**P1:** **[00:00:00]** Hello.

**P2:** Hi.

**P1:** Oh, hi.

**P2:** How are you? Let me just start the video. Okay.

**P1:** Hi?

**P2:** Hi, how are you?

**P1:** How are you doing?

**P2:** I'm good. How are you?

**P1:** Can you hear me? I'm all right thanks. Nice to see that -- yes, I can hear you and I can see you.

**P2:** Okay. Let me just make it a bit louder so I can hear you. Okay. That should be a bit better.

**P1:** Cool. How are you? How have you been?

**P2:** Um, yeah, I've been okay. I mean, we are getting into a routine now I suppose, a bit more of a routine.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, uh, yeah. I'm -- I mean, obviously we don’t know how long this is going to last, so, um…

**P1:** Yeah. We assume…

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** …the school opened again? Sorry. Is your school opened again?

**P2:** No, we -- we are not back at school yet.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** So, that is the challenge. So, um, we're just trying to, um, do as much as we can at home.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah -- yeah.

**P2:** Um, and that's about it.

**P1:** Yeah, okay. Um, I feel your frustration. I feel like you're very frustrated. **[laughter]**

**P2:** Very frustrating. It's very. But I've sort of come to like a bit of an acceptance as well.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** I mean, I have this sort of, like, um -- yeah, I mean, at the beginning I was so furious and anxious and, um, you know, just not know what to do, and now I'm just kind of feel like, well let's just ride it out and hope for the best.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah.

**P2:** Um, and we're -- we're getting into a routine. I mean, you know, at the beginning, it was very difficult to settle into a routine and now we have a bit more of a structure to the day.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, although it's quite fluid. Um, you know, the mornings are for, you know, activities and going outside and going out or drive or going out for a walk. Um…

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** …and then the afternoons are more like, you know, a bit of TV.

**P1:** Mm-hmm.

**P2:** Or, you know, whatever. Um, yeah but it's still -- it is still…

**P1:** Yeah. Has that helped you[crosstalk]?

**P2:** Has that helped me? Yes, it has helped me. Um, because now -- now my little boy knows sort of -- knows what -- more of what to expect. So, um, instead of expecting TV all day, um, he now knows that TV is only for the afternoon.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, that's how -- but he's also -- we also started a bit of play therapy.

**P1:** Yes, I remember you were going to start. How is it going?

**P2:** Yeah. So, we've had two sessions. Um, two Zoom sessions, on Zoom.

**P1:** Okay, that’s a bit -- okay.

**P2:** Uh, no, it's really not ideal and thankfully on Friday morning we'll have a face-to-face session.

**P1:** Yes, awesome.

**P2:** In the -- so kind of just practice. Um, the -- I have to say the Zoom sessions I didn't feel it went well at all.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, I thought that they were, um, very difficult. Um, very -- I mean he wasn't particularly cooperative. He felt very threatened in fact for some reason. I mean, it got sort of very intense very quickly.

**P1:** Okay. Interesting. What do you think it was? What do you think happened?

**P2:** I don’t know. I mean -- I mean he understands the concept of Zoom, because, um, we -- we chat with my dad every week. My dad lives overseas…

**P1:** Right.

**P2:** And we have a Zoom meeting and Zoom chat once a week.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** So, he's kind of used to that. He's kind of used to seeing people on the -- on the screen and he knows that he can talk to them and whatever. Um, but for some reason, this was obviously a stranger that he's never met before. Um, and asking him to, um, not leave the room, so that the rule was he can't leave the room. And obviously asking him to do things that he didn't want to do specifically.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, so it didn't go very well. Um…

**P1:** Which is hard enough in-person, I think, but um, in Zoom extra difficult.

**P2:** Yeah, but I think like our first session we had a bit of a breakthrough, in that, you know he had -- because he wasn't allowed to leave the room, so he felt very, um, um, captured -- captive.

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** Um, and he had like this enormous tantrum and the therapist actually sort of coached me how to deal with it and that really helped. And she was, you know, sort of just observing my interaction with him, and basically made some, um -- made some observations which I felt were quire insightful.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** And, you know, sort of use that. Then, you know, like one of the things -- and one of the things I know that I do, is that I get a bit -- I get very tense when he has a tantrum. I get very nervous. You know, one of the things he said to me -- she's said to me, the therapist, was like, "Yeah he's not going to break. You know, he's not going to die from a tantrum, you know." Like…

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um -- like just relax, basically. He didn't say in those words, but um, I mean, the bottom line was like, you know, like you're panicking but it's fine. He's just going to have a tantrum and, um, and it's fine. Nothing is going to happen.

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** Um, so that definitely did help and I felt like, um, you know whereas I had been -- because I get very sort of, um, anxious when he throws a tantrum, I had to sort of trying to ignore it as much as possible. So, I just turning away from him and he pointed out that maybe he felt a bit rejected at that point when I ignore it. Because I didn't want to prolong it. You know, I just felt that if he wasn't given any attention then it would just -- it would, um…

**P1:** Dial down.

**P2:** Yeah, it sort of would -- it wouldn't last so long. But, um, basically she said she suggested that I, um, just sort of try and hold him or, you know, rub his back or, um, you know, rub his tummy, something like that. And, um, and yeah that has helped. So, you know, now when he has a tantrum -- he's had a few since then.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** I just -- I just, um -- I just sort of like try sit by him and because he is completely out of control when he has a tantrum. I mean, it's just he has no control whatsoever. Um, and it just it is helpful to just sit next to him and not -- and be calming myself and -- and just try and, um, make him aware that I'm there for him if he needs me.

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** Um, but, you know, um, because I think he sensed that I was -- I was panicking, um, you know, and yeah. So, that definitely did help.

**P1:** Can I ask, I mean, I know you said the therapist said like, "Don't worry. He's not going to break." And -- and I wonder if you felt as if you were going to break. Like I can't do this? I can't take this and like you were the one that wanted to run away. Um…

**P2:** Yeah, I suppose, it was a bit of a **[00:10:00]** -- a bit of, um -- a bit of both. Like I said like oh my God, you know what? He's -- he's going to, you know, he's going to explode, you know. Um, and also I suppose me as well. Like I'm like, you know. Um, another thing happened that has just popped into my mind that I actually -- I actually shouted at him, um, a few days ago.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, and I don't -- I really don’t shout a lot. Like I really don’t. Um, and when I say shout, I mean screamed.

**P1:** Yes -- yes -- yes. **[laughter]**

**P2:** Um, and I really don't do that. I've done it maybe like a handful of times his whole life. Um, but I don’t know I had a lot of stress. I had an assignment that was due and he was whining and I can't handle the whining. The whining for me is terrible. And he was whining and whining and whinging and I just cracked and I screamed at him, and, um, interesting, like um, it really shut him up. **[laughter]**

**P1:** Okay. **[laughter]**

**P2:** I really -- it like -- yeah it just shut him up and he was quite scared, you know. He got a fright, he got a big fright, because, you know, I don’t -- I don’t shout at him.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um,

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** And so then I felt terribly guilty. It was like the -- he was -- he was really scared and I felt terrible and, um…

**P1:** I think it is that moment where we see ourselves through our children's eyes. Like you have that moment where the view shifts and you think, "Oh, gosh." Like, "He sees me as scary," and that feels awful in that moment.

**P2:** Yeah. Yeah, and so it wasn't my finest moment. Um…

**P1:** I'm sorry.

**P2:** But it was interesting to see his reaction. **[laughter]**

**P1:** Okay. Speaking of that, makes me wonder if you do -- if you -- what did I want to say, hold it in often, um…

**P2:** Yeah. I do.

**P1:** And don't express your feeling early enough or just enough or do you know what I mean?

**P2:** Yeah. I'm probably. Yeah, I just -- I do. I just do hold it in because I don’t want to be a shouting mommy.

**P1:** Yes -- yes.

**P2:** Um, and that you know, I just don’t want to be like a mom like that. And…

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah.

**P2:** But he's always been, I mean, up until now he's always been fairly, um, I mean, little kids are, you know, not as difficult as older kids. I can see, you know, he can't really defy me. You know, like he's a small child, but you know, it's not like he can -- like you know, he's still very dependant. Um…

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah.

**P2:** And I just wonder how I'm going to handle him as he gets older and he gets more independent and, you know, more, um, have his own ideas and thoughts and whatever and how I’m going to deal with that. Because obviously, I mean, it's inevitable. I mean, I can't -- you know, he's not always going to be very compliant and, um, you know. **[laughter]** Um, and I just I don’t want to be a mommy that just shouts all the time.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** um, it's very frustrating. It's not nice for me and it's obviously not nice for him. And, um, so I kind of feel like I need to learn skills.

**P1:** Right. I mean, I was wondering, what you were telling me this story it sounds so lucky with the therapist that she could talk you through it. That was a nice opportunity. But I wondered if, um, sometimes you doubt your own ability to be able to manage and it was nice to have this coach basically like to guide you through it? Like now, do this, do that?

**P2:** Um, yeah it was nice. It -- it was nice to get another person's, um, observations.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** You know, and she -- she -- she explained what she saw in the interaction. That was interesting for me. Um, and gaining another perspective. Um, so um, yeah and it was very reassuring. It was very reassuring to just had someone say, "You know, you're not -- you're not doing badly. You're not a bad terrible mom, um, but maybe you could try this next time." And that was helpful

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah. Because do you sometimes doubt yourself or doubt your abilities to cope or?

**P2:** I do. Um, I do. I mean, yeah. Um, yeah. I don’t know what else to say. I do.

**P1:** Okay. **[laughter]** Um, yeah, okay I'm trying to think. I mean, the other thing I was thinking about that when you were talking is -- I don’t know why but it took my mind back to your mum. Um, it reminded me of, um -- the last time I spoke to you, you were saying that when he has a tantrum and then your mom also says like, "No, don’t tantrum." And she -- you can't bear it, and I wondered -- how do I -- sorry, I need to find the words to describe my thoughts, but…

**P2:** Okay.

**P1:** …I wondered if you were needing from your mom what the therapist was doing, if that makes sense? Like would you have wanted your mom to be that person to like coach you through it or?

**P2:** Um, look, um, I definitely -- I definitely would like my mom to be more, um, calmer and more, um, rational, um, when this happens.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, but she has her own -- you know, her own experiences, her own parenting experiences, her own background.

**P1:** Mm-hmm.

**P2:** Um, her own feelings about him.

**P1:** Mm-hmm.

**P2:** So, it's -- it's very difficult. Um, I don’t think -- no. To answer your question now, I wouldn't want my mom to be that person.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** But I would want her to react in a different way when he's -- when he's having a tantrum.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah -- yeah okay. So, not -- would it feel too intrusive if she was coaching you like do this now…

**P2:** Yes.

**P1:** …and do that. Okay, you're like, "Back off. I've got this lady." **[laughter]**

**P2:** Right.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** And yeah, I mean, definitely I need her to kind of back off when I'm dealing with the situation like that, and I need to deal with it my way, not her way.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah. Okay, um, that makes sense. Um, I mean, I wanted to ask you, that was one of the things that we didn't really talk about last time I spoke to you, um, was your mom and your relationship with her and you, you know, you were worried she was in the background and do you feel comfortable about talking about it today…

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** …a little bit more.

**P2:** Well, she's still in the background.

**P1:** She's still in the background. Okay.

**P2:** Um, **[laughter]**.

**P1:** It's difficult.

**P2:** Yeah, it's been very difficult especially during this period, um, when we're both basically at home.

**P1:** Mm-hmm.

**P2:** Um, and we've had some quite major blowouts.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, and it's interesting, we -- I mean, we had one major blowout and, um, in front of Son which is not great.

**P1:** Right.

**P2:** Um, but it happened, and, um, and he actually after that started pushing her away a little bit.

**P1:** Uh.

**P2:** And, you know, interesting and it's a little bit sad for me to see that reaction because usually they're very close.

**P1:** Right -- right.

**P2:** Um, and it just highlighted to me, that, you know, we need to -- we need to come to some sort of compromise and peace, in, you know, because it's -- it affects him. I mean, it does. Um, so, it's -- it's very important. So, it has been a lot better since then because I'm very cognizant of the fact that he's watching and observing and, you know, taking in everything like a sponge. Um, and I don’t want it to affect his relationship with her.

**P1:** Mm-hmm. What have you had to do that's created more peace? Has it meant you holding back or responding in a different way or…

**P2:** It's responding in a different way. And, um, just, you know, just -- just trying to have a lot more patience with my mom. Um, you know, um, and, um, keep in mind her struggles and her issues and, um, you know, things like that. Um…

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** Yeah, so has that helped? Like keeping most stuff -- keeping her in mind?

**P2:** Yeah -- yeah. Definitely -- definitely.

**P1:** Is she able to keep your stuff in mind when she's interacting with you?

**P2:** To a certain extent. To a certain extent, but I mean, she is -- you know, I mean, she's also had 70 years of doing things her way, so it's very difficult for her to change. But, um, but we do. We both do try. We really do.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** For him -- for son's sake.

**P1:** Yeah. I mean, do you guys -- do you talk **[00:20:00]** about it ever in that meta way of like, "What can we do to be better?

**P2:** Um, yeah we do. We do talk about it. Um, I mean, sometimes we need to not talk to each other. **[laughter]** Because there's no meeting of minds. So, it's just -- it's just -- it's better to just not talk to one another because…

**P1:** Right -- right.

**P2:** Um, but at times we are able to talk about, you know, our relationship and what we can do to improve it.

**P1:** Okay -- okay. And all right, so then you're able to agree, I'm guessing sometimes about what needs to be done.

**P2:** Yeah, in moments of sanity and peace…

**P1:** Yes -- yes.

**P2:** …we are able to do that, after the -- after the blow out, yeah.

**P1:** After, yeah of course. Of course. Okay. All right. Um, and have you gone back to -- oh, you were always working obviously, but are you leaving the house or staying…

**P2:** Not really no. Well, I mean, a little bit more than before. Um, but not much. I mean, you know, I do take -- I do try and take Son out, you know, even if it's just for a drive.

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** You know, to get like a coffee for me and like a hot chocolate for him or something. Um, just so he gets out of the house. I mean, he goes to see his dad almost every day…

**P1:** mm-hmm.

**P2:** …um, which has been fabulous. Um, he -- um, his father, um, had some -- had a family celebration, I don’t know if we discussed that. Um, so -- yeah, it was our niece's wedding.

**P1:** Oh, okay.

**P2:** Yeah, an eagle wedding that they had.

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** So, there were a lot of celebrations around that which he was involved in. Um, so I was very happy for him to be involved in.

**P1:** Right.

**P2:** Um, so he does seem a little bit -- but he's also -- so he started play therapy, he's also started with speech therapy.

**P1:** Oh, amazing.

**P2:** Um, yeah, which I felt, um, I felt that there were deficits.

**P1:** Mm-hmm.

**P2:** And that was, initially he had, um, some testing done and that was confirmed basically that he does have some deficits. Um, I'm glad that we -- that we got him into speech therapy. So he goes to speech therapy once a week he goes -- oh, we did start -- we did restart physio. He had been in physio, um, before lockdown and then his physio closed her practice and she started again. Unfortunately she is now sick. So, um, he did one session of physio, which was fabulous.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, and he also has -- he also has like, um, a little girl, who comes in twice a week to, you know, to just play with him and…

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** …um, you know, just let me get some work done and, um, he seems to be loving it.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** So, he's getting a lot more interaction [crosstalk] and, um, so he's feeling a lot better now.

**P1:** Oh, good. Okay, so a lot more structure as well, in his week…

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** …um, just around, um, things that re happening and it's amazing. Um, has he settled at all? Has his behaviour changed?

**P2:** It's a lot better. It's a lot better. Yeah.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Look he's -- I still think when he's very frustrated and confused. Um, I mean, we often go drive past his school.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, you know, because I don’t want him to forget that he's going back to school, um, you know, as soon as it opens. So, I do take him past and we talk about school and we talk about his teacher.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, and he always says to me, "Why can't I go to school?" You know, "Why am I not in school?" Um, so he's still -- there's still a lot of confusion about that and I still think he gets very frustrated.

**P1:** Mm-hmm.

**P2:** Um, but I feel like he's just happier.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** Okay, and you? Because you are obviously getting a lot more space in the day or in the week at least, um?

**P2:** Yeah, look, I mean, I have a lot of work to do. Um, trying to get through this work that I need to do. Um, so I've made a decision to have a bit of clarity sort of careerwise, um, which has been, um -- which has been good for me. Because it was just very much sort of in the air. And, you know, now I have more of a career path that I am going on, um, which has been great, so I know what I need to work towards.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, and so yeah, I'm feeling a lot more, um, confident about that.

**P1:** Okay. Was that -- I mean, were you feeling a bit lost beforehand…

**P2:** Yes.

**P1:** …maybe when we had spoken a few weeks ago?

**P2:** I was, um, you know, so I um, -- I had started a private practice in January -- February. Basically February and then in March there was a lockdown. So, I mean, you know, and I was sort of feeling like a bit of a failure, um, you know, having not established a thriving private practice in a month and a half.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, **[laughter]** so, um, and now I've decided that look I had always been like one foot out the social work door.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, for a long time. And now I've decided to basically go in a different direction completely.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, and I've -- I've basically said that -- I've basically told, um, the school that I'm not coming back to my practice, um, and they -- and I've, you know, actually suggested a friend of mine…

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** …um, to take over. So, that is bringing me to looking other direction, which I'm very happy about.

**P1:** Amazing. Okay. Amazing, it sounds like although a lot is still very much the same for you, a lot more has settled. It's like, um, yeah.

**P2:** Yeah, or we all -- I feel like we're all very used to this now, you know? And it's like this is -- this is what life is like now. There's, you know, um -- so what can I say? I mean, so I feel like -- I feel like I'm closer to acceptance which is bad because like, you know, it's just so wrong. I mean, that's -- that's -- that's what that is.

**P1:** Mm-hmm. Absolutely. And, um, I mean, I wanted to ask you, one of the things that I had two questions from the first interview was around, sorry I'm just reading -- where has this disappeared to now? It's what -- I don’t know, what do you think you're needing as a mom? What could make things easier for you? I know the school opening, um, but, maybe I mean more existentially.

**P2:** Uh, what do I need as a mom? Hmm, validation.

**P1:** Okay. That you did a good…

**P2:** Yeah, that I'm doing a good job. Um, I'd have to say as much as I feel like I do have -- I'm very privileged to have a lot practical help…

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** …I still feel like I need more, you know. Um…

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Yeah, and just I don't know resources, money, you know, um, **[laughter]** there's just -- I mean, at this point, like I'd love for him to do, um, more extramurals even though I know that, you know, it's so over emphasised and I don’t want an overscheduled kid.

**P1:** Sure.

**P2:** You know, there's still things that I would like him to do that I just -- it's not going to fit into the budget at this point. Um, yeah, that is I think what I would need.

**P1:** Yeah. Is some of -- I mean, it's about -- it feels like -- uh, sorry, how do I say, giving him a certain experience. You want him to have -- you want to be able to give him something, a certain something in this…

**P2:** Yeah. Yes. I mean, there's always this feeling that, you know, when you see your peers, um, doing certain things and -- and I try not to be caught up in that. I mean, I try not to get caught up in the latest things that are happening, but you know, a lot of his -- a lot of his little friends at school do, you know, soccer and whatever. You know, like a whole lot of stuff. And -- and I don’t want him to miss out. I don’t want him to be left behind. I don’t want him not to have those experiences. At the same time, I know that’s not all important. I mean, it -- you know, it's the fact that he is loved and -- and, um, supported and, you know, looked after, uh, you know, basically is what's going to make him a successful adult. A successful person. Um, it's not all about, like, you know, which soccer class he goes to and -- and what clothes he has and things like that. I try not to get caught up in that, but sometimes I do, you know.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, although for the most part, um, we do go to a very sort of down to earth school, I have to say.

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** Um, and just -- and just sort of giving him time, um, and sometimes I **[00:30:00]** I need to do things and I'm not there to support him and play with him and things like that. I think also what I would want is to have more patience to, um -- to play with him. Um, and to spend time with him. I'm not good at that.

**P1:** Yes -- yes.

**P2:** I'm not good at sitting down and playing with Lego or playing with cards…

**P1:** No.

**P2:** …or things like that. I get very sort of frustrated with that. I do try it, as much as possible.

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** Yeah, um…

**P1:** What about it frustrates you? Which parts? **[laughter]**

**P2:** Um, hold on a second. He's just screaming. Hold on.

**P1:** Sure.

**P2:** Sorry.

**P1:** That's okay. Is everyone all right?

**P2:** Um, yeah, everyone is fine thanks. Um, what was I just saying? Um, I just get very restless…

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** …about when I'm like sitting and playing, I just feel you know, this is silly, I need to be doing something constructive, you know. Yeah.

**P1:** Okay. Do you find it boring?

**P2:** Yeah, I do.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** I'm also like addicted to my phone, **[laughter]** so it's very hard to put the phone down and focus on him.

**P1:** Yes -- yes -- yes -- yes -- yes. Um, okay, and is he wanting -- has he been wanting a lot more of that from you during the lockdown?

**P2:** Um, yeah -- yeah. Sometimes definitely. I mean it's also boring for him, um, you know. Sometimes he has to play by himself.

**P1:** Yeah, does he play by himself?

**P2:** He does. He is able to play by himself, but sometimes he does say, you know, "Come and play with me." And, you know, and he's got this -- this little girl that comes and plays with him and he loves it. He absolutely -- she's like, you know -- I mean, she's like all her attention on him. He loves that. Um, so he -- and he -- and she just does whatever he wants to do, so…

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** …it's great for him, yeah. Whereas I'm very distracted when I play with him. I'm like, you know, checking something on the stove, or checking my e-mails or, you know.

**P1:** Yeah, when were the times that you guys do connect? What do you connect over?

**P2:** Um, hmm. Um, I mean, there are times when I can sit with him and we'll play with Lego and we'll build stuff, um, you know, accept, um, we sometimes sit in the garden. We -- you know, we often times sit in the garden and just sit on a -- on a, you know, a blanket on the grass and just chat.

**P1:** Yes -- yes.

**P2:** Um, he also sleeps in my bed, so every night a few unfortunately…

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** …but at this point…

**P1:** Maybe saying…

**P2:** Yeah, it is frustrating but I also -- I'm also scared of letting him go. I mean, he has his own bedroom and his own bed, but you know, um, I don’t know he doesn't seem to want to sleep in his bed alone and I was so -- I don't encourage it because, um -- I don’t know. I feel -- I'm scared of him being so far away…

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** …you know, next door bed -- next door bedroom, but anyway we -- you know, I just -- I do lie with him in bed every night before he goes to sleep and we read stories, we just…

**P1:** Okay. That's nice.

**P2:** I just tickle his back, um…

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** So that's nice.

**P1:** Yeah. That is really nice. Um, sorry, so when you said scared of him being far away, is it like a physical thing like he'll fall out of bed and bump his head or is it like he'll have nightmares and I'll be -- I'll, you know, only be in the next room or?

**P2:** Um, yeah, I am scared that he might fall out of bed. Um…

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Like for instance, I am scared that he's going to -- he always seems to kick the covers off especially now during winter months, I'm scared that he's going to get cold.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, so, yeah, so that's my main fears.

**P1:** Yeah, just a general worry about…

**P2:** You know, if he -- if he's in his own bedroom, I'll just be checking on him like every half an hour. So, it's just easier for me to have him sleep in my bed.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** Yes, and you worry that you'll be awake all night like checking…

**P2:** Yeah, worry.

**P1:** Okay, yes. **[laughter]** Yeah. Um, okay. I mean, I guess, there's something more I want to say about that, but I don’t really know what it is. Maybe something about a constant worry that he's okay or general anxiety around his wellbeing.

**P2:** Yeah. Definitely.

**P1:** Um, okay. Um, I mean, sorry that reminds me of something else that I wanted to ask you. But sorry, I'm just trying to go through. I had a whole list of questions that I'm just trying to read through. Um, I mean, yeah this -- this is one around -- so what I had written and I don’t -- I can't remember exactly where it came up in the first interview, but, um, I wondered if you felt like you often were the one that had to take the reins and steer the ship and, I mean, being the mom you obviously have to do that, but sometimes it was difficult or you didn't feel like it, and if felt like, "Uh, why don’t--," you know.

**P2:** Yeah. I understand. Um, yes -- yes. I mean, I feel -- sometimes I'm the only one that's making the decisions, um, for this child.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, my ex-husband is very, um -- um [ 00:36:23].

**P1:** Okay, right.

**P2:** Um, you know, like I felt a sense of urgency to organise an [**opay 00:36:30**], for him to come in and just have a tease with him and I felt a sense of urgency to get him into play therapy and I'm -- like I am always the one that's making those decisions and you know. Um, and that I had just specifically ask him for his opinion before he will discuss it with me. And, you know, sometimes he'll say, "Oh don't worry about it," you know. Like you know, like he has -- you know the teacher picked up last year that he has, um, a weak core -- you know, like weak core muscles and maybe needed physio.

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** And Ex-husband, my ex-husband was like, "Oh, leave it, you know. All children have that. You know, whatever. We'll deal with it when he goes to Grade R." And I was like, "No, no. We have to deal with it now." Um, so I was the one that -- I'm always the one that's, you know, finding a therapist to go to and making the arrangements and taking him to the arrangements and things like that. So, um, yeah sometimes I do feel like I’m the only one that's making decisions which is a mother's responsibility.

**P1:** Yes. And exhausting, I guess. Sometimes you just want someone else to do the things.

**P2:** Right. Right.

**P1:** Yeah. Because I wonder if the reason that that was the question, um, that I wanted to ask, is because, um, do you talk the anxiety -- like he's in your bed and part of you really enjoys him being there, and part of you also wishes that he would go to his own bed.

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** Um, and I wonder if I was -- I'm -- I'm asking, yeah, about that struggle around on one hand wanting him close, and then on the other hand just like wanting space and exhaustion of that, being in contrast and wanting to let it go. I don’t know if that makes sense what I'm talking about.

**P2:** Um, yeah. I mean, I'm very -- um, I'm very divided. You know, it's a big dilemma. Like you want both, you know. I want my own space and I want to have my own bed and I don't want him to be like 15 and still sleeping in my bed even though I don’t think that's going to happen. Um, but and I just wonder how the -- you know, how this is going to affect him developmentally and…

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Although I don’t -- I mean, I don’t necessarily believe that -- I don’t believe that children need to like, you know, come home from the hospital and be on their own, you know, bedroom. Like five miles away. I don’t really believe that, but um, I mean he's almost four and he's still sleeping in my bed. And -- and I always feel like maybe I'm doing -- you know, maybe this is -- you know, maybe it's terrible, I don’t know, you know. Um, yeah and it's difficult. I mean, like you know, I just -- I do want to -- I mean toddlers are not like the most comfortable sleeping partners.

**P1:** No.

**P2:** Um.

**P1:** That's right, they just want to sleep with you all the time. You'd think that…

**P2:** Yeah, so like I have -- I have that like Son on top of me. I have the cat on top of me. Sometimes I just like wake up and there's just like I can't breathe, you know.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, but at the same time, um, you know, it's like a -- I feel like I won't be able to manage with him -- I won't be able to cope with him being in another room, you know.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** So, I just sort of let it go. **[00:40:00].**

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Yeah, it's a constant struggle.

**P1:** Yeah, it's a battle. Sometimes I wonder about the balance or link between, um, guilt and resentment. Um, yeah.

**P2:** Interesting, yeah that is interesting. So I suppose there is -- I do feel sometimes resentful, you know, that, um, yeah. I have to acknowledge that. I mean, you know, there is some resentment and I feel as much as he's my whole life.

**P1:** Sure.

**P2:** Um, I feel I can't deal with the other one. I can't just like, you know, take a trip overseas…

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** …without extensive planning, you know. Um…

**P1:** Let's go to a restaurant and…

**P2:** I can't -- I can't just like -- like apply for the job of my dreams, you know, if it -- you know, I have to consider that, you know, I need to fetch him from school. I need to take him from school. I need to, you know, yeah.

**P1:** Mm-hmm and then of course that's balanced by the feelings of never doing enough. Am I giving enough? Am I giving enough of myself like you now…?

**P2:** Yeah, and just the responsibility. I feel like I feel this -- I mean, this child -- this is a human being that I've brought into the world that is completely and utterly dependant on me.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** And I am going to make or break his life, basically. If I don’t give him -- I mean not in such a little way, but if I don’t give him the upbringing and the experiences and the material things and everything else, um, you know, then -- then it's going to affect the rest of his life and you know, it's my responsibility to give this child everything -- this person everything he needs to make it in life.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, and that -- that, um, that feeling of responsibility is just incredibly profound.

**P1:** Yes, absolutely.

**P2:** If I'm not doing my absolute best, it's going to affect him. You know, if I don’t -- if he wasn't around -- if I don’t do my absolute best, it's just going to affect me.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah.

**P2:** And now he's in the picture and, you know, he needs me to be my best.

**P1:** Yeah. Massive emotions both of them are resentment and then the -- the, um, obligation to do your best.

**P2:** Yes.

**P1:** You're both so in this, because at the same time, yeah, you want to be turned on all the time to attend to him and then you are just desperate for some space or, you know.

**P2:** Yes.

**P1:** Those two things are very -- I think it's difficult to manage, to balance.

**P2:** Yeah, it's very difficult to manage. I mean, like for the first time in four years, I actually went to the dentist, um, yesterday, you know, because I can remember even when he was very little, um, he was -- he was like a baby. He was like six months old and I didn't actually have anyone to look after him, and I remember thinking I need to go to the dentist to have a check-up and I couldn't go because I -- you know, I didn't have anyone to leave him with. I couldn't take him with. So -- so I kind of lived for another four years, um, and I actually you know, yesterday, um, decided well, I mean, you know, I decided that I needed to go to the dentist. Like I need to actually prioritise myself for a change.

**P1:** Yes.

**P2:** Um, and thank God, you know, my mom is here to look after him and -- and whatever. Um, but there's a lot of things like that that I've put off because, um, yeah. Because I need to look after him.

**P1:** Mm-hmm. Absolutely. And I think -- I mean do you find the things that get put off the quickest or the easiest are the self-care things like the dentist or the hair dresser or like, I don't know what else falls in that category?

**P2:** Yeah. Right, exactly. I mean, there's most things I put off because, you know, um, yeah. Um and yeah. Most things I do kind of, you know put off unless like sometimes it's an excuse to get away and just be by myself for a while, and just you know. Like actually, I mean, um, I quite enjoyed going to the dentist because it was just like…

**P1:** Okay **[laughter]**.

**P2:** …um, myself and it was great. Um…

**P1:** Okay. **[laughter]** I thought I was the only one. **[laughter]**

**P2:** Yeah, it's quite enjoyable. **[laughter]**

**P1:** Yeah. It's really funny. **[laughter]** Um, okay. Yeah, no **[laughter]** it's difficult to balance.

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** Um, sorry, and I'm just reading through if there's anything else. I mean, was there anything that you -- after our first interview, I know it was a good few weeks ago. Was there anything that you were left with that you were thinking about that stuck with you?

**P2:** Um, no. Um, I just -- I was just, um, became a lot more aware of my, um, my interactions with him. Like I started thinking about it a lot more. Um, so that was interesting. I mean, I felt -- I felt like that was actually very helpful that I -- you know, because I -- the -- the, um, the purpose of your research was how you put it in the letter, um, I started thinking about, um, what are my interactions with him like and how is it affecting me and how is it affecting him? Um, so I started, sort of, I mean, not in a very -- not in a very intense way, but I did start paying more attention to that.

**P1:** Yeah-- yeah. Did you notice anything that you hadn't noticed before?

**P2:** Um, not specifically. Not specifically. Um, I can't think of anything off hand now.

**P1:** Mm-hmm. Okay. And I wonder if it was just the highlighting of it, um, that -- that sort of brought it into focus for you.

**P2:** Yeah -- yeah.

**P1:** Um, and do you think then noticing changed anything? Do you think it made you do anything differently because you were focusing on it?

**P2:** It probably made me, um, behave a bit more intentionally towards him.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, and with a little bit more patience.

**P1:** Right

**P2:** You know, and a little bit more, um, thought.

**P1:** Mm-hmm.

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** Okay. Okay, um, so that sounds quite -- that sounds nice. That sounds -- I don’t know if you felt good about that, yeah.

**P2:** Yes, I did. I think it was positive.

**P1:** Mm-hmm. Um, and I wanted to ask you if you've got a good support structure around you in terms of friends? Um, are there people that you speak to?

**P2:** I do. Um, I do. I mean, yeah. I have, you know, obviously I haven't seen my friends in a long time.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, it's been very hard. I speak to them often, um, you know. I have friends that I just -- you know, we just go [**unintelligible 00:48:01**] motherhood.

**P1:** Mm-hmm.

**P2:** And we just like laugh about how difficult it is and how we like lock ourselves in our bedroom when we want to like [crosstalk].

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** And you know, um, how we're going to like just drop them off at the zoo one day **[laughter]**, you know, stuff like that.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah.

**P2:** Um, yeah, like so, um, I do. Thank God.

**P1:** Okay. Yeah -- yeah that's good. Okay. Um, and sorry, can I jump back if you don’t mind completely out of the **[unintelligible 00:48:34].** How -- I mean how was the experience for you? I know we say it was good with the play therapist that she could talk you through the tantrum, but how was the experience for you, um, of him during the play therapy and that he had felt trapped?

**P2:** It was very unpleasant. It was very unpleasant.

**P1:** Yeah, what was going on for you?

**P2:** I was quite alarmed because he had a very intense tantrum. Um, you know, and seemed very distressed actually. Um, and not -- you know, not a tantrum like he -- he, you know, he wanted a chocolate and couldn't get it and threw a tantrum. It was like, he was -- he was just stressed. Um, and -- and yeah. So, that -- that was a little bit distressing.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, but I suppose it was [**crosstalk 00:49:26**] but it was kind of like mitigated by the fact that she gave good insight.

**P1:** Okay -- okay. And what was going through your mind? Ike what were you thinking while it was all happening?

**P2:** Well, I suppose it brings up **[inaudible 00:49:48]** this is a complete disaster.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, like what the hell is she thinking? Um, and you know, like this is not working. **[00:50:00].** Um, and I for sure thought, you know, we're not doing Zoom sessions anymore. Um, but at least after the first session, I felt it was very helpful. Um, because I felt like we -- because of her insight and he coaching, uh, I felt that I had managed to connect with Son a little bit more like have a deeper connection with him.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** So I felt like that was quite useful.

**P1:** Yeah. Um, did you feel as if you wanted to let him out the room? Like did his trapped feeling -- did you feel trapped because he felt trapped?

**P2:** Um, I wanted to just make it better. I wanted to say, "Okay this is not working. You know, let's end this," and let him go back to doing what he wanted to do.

**P1:** Right. Right -- right. Okay. So the urge was to like take away the thing that was making him so upset…

**P2:** Yes.

**P1:** …obviously which…

**P2:** Exactly.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah. But the way you were feeling during that tantrum is that -- I mean, is it comparable to other tantrums or was that one quite different?

**P2:** That one felt different. I must be honest. Um, I mean, sometimes he has tantrums, you know, where I know that it's because he's not getting his own way.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** And I can sort of like, um, I can rationalise that. I mean, you know, obviously my job is not to let him have everything he wants. Um, so I can understand that, and I can understand that it's frustrating for him because he's a small child and um, you know, not getting what he wants is annoying.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, but that felt very different. That felt, um -- that felt like he was very distressed for some reason. I'm not really sure why to be perfectly. I am not sure it was because, uh, you know, the door was closed and he wasn't allowed to go out or because she started asking him about how he's feeling and that triggered something, you know.

**P1:** Mm-hmm.

**P2:** I'm not really sure what it was about, but he did -- he did react, um, in a very different way.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah. Um, okay. And that was quite -- was it confusing for you?

**P2:** Yes.

**P1:** In the moment?

**P2:** Yes.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** I would say it was confusing and distressing for me.

**P1:** Yeah. It sounds like it was very difficult.

**P2:** Was difficult.

**P1:** Yeah, did he -- I mean, so he obviously calm down because you had another session.

**P2:** He calmed down, um, and I felt -- I felt very connected to him.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** …you know. Um, the second session was actually my ex-husband came in the session. He was here.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, which is interesting because Son acted -- reacted in the same way. Like he felt trapped and he didn’t want to talk to this woman on the computer screen. Um, and Ex-husband was, um, very dismissive of the whole experience. He thought it was silly.

**P1:** Right. Openly dismissive? Was he saying like let's just end it?

**P2:** Not openly, but I mean he's not openly afterwards when we were discussing it, but during the session I could see that he thought this whole thing was ridiculous.

**P1:** Yeah. Did that mean he engaged or did he not engage? Was he able to comfort Son?

**P2:** He did engage. Um, he did engage and he did follow suggestions and things like that but I could see that he was like, you know, um, over it. Yeah.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah okay. How was it for you? I mean, what -- I don’t know. What came to mind when you saw that?

**P2:** Well I was irritated. **[laughter]**

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** But that's not a new feeling with him.**[laughter]**

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah -- yeah. Okay. I don’t -- yeah, it makes me think about what you were saying earlier about, um, always feeling like you are the one doing this all the time. Um, and sometimes it must feel -- I don’t know about lonely but alone I guess.

**P2:** It feels -- it feels -- it feels very lonely, um, uh. Yeah, it feels very lonely. I mean, you know, um, I mean, I don’t haven't really discussed this much with my mom or with -- with Ex-husband, but I'm actually thinking of going to live in Israel.

**P1:** Okay. Okay.

**P2:** I mean, not in the next year, but at some point.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Basically, you know, taking him -- taking Son away from my mom and from his father.

**P1:** Yeah.

**P2:** Um, and sometimes I think like, you know, then I will literally be the only one that's doing everything. Making all decisions, um, but then I think to myself, well I'm doing it anyway, so you know, what's the difference?

**P1:** Yeah. Um, would it just be to like make earlier or like the reasons?

**P2:** Yeah.

**P1:** Okay. Have you got family there?

**P2:** I have a -- I have some family. I have my cousins and my grandmother. Um, but it's -- it's not -- um, it's not definite at the moment. I'm still sort of thinking about it.

**P1:** Yeah -- yeah okay. Okay. And then all right. So, sorry, what you were saying obviously you are anxious about taking him away from those people understand what support you have at the moment.

**P2:** Mm-hmm.

**P1:** Yeah. Is your -- I mean, is your thinking you would be happier there? Are there things there that you think you wouldn't have here or is it just because it's Israel or?

**P2:** So many reasons.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** I mean, so many reasons that I can't even put into words. Um, yeah it's just -- I mean it's something that I wanted to do -- I was yeah, for many many years.

**P1:** Okay.

**P2:** Um, and that's never happened and, um, for so many reasons.

**P1:** Okay. Okay. All right. Cool, and, um, I think that's it for me. Is there anything that you wanted to ask me about or?

**P2:** No.

**P1:** Okay. Cool.

**P2:** No.

**P1:** Thank you so much. It's been very very interesting.

**P2:** Okay

**P1:** Yeah, and I really appreciate all the -- the time, yeah.

**P2:** No problem. Thank you.

**P1:** Good. Okay, look after yourselves and I hope you guys go well. All the best. Thank you.

**P2:** Thanks so much and good luck. And send me a link when you're finished…

**P1:** I will you might just have to wait several years, but if you if I find email, I can still be **[laughter]**.

**P2:** Okay. Good luck.

**P1:** Thank you so much.

**P2:** Okay.

**P1:** Bye.

**P2:** Take care.

**P1:** You too, bye.