

Introducing child and family practice to parents

Case study – Helen and Zac

Zac is eight years old and exhibiting 'acting-out' behaviours in the classroom and at home. This is concerning his mother, Helen, who believes Zac's ADHD medication needs to be increased to 'fix' his disruptive behaviour.

Helen has recently separated from her partner, Michael. Michael is not Zac's biological father, but Zac had grown very close to him. Zac never saw much of his biological dad, and the little he did see him was not good.

Michael had been using Zac and his older brother, Tai, to lie to Helen for months to help cover up his mounting gambling debts. He even bribed the boys with money to keep his gambling a secret from their mum.

Zac secretly believes that Michael and Helen's separation is his fault. When he gets home from school, Helen can barely look at him and she has told him that she is not sure she can ever trust him again. The whole ordeal has proven to Zac that he is a bad kid, just like everyone says. He really didn't mean to lie to his Mum; he just didn't want to lose Michael.

Helen is finding these circumstances difficult to deal with and is currently struggling herself with what she has described to a friend as 'depression'.

Please view the video of Helen's consultation with a GP to gain an understanding of her approach to Zac and the problems they are facing.

Access video: <https://youtu.be/dSel8ohli7w>