**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Senco, urban, south, state school, female

## General introduction

**INTERVIEWER:** So if we can start off just talking about your personal experience and how you’ve ended up in this role in this school. Great.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** OK. Ohh well. So way back way back when, when I actually started out, my very first class was as mad as a box of frogs. There was no other way to describe them frankly…um…and I met them before the summer holidays and went home thinking ‘what on earth made me think I could teach’ quite frankly so then spent summer holidays looking at different behaviour strategies.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah OK.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Then-…and now I didn’t have any diagnosed ADHDs in that class, and I had no training on it as part of my teacher training. But looking back, I know that there were two or three that probably nowadays you had be going ‘Hmm OK, either that or attachment or whatever’…um…and…I tended to always then end up with naughty classes cause when I got a good class I got a little bit bored [laughs] and…and probably my second or third year of teaching, I had um a young boy who was literally climbing the walls. I mean he was delightful, he was lovely, but he couldn’t stay still. He was constantly crawling around the floor and shouting out. And at home, parents were having a terrible terrible time with him, they wasn’t sleeping at all…um…so we worked really closely together and actually he ended up with a diagnosis…uh…sort of in the following year…and he was put on Ritalin actually…which was quite awful because he almost be qui-…came quite zombified initially. It took a while for…sort of the meds to be settled and to be right. And it wasn’t long after that, that um…I’ve had the opportunity to become the SENCO-…well the SENCO left and I went ‘I want to do that job’. I-…I’m dealing with these all of the time [laughs] um…so I became a SENCO very very early on…um 2004, 2005ish. Did that for a number of years. Went under a different school, assistant head and although I wasn’t actually the SENCO, because I’d been a SENCO I did my all my SEN stuff so…uh…literally SENCO di-…had nothing to do with my…my year group…um I used to do transition to secondary cause I was year six. And then I went to sec-…secondary a-…as a SENCO

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh right.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Um…and that was really interesting because obviously the way I think any child with special needs but particularly ADHD is managed in a primary school is quite different to a secondary school. Simply because of the…of what you can put into place I guess. I think it’s quite different. So that was kind of really different. And I ended up here as a favour, quite frankly. It-…it is that basic…um…SEMA inspector contacted me and said that SENCO here has been off for six months, it’s in a bit of a mess, any chance I can come in and to help out. So I did, and I still here.

**INTERVIEWER:** So how many years is that?-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Two years down…two years-…

**INTERVIEWER:** Two years

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** …-down the line. So yeah, I’ve been…um…here for a couple of years now, and um-…

**INTERVIEWER:** So in those early days when you went home and read all these books and kind of worked it out and then you…you know were working with these children and then you had these family to work with. Were you just learning by yourself?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah, yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** Finding people or books or-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** I have never come across any ADHD training in primary school.

**INTERVIEWER:** Wow.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** And that’s scary.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** That’s one of the reasons why I thought ‘I’m gonna do this’ [laughs] because I don’t think there’s enough out there. You know we’ll get something from CAHMs saying child’s been diagnosed with ADHD and if we’re really really lucky, they might put the back ‘these are some strategies that you can use with this child’…That’s if you’re lucky. That doesn’t always happen. And I think the reason that the vast majority of teachers really struggle with children like this in the classroom is that they don’t know how to manage in any way, shape or form. They’re kind of in that situation where they’re like ‘What do I do? Here’. You know what’s the right thing to do. And that’s really difficult when you’ve got twenty nine other kids and you’re tryna find out for yourself kind of thing. I do think it’s a real…gap. There’s lots going on at the moment around ASD and all that sort of thing, but not so much around the A-…whole ADHD.

**INTERVIEWER:** So for you, you see it as a priority?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah I think it’s really important because even if it’s sort of ADHD ADD, ther-…there’s a lot of cross over and actually it’s-…because for a lot of these [sigh] and knowing where they go onto as well I think that’s…that’s the other thing for me, knowing how it’s managed because I think you see a lot of the time, we make lots of different allowances in a primary school in a way that isn’t made in a secondary school. So you know, we had a little…a young lad in our year six two years ago who would sit [bangs on table] all the time. Teach reall-…really stressed about it. And we’re like just ignore it or give him something else…to tap on so that he can still do, but it’s not as much. And if things were just a little bit heightened, we say, you know ask him to go for a walk. Send him to down to us with a message. Doesn’t even have to be a real message. It can be a folded up piece of paper that’s got nothing on it, that just says ‘he needs to go for a walk’ [laughs] Do you know what I mean? And we tend to do things like that because you-…you know we’ll come up with strategies that they can use. In a secondary school, unless you’ve got people who have had quite a lot of experience, a lot of teachers won’t do that and then the next thing you know the kid’s been sent out, they’ve got a detention, they’re being excluded dudduhdaduhda. It escalates VERY quickly in secondary school and so by year nine and year ten a lot of them are excluded and yo-…you’re looking in a [unintelligible]. Um…so…it’s…yo-….you kind of see that traject-…trajectory going and-..and I think it-…it-…that’s why I’ve [unintelligible] since it’s important.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah and that’s why we want to do something at primary level-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** …-yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** -…rather than waiting

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** …-yeah

## ADHD as a disorder and its symptoms

**INTERVIEWER:** But um…So just if we just focus in on ADHD itself for a moment, like from your experience or what you’ve read or whatever. How would you describe it? How does it present in the children that you’ve seen?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** [laughs]Various…um…fidgety, can’t keep still, always on the go…um…attention really poor. Not always poor if it’s something that they’re interested in, I have to say. And some of them…I mean yeah…I…it tends to be-…I’m just thinking of [unintelligible] year two at the moment though it kind of [unintelligible], [laughs] He hasn’t got a diagnosis but he’s one of those that-…It’s very rare that I go ‘Hmm yeah, I really really think’ [laughs] but he’s one where I go ‘Hmm I really really think’. You know they appear not to be listening to you a lot of the time, even when they are [laughs] It’s…It’s a really random one, but they are also the child that will crawl around the carpet. They’ll get into trouble for silly things cause they’ll be the ones constantly shouting out and they can’t quite hold it together enough to put their hand up and then wait for a response an-…

**INTERVIEWER:** It’s a bit more impulsive then-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yep, very very impulsive. And they’re the one’s that will be doing the table tapping, and flicking the person next to them, and all that kind of stuff that makes you go ‘hmm something not quite sitting right-…

**INTERVIEWER:** So when you said like sometimes they can concentrate on-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** …-Yeah!

**INTERVIEWER:** …-something, have you seen that where they’ve got completely

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** …-absorbed

**INTERVIEWER:** uh yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah, yeah. This one at the moment is abse-…is absorbed in pom pom making.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh, that’s interesting!

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah it’s…h-…[sigh]…a-…he’s very impu-…very impulsive. And, at the moment less imp-…we’r-…we’re managing him really well in lessons but it’s outside. He literally will walk out and…he’s do for [unintelligible] as he goes quite frankly and he’s hurting a lot of other children. So we’ve kind of had to say ‘Right this isn’t working’ so he’s coming in and spending [laugh] break times with me. So I’d said one day ‘should we make pom poms?’ but he loves it, to the extent that now mum now has had to buy pom poms with his [unintelligible] at home but he will sit there and do that. He-…but it’s practical, it’s doing something. It’s that physicality of doing something that makes such a difference.

**INTERVIEWER:** And have you seen quite a variety of different children? So they’ve all got ADHD but they present quite differently-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** …-or are there sort of common

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** No I think…I think you’ll find some have stronger bits tha-…than others i-…in quite a lot…um…and in terms [laughs] there’s that crossover when somebody would say ‘this child’s got ADHD’ and you’re kind of going ‘mmm is it ADHD or is it actually ADD’ because they’re almost [unintelligible] like in some ways

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah OK

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Do you know what I mean?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** And you’ll get…you’ll get this bit of paper that’ll go, ADH-…and you’ll go ‘really?!’ I mean I’ve actually had somebody from CAHMs say to me ‘Oh I think this child’s got ADHD. They were sat with their foot tapping in a meeting.’ And I think I do that when I’m stressed, I’m doing that right now talking to you quite frankly because this is really ridiculous! Um…it…so it can be really difficult sometimes because I would be expecting a…a child who was genuinely ADHD to be presenting very similar at school to at home. And sometimes, you know parents say ‘Oh but they’re doing this and I think they’re ADHD.’ And we’re like but we don’t see that. And actually we would be seeing that for a child who genuinely can’t manage it, and that…those ones that you’d be saying ‘this is and ODD-…ADHD kid’ they can’t do it. They…it’s not that they don’t want to cause actually they’re the one’s that…they do want to and they hate getting in trouble for the things that…y-…that-…the-…that they literally can’t manage and they get really frustrated and upset by them.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, so you’ve seen examples of that where-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Oh God, Yeah!

**INTERVIEWER:** …-they’ve actually

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** totally!

**INTERVIEWER:** …-would like

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Very…Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** …-to be different

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** And they, and they you know that-…I…I…One year I had two boys in my class. One who was not yet diagnosed, and another one who…I’m not gonna use face him as a naughty boy, but there were lots of other issues at home that was impacting his behaviour and we actually had CAHMS in to go and observe that boy for ADHD and I said ‘he’s not!’ It…that’s…that’s not his issue. That one yes. That one absolutely not. You know it was…it was very much a ‘all this other stuff is going on in my home life and actually I can’t manage that and this is how it’s presenting’ whereas this one was desperately desperately trying to do the right thing, and you know was absolutely delightful but was really really struggling with the con-…it’s that conformity that’s expected in the classroom. That’s the difficulty. You know once you hit year one, year two or less about year one and going into year two, right through the whole structure of school is really hard for these kids because actually, you spend half your life sitting down you know and…a good teacher will work in those brain tin-…brain breaks and get them moving in between the transition times. But then you’ve also got to realise that you need a bit of settling time then. You can’t say ‘Right let’s move around and now go sit down. Go concentrate’ Cause that’s not gonna happen. So you know it’s…but it’s that thing of…you’ve got to be thinking about why that’s gonna work and wha-…what’s behind that and it-…for a lot of teachers, it comes with time. It’s just…you’ve kind of realised that ‘Oh actually if I do this, this happens.’ There’s nobody actually out there saying ‘Well actually if you try this and this and this’-…

**INTERVIEWER:** So it’s kind of trial and error-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** …-which could take a long time or you could get lucky and-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Absolutely.

**INTERVIEWER:** …-find that quickly

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Absolutely

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** And I think as well, it then comes down to relationships. Because if you build a good relationship with the child quite quickly, you can kind of m-…and I think that’s probably why we’re more successful in a primary setting than we are in a secondary setti-…setting. You spend more time with them so you can get to understand what their interests are and why they ride around and all the rest of it, and you can use that as a latch on and say ‘well if we can do such and such, we can manage this later.’ Whereas in a secondary school, they-…they don’t have that. They don’t have the time and the relationship that they build is different…um…and it can appear that this child is…is lazy sometimes, actually…um…and it might just be that it’s just taking them such a long time to process because processing is quite often their hand in hand, that actually…or there’s too much going on, there’s too much stimulus going on so there’s too many distractions its…so it takes time to actually realise that that’s not actually what’s going on with this kid…um…and you need to just be doing things slightly differently south. But I think, you know when you’ve got lots of kids coming through the door, it becomes much harder. It’s easier in secondary to um…in primary to go ‘right ok, how am I going to do this? What am I going to do?’ We’re very good in a primary setting generally at talking to each other and saying ‘Help! I’ve got this [laugh] child and this is what’s happening. How…how do I manage this? What can I…what could I be doing?’…um…

**INTERVIEWER:** Well I guess in primary that teachers got them probably most of the time. Whereas in secondary, they have them for a lesson every so often

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Exactly

**INTERVIEWER:** So it’s-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** …-Very different

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** And that…that’s the thing. Yeah it…it gives you the chance to then try things. Because there is no ‘oh look you’ve got a child with ADHD, you can go on that course.’ It just doesn’t tend to work like that. It tends to be…when…you’re in a crisis situation maybe where behaviour has just become overwhelming because the child really can’t cope and is going into meltdown the whole time because of that. Then actually maybe you get behaviour support involved and then the teacher can actually have tho-…that sort of conversation with them…um…because is-…as well I think there’s…speaking from personal experience [laughs] over a vast number of years with this, you know teachers are really pre-…pressured in their classrooms. So when you’ve got the SENCO saying to you ‘I need to you to try this, this and this.’, it can sometimes be a bit [whispers] ‘oh for God’s sake’…something else, you’re asking me to do something different, something over and above. That’s really hard and maintaining that. And sometimes you need that outside voice to come and say ‘Have you done that?’ and then they go ‘oh actually I’ve been ask to do that and I haven’t actually done it’ Do you know what I mean?-…

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** …-Or I haven’t maintained it. So actually, that’s useful to be hearing I from somebody-…

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** …-other than…and…and I think that’s the thing. When I was SENCO as class teaching as well, people kind of go ‘Right fair enough, you…you…you’d…you’re having to do this all the time.’ I’m not class teacher based here. I am literally just a SENCO. We’re a big school, it’s over six hundred…um…and I only do three days a week. So none of them have ever seen me teach. None of them have ever…known me with my own class. So therefore it…you…there is that thing of ‘Oh really? What do you know?’ You can kind of sense it, so sometimes I think that’s the frustration they need to overcome.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** If that makes sense.

## The diagnosis and treatment of ADHD

INTERVIEWER: And have you over the years, have you worked out what causes ADHD or what causes it for certain children?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** No

**INTERVIEWER:** No…um and-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Although trauma is…does play a part.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah OK.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** We’ve ac-…we’ve actually got a…um…kid at the moment that…um…CAHMS have actually saying that they think had trauma ADHD

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah OK

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Which is quite interesting.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** And we’ve got another who’s got a diagnosis of ADHD and attachment. He’s actually medicated for his ADHD. Before he went on to that, was off the wall, I mean completely off the wall but he’s very very very settled at the moment. About to transition, I’m concerned about that, things are very very bubbly, to the extent that at home, he’s deliberately not taking his phone out, he’s not coming home til ten o’clock at night all that sort of thing…um…and we think it’s to do with transitioning that he’s really concerned about that…um…but that’s around trauma definitely.

**INTERVIEWER:** So when CAHMS tell you that, did they give any explanation of what that might mean?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** No, no.

**INTERVIEWER:** Or what you do about that?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** No.

**INTERVIEWER:** So do you have any thoughts about what you think causes it?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Oh in that particular case, it was neglect, was a severe neglect…um…

**INTERVIEWER:** Of the other children that don’t have a particular history of trauma, do you have any thoughts?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** No, not specifically.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um…I’m kinda interested as well…so obviously you have a lot to do with CAHMS in kinda cases. D-…would they come to you and ask you to sort of fill in forms about behave-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yep

**INTERVIEWER:** …-iour reports and any other information?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** They normal send the snap questionnaire through. So we’d normally get a snap questionnaire, and I wouldn’t do that. I will give that to the person whose working with them most of the time. And if it’s a child that I know really well because I’m having A LOT to do with them, then I might do wha-…and one a-…alongside it actually because then it’s quite interesting sometimes to see how hmm well this is what I get but actually this is what the class teacher is getting. And sometimes it’s a…it’s very similar and sometimes it a-…it’s…slight changes obviously. But it think it’s useful for CAHMS to be able to see that big picture of what everybody’s kind of experiencing…um…but yeah the-…that’s our usual. And actually periodically for those with diagnosis who are on medication and obviously they’re reviewed regularly, they’ll send us that so we can do an updated ‘this is what we’re seeing at the moment. They do that via a link-…

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh OK. And would they give recommendations of sort of treatment as such or interventions or…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** No

**INTERVIEWER:** No, so you’re left to…figure out how to do that.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yep

**INTERVIEWER:** And…medication does that ever come in through school or is it always administered at home?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Um it depends actuall-…in primary school, I don’t think I’ve ever seen a child medicated at school. At secondary that’s different cause they quite often end up with their medication having to be taken at school as well, but primary usually is at home.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah OK. So you’re not really involved in the treatment side of things. It’s more the management of the child.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** You can normally tell if they’ve forgotten.

**INTERVIEWER:** [laughs] What do you do then?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** [laughs] Depends, I mean if-…if they’ve…if they’ve forgotten and it’s feasible, you might phone parents and say ‘Don’t suppose any chance you can pop in?’ [laughs] um…you know, no if you can’t get a hold or that’s not feasible because it’s the wrong…really is the wrong time of day and they maybe haven’t eaten dadaladala all those sorts of things. It depends on what meds they’re on as well. Then you might just have to go ‘OK, we’re…we’ll just take it as the day goes.’ [laughs] ‘We’re gonna go out for an extra run in the playground today.’ Or whatever. You…you…you find a way to manage and adapt you know. It’s just that…it might be that one sort of somebody from the pastoral team will jump in and do a bit of…extra support that day…um…

## Training and support for teaching children with ADHD

**INTERVIEWER:** So if you were designing some training for teachers here in this school and it was around ADHD, what elements would you put into that? What would you want them to know or what do you think they want to know?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** I’d want to know what kind of symptoms are you likely to see, and I think as well…kind of that clarity around how…girls and boys can present differently.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** I think that’s…uh…quite important.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you seen that yourself?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah…um…and I think [sigh] it’s really hard. I mean we’ve got a couple of kids, girls at this point in time, their dad is ADHD. He had a diagnosis. And they have a brother, a much much older brother…um…and they present some but it’s also-…they’re only five and six

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah OK.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** So there’s a whole developmental side. And then you-…it’s like so how much of this is learning behaviour because there is an element of that, we know that. And how much is actually that they genuinely can’t control this. And it qui-…been quite interesting because as time as gone on and they’ve settled a little bit more, we’re seeing less of it. And occasionally you’ll get so-…certain things but other times you’re like ‘mm no it’s not’ so it can be-…I think a-…when they’re really small sometimes, it can be harder to know…is that it? Or is it just a developmental and they’re just not at the stage. That it’s just taking them longer to regulate and [unintelligible] all those kind of things cause that [unintelligible] regulations thing becomes a bit of an issue. So yeah it’s um…so I think, yeah, signs and symptoms, what are we looking at, what are we looking for you know…does a certain thing in isolation mean…or do we n-…how many different things we’re looking at to really be getting that big picture. So definitely that…behaviour management. Effective behaviour management, that are…reasonable. It’s that reasonable adjustment because I think sometimes you know you-…you’ll get lis-…things on the list. Oh you know, you’ve got to…set the curriculum to things that they enjoy. That’s great…it’s not practical. You know we have a dictated to curriculum, not set by us but by the government. So therefore actually that could be really hard. You can use the ‘they’re interested in this’ as [unintelligible] when you’ve done this, then we can do a bit on such and such but you’ve still gotta do those things. So actually, it can be really really tricr-…tricky to do. Especially you know when you’re looking at maybe one…child in a year group of ninety kids…um…so I think really practical…ways of supporting a child…um…in that…becau-…and I…becau-…but I think sort of the [unintelligible] is really useful because sometimes [laugh] I think teachers go ‘they’re just naughty.’ And that’s…that’s frustrating for the child, it’s frustrating for the parents…um…and actually the teacher then doesn’t get a real sense of what’s going on…um…that can be really tricky I think so I think that…that…it really…i-…

**INTERVIEWER:** And when you say reasonable adjustments, I mean I’ve been in some schools where they might have three safe spaces that a child know they’re allowed to go to without asking, and those places will be monitored or the teacher can radio for help. I mean would you say that’s reasonable?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** Or in some schools they said ‘we can’t let them out if we don’t know there’s an adult nearby. We can’t manage that.’ I mean I’d…what’s reasonable for you in this school?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah, we…we…we let them go. We might you know…it’s very rare that you get a kid that…who is having a bit of a wobble, that needs to go to safe space, that doesn’t actually go. Even in a secondary environment, they’ll go. It might take them a little bit of a while to get there, they might meander. But they do go. You know you literally can just pick up the phon-…most…I mean in here, all of our classes have got a…a telephone so you can literally phone and say ‘such and such is on its way.’ And then if there’s no…if they’re not…you know if they don’t turn up, you gonna go and look. And there’s plenty of adults around that are gonna go ‘who are you wondering?’ Do you know what I mean? It’s…it’s not like they’re gonna go wondering out the building. We’ve never had that. And even at secondary, they don’t tend to. They might go and find a little space to hide around cause they don’t wanna be in a particular lesson, but they don’t…um scold them as a rule. So I don’t-…I don’t have a problem with that, I think. You’ve gotta…you’ve gotta trust them! And actually showing them a bit of responsibility and saying ‘I think you need this’ or you know ‘this will really help you…take some responsibility for learning to manage cause ju-…this is not something that gonna go away. You have to learn to manage it.’ Actually in giving them that responsibility, it’s part in parcel if those skills that you give them to…to take in to adulthood with…with them.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, so it’s…what it’s saying there I guess is not…you’re not just training the teacher, you’re training the teacher to train the child?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah!

**INTERVIEWER:** You know that the child ends up with the skills themselves. So-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Absolutely yeah. Cause that’s what you’re aiming for-…

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** You’re not gonna be there for them all the time. You know by the time they get to year eleven and they’re sat their going ‘I can’t be bothered to do my exam. I want extra time.’ Well, you don’t need extra time. What you actually need…is breaks. Here’s your breaks. You can take as many breaks as you like. But when you’re…sat there and your not doing anything in that time that you’ve got in between, that’s down to you. That’s your responsibility. I can’t…make you do that. I can’t…put word in your mouth. You’ve got to kind of…that’s gotta come from you.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** So

**INTERVIEWER:** And do you think it would benefit teachers to have training where they…work together. So you said like you’re very good in this school at you know communicating across classrooms. So if you had some training and then the teachers…a few teachers sat round discussing their classrooms for example and…helping each other to think through strategies-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** …-maybe, rather than just on their own-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** …-tryna figure it out

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah it’s…it’s much better. The more th-…people that you’ve got that can talk about ‘Well I’ve tried this and I’ve tried the other.’ You know and we’ve-…case in point today, we got a…um…a member of staff who’s just struggling a little bit. Some very challenging children in her class, possibly one with ADHD as well. Just waiting on the diagnosis there…um…and…the [unintelligible] is very frustrated cause she feels it’s very negative at the moment. So they’re on a reward chart and they get a tick for being goo. And at the moment she’s saying things like…um…’I don’t want to not be able to give you a tick.’ or stuff like this. Whereas, actually she could be saying ‘Oh I wonder what behaviour I could see so that I can…I can give you a tick.’ It’s just that slight [clicks fingers] rephrasing. But because of the head space she’s in, if you said to her ‘If you do it like this, that’s not gonna go very well.’ Whereas actually if it’s modelled to her, she’ll probably do it. Do you know what I mean? [laughs] so sometimes it’s little tweaks that actually make all the difference. It’s just thinking about how you’re saying things, how you’re presenting it…um…that may be misconstrued by a child and…and all the rest of it.

**INTERVIEWER:** So maybe like hearing other teachers experiences of being positive or even case studies that would-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Definitely

**INTERVIEWER:** …-just model

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah, because I think sometimes especially…because it’s not something you come across all the time, it is one of those you know…I would say the actually diagnosed cases of ADHD are few and far between in the school and I…you know I had over two hundred children on my ICM register in my last place. And I think it’s one of those things that…you can feel quite isolated cause you feel like you’re making a big deal out of it because you didn’t man-…you can’t manage it or you don’t know what to do next. So actually having a case study you can look at or talking to other people and say ‘ooh but I tried.’ It just makes you go ‘Woah. It’s not just me.’ Do you know what I mean? It…It…It…I think that really is beneficial. I’m thinking it’s one of those things that makes you stop and go ‘Right. OK.’ It’s um…

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** And not every…you know with the best one in the world, not everything works for the same people. Even if you’ve got a particular strategy and somebody else might try it and doesn’t quite come off, because part of it is to do with relationships as well and you can’t you know tweak that. But nine times out of ten, if you’ve got a really good strategy, it will work.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. And I guess yo-…like you were saying, it’s individual. So you can try something-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** …-and then try something else and-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah, exactly. You can just tweak it until…you know you’re never gonna get the perfect answer. Kids will always gonna have good and and they’re gonna have bad days. And it’s just accepting that on a bad day, you’re not responsible in a way…um…it’s that thing of saying ‘Right, OK. They’re having a bad day. I need to tweak what I’m doing to help manage that. I can’t fix it but I can help them be here.’ Kind of thing…and learn as is possible. Bearing in mind that’s what they’re here for. That doesn’t always work when they’re having a bad day lets be honest [laughs] but…yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. And like on a very practical level, do you think for teachers…if they were doing ADHD training, it’ll be better to do it as like an insert day for the whole staff at the beginning of the year, and then have a…I don’t know, someone come back six months later and talk about have you tried any of these things. What’s gone well, what’s gone wrong. Or is it better to do a more…drip feed, bit by bit. Or even when a teacher gets someone with ADHD, they then go and look at some, either online resources or you get somebody to come in and train. I mean how do you think it would… work? Or all of those things, I don’t know.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Hmm…it’s…it’s a-…Right, definitely online resources. I mean I think the vast majority of teachers will go to…look at things like that, well you would hope…maybe fifty-fifty let’s be honest. Ok but a vast majority, I think probably would-…

**INTERVIEWER:** If it’s readily accessible-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** If readil-…readily accessible, they will look at it…um…I mean what I do here, is I…all my children on the SEN register have a strategy plan, with different strategies that you can potentially try to help support you in managing that child. So if it’s a child with ADHD, I’ll take all the different things that, over the years wh-…I’ve picked up from different places and put them on that checklist so that…there’s at least a tool back there m…might not work, you know but there’s something there that you can ha-…give it a go…um…but I do think in terms of actual…I suppose it’s [laughs]…this I going to sound really ridiculous. Any sort of training around ADHD or dadadalala will have an impact on other behaviours, because actually you’re likely to see ver similar things maybe from AS students. You’re gonna see things-…similar things maybe from ADD students. You know children with trauma and attachment, you are likely to see similar kind of behaviours. Do you know what I mean? So actually, it’s that thing of ‘yes this is… this is ADHD training.’ But it’s gonna have a positive a impact on lots of different children in your classroom. And therefore, as a whole school it’s really important to do it altogether. So having that as an inset and then having a follow up saying ‘Oh what did you try? How did that work for you?’ you know ‘Have you tried such and such?’ you know wha…what…what were the…what were the outcomes of that kind of thing would be really beneficial I think.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah that’s interesting. And, do you think as a school it’s a kind of thing that…a school training budget would prioritise ADHD or do you think it would be…um…something that couldn’t…fund couldn’t be allocated to because it’s one of many options

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** I think…that’s the difficulty. I think for the amount of children you get with ADHD, that are diagnosed with ADHD. People would go ‘What’s the point?’ Which is why autism is a big one at the moment because you’re getting so many children with au…a diagnosis of autism in school at the moment. You know…we have LOTS of diagnosed autistic children in school. We don’t have very many diagnosed ADHDs…um…so I think if you had it as a…you know…a ge-…a kind of coming under a general banner of these are the things you see with these kind of…

**INTERVIEWER:** So broader

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah broader spectrum of these…

**INTERVIEWER:** Behaviour or…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yeah, yeah. It’s a tricky one. It is a really tricky one I think in that regard, which is probably why there’s not really much training. You know, bespoke training out there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, and-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** And we don’t get therapists into school in the same way they work with parents. Not in any way, shape, or form. The only people we really genuinely get in are primary behaviour service.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah OK. And are they helpful? Are they good?

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Um…depends. Sometimes they can feel a little bit like suck-…they, you know trying to teach you to suck eggs. We’ve got a very positive relationship with ours…um…which is really really good…um…it’s very rare that they give you anything particularly new. But sometimes, it’s that…just having somebody else to balance ideas off and kind of, they’ll go ‘Oh have you tried such and such?’ and ‘Ah we haven’t thought about that one. Lets go for that.’ So that can be really quite useful. But in terms of you know, therapists like CAHMS, who are going to be, maybe work with the chil-…the children and the family, we really don’t get unti-…un-…unless it is absolutely at crisis point, school probably will never see them. And it has to be…I mean seriously at crisis point, as in they’re either on the verge of permanent exclusion or you know they’re not attending school or whatever to get to that situation where you might actually ever meet them…so…which is kind of…defeats the purpose really doesn’t it? But that’s because they’re overworked as everybody else.

**INTERVIEWER:** True

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** So…becomes really difficult. But I think that’s why they tend to find that they work with parents, but then…you’re not getting the same sort of input into a school. Come on then

[End of part 1]

[Start of part 2]

**INTERVIEWER:** So, just a couple of last things I think in terms of what I wanted to cover, for the role of like a SENCO or senior leadership obviously supporting the class teachers, is there any sort of training senior leadership need or would want-…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** [laughs]

**INTERVIEWER:** in order to support classroom teachers rather than just thinking about the training for the teachers themselves.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** [pause 5 secs] Probably as much…because it’s that thing-…SENCO is a different role to any other role. It’s um…it’s quite an isolated role because yo-…you know, you…the rest of your SLT might never have touched on it in anything like the same way at all…um…and…just cause they’re on SLT doesn’t mean so they’re good at managing behaviour….um…in fact I know that an awful lot who are really really really rubbish at managing behaviour to be perfectly honest…um so…it-…I think generally it would be a kind of bigger picture. I think sometime what you’ll find with SLTs is they have…they tend to do this knee jerk reaction of ‘oh wow. We’re getting behaviour off of these children. Let’s put in this.’ without a ‘actually let’s think about this big picture.’ You know actually is that gonna benefit those children in the way you want it to. What is it that you’re actually looking to do. What is it at…that you’re looking to see? Um…yeah. I can think of lots of occasions when I’ve gone into SLT and I’m like ‘Really?!’ I’m not sure about that. That’s not gonna work is it. That’s not really what we’re looking for. [laughs] So I think in a lot of ways, they need [laughs] they pretty much need the same training to be honest in that first instance, to actually make them feel comfortable about what they’re really looking for.

**INTERVIEWER:** And would you think that…f-…for the SENCO role that, SENCOs need to be part of the whole training plan and in that they need to know what the Senior Leadership team are thinking, they need to know what teachers are facing

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yep

**INTERVIEWER:** They need to be part of that.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** Yep, yep. And I mean in a vast majority of schools, she says…OK…ideally your SENCOs on the Senior Leadership team because they need to be that go between. You absolutely need to be that the go between [unintelligible] person…um…because if you’re not, it can be really tricky to manage what’s going on, to share what….you know espec-…especially when you’re managing different things to do with behaviours that you might see out of ADHD and ‘oh it’s one of those sorts of things.’…um…cause otherwise you’re kind of the lone voice out there. And you know, you need to be able to say you know, you know when this kid is kicking off like this, that’s not the way to manage them. If you do this da da da da da, that you kind of need that…that overall voice…in there to do that, I think.

## Conclusion

**INTERVIEWER:** Aw well that’s great. I think that’s everything that I wanted to cover. I don’t know if there’s anything else that you wanted to chip in at this point or…

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** No don’t think so

**INTERVIEWER:** Aw well thank you very much.

**INV**-**012-S-U-S-STA-F:** You’re more than welcome.

[End of interview]