

Michael tells his story about how Relate's Family counselling helped him and his family restore the balance in their life...



The names and photos of clients and counsellor in this story have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Why we came to Relate...

"My wife Mandy and I had previously attended relationship counselling very successfully in the past, so when things were becoming difficult in our family relationships we again turned to Relate - this time with our three children who at the time were 16-year old Dan, 13 year-old David and 11-year old Poppy.

We called Relate after realising that our family unit was being seriously disrupted by how our middle son, David, related to other members of the family and to people outside the family too. At home things were really challenging, especially in his relationships with his younger sister and with us. At home he'd been swearing, hitting, bullying, stealing and at school he'd been consistently misbehaving and disrupting lessons and talking back to teachers. So we thought it would be good for the family to go together for counseling."

Our first session...

"Mandy and I had been to Relate before so had an understanding of what happened during counselling, whereas the kids didn't know what to expect at all before the first session. I think we were all a little bit apprehensive to be honest. But we needn't have been as our first session with our counsellor Nina was great."

What happened during the sessions...

"The counselling allowed each child and parent to have their say in a non judgemental environment. Nina asked us to do a bit of role play to help see things from each other's perspectives. The sessions helped us to air our views in front of Nina who we all trusted and respected as an impartial person in the room who would hear us all as equals. We were able to search for and clarify how our family dynamic worked.

Although it didn't wave a magic wand over all of David's behavioural issues, he did become more aware of the consequences of his actions. As he's grown older, his behaviour has improved naturally as he's become more mature though this hasn't resolved many of the basic issues."

What we've taken away from counselling...

"The sessions with Nina were very helpful but our other two children began to resent the fact that they had to give up their free time in order to help with something that they didn't see as their problem. By the end of our sessions, however, they could see that it wasn't just their brother with a problem, but rather the way we were all interacting which needed to improve.

Coming to Relate showed us all that we needed to look at our family and the way we behaved in a larger context. The biggest thing we have taken away is that everyone's behaviour affects everyone else's and we're all responsible for each other's happiness."

"We would definitely recommend that anyone in our situation tries Relate."

relate
the relationship people