! I was gulping back the tears. This was the girl who hated touch – and who disliked giving touch. Staff nearby were clearly amazed, as was I. I will never forget that hug and the volumes it spoke. It left its print on me for weeks afterwards and I can still recall it exactly now.

Louise, Aged 21

Louise first asked to see me when she was 19 and had just started at one of my academies. She has ASD, learning difficulties, dyslexia and dyspraxia. She has a very sensitive and caring nature, expressing

herself beautifully and articulately through the spoken word and coloured pictures and drawings. She is clearly a creative soul and one of life's thinkers. She is very sensitive about herself, but also others, and gets very affected by the moods and actions of those around her.

On our first session she was initially nervous to the point of fear. She was extremely anxious as to what to expect. Again, trust needed to be earned here. I put her totally at ease by explaining where I work and putting her completely in control of it; very soon she was having the full treatment. For Louise, as with so many of my young people, the session was also about having that space to have a voice and to feel listened to and safe, whilst having the massage.

There area where she most wanted the massage would vary each week and interestingly it was always where she needed it the most in terms of what was going on for her at that time. She always requested I do her upper back and shoulders when she was having social issues or difficulties, which initially were fairly frequent. Massaging here opened up her heart and lung areas, the heart being the centre of emotions and the lungs being all about relationships. I also concentrated on Louise's head, particularly the occipital lobe to calm her anxieties and fill her with calm, and her temporal and parietal lobes to stimulate her dopamine and serotonin levels so she felt more able to cope, think clearly, control her impulses and be generally much happier. I balanced both sides of the brain with each session to level out her hormonal levels and bring clarity of thought. She was always more smiley, clear, relaxed and uplifted at the end of each session. It certainly made a great difference to her in that first year away from home and coping with so many new people and demands.

Louise also told me regularly how she would sleep much better after each massage and how her anxiety levels would drop. She said to me many times, 'Giuliana, you help me to cope. It feels better after you've been.'

She also told me she would have 'much better lessons' after her massages and could 'remember things better'. It was so wonderful to hear that the massage was clearly helping Louise academically as well as socially. Whilst growing up and adapting have also undoubtedly played a part in these changes, as well as the support of other staff, Louise directly and immediately reaps the benefits of my massage and, long term, those rewards have really paid off. She certainly copes much better on every level now, and when she has a 'wobbly' or a tricky patch, the massage is invaluable in helping her to articulate that, find solutions from a clearer, happier, calmer space and get her on an even keel once more.

Adrian, Aged 22

Adrian is an absolutely delightful and very personable young guy with learning difficulties, communication difficulties, Down's syndrome and a hearing impairment. He has a beautiful, sunny, open nature but was experiencing a few difficulties settling in to his new academy, living with new fellow housemates and adapting to new routines where he had to organise himself in the move towards independence.

Adrian was very receptive to my therapy from the start and absolutely loves touch. He is very in tune with his own body and where he needs touch. He asks constant questions about my massage technique, what it all means and what each technique does. He is a total joy and I really feel as though I work with him, not on him.

Recognising his struggles and the huge amount he has had to take in, I knew from the first session that I had to work on lowering his anxiety levels and raising his serotonin and dopamine levels to increase his happiness, clear thinking, confidence and forward

planning abilities, as well as his judgement. I noticed a marked improvement after just three sessions. For example, on the fourth time I saw him, he knew he hadn't had his lunch but had to go to work at 1.30 pm. He took it upon himself to swap his session time with someone else and then he came to let me know. For someone who three weeks previously had forgotten to budget for bread for his lunch, this was an amazing step towards organisation and independence.

I noticed that when he had trouble communicating his thoughts and opinions to other housemates or to staff, he would stutter and then give up and take himself to his room. I worked on his speech and confidence areas as well as his occiput to lower his stress levels and allow for more clear thought. I also spent a lot of time over the sessions working up Adrian's spine to open up the heart and lungs, calm emotions and help with his relationships with others and his environment. By working regularly on his neck, Adrian's throat and communication were opened up, and he also felt he was being heard.

After eight weeks of noting and recording all the changes, however subtle, in Adrian's confidence, speech, interactions, ability to cope and function and the pride he was taking in accomplishing tasks, as well as his generally calmer disposition, my joy was compounded when after one session he turned to me, made me sit down and declared, as if he was making a speech, 'Giuliana, you fill my heart with magic and warm and lovely things. When I have girl trouble or college trouble, you fill me with your healing touch and I can look at myself and think, "I'm Adrian and I'm a kind and wonderful young man and I love my college."'

What more can I say?! I nearly cried.