**Part 2 of The Bartlett Family - Please not this is not a real case.**

***Context/Situation***

Kate asked Tony to move out 2 months ago as a result of Tony’s increasing alcohol intake. While Kate and Tony use to enjoy a drink together socially on weekends, Tony’s drinking has become more frequent and problematic over the last 12 months. For Kate, the critical point came when Tony was meant to pick their daughter Emily up from violin lessons, but did not turn up. Emily sat waiting first outside the house of her violin teacher, Tess’s, house while she was with another student, until they realised Tony was not going to turn up. When Tess phoned to let Kate know Emily was had not been picked up, Kate began to worry that something happened to Tony. After Kate arrived home with Emily she began to phone the local hospitals to see if Tony was there, yet there was no record of him being admitted. Tony finally arrived home at 10pm after the children were in bed. He was completely inebriated. Kate was raging! Tony was not capable of answering her questions, as he was incoherent, so she asked him to sleep in the spare room. The next day Kate asked Tony to leave and to sort his alcohol problem out. She has said she is willing to talk about reuniting once Tony seeks help for his problematic alcohol consumption, is able to show that he is no longer consuming alcohol and has found better ways of coping with his pain levels.

**Tony’s story:**

Just over 12 months ago Tony was in a serious accident on one of his building sites, where he fell from quite a height. He was taken to hospital and the X-ray showed he had fractured two vertebrae in his spine. Luckily he still had feeling in his legs, and after extended stint in hospital he was able to resume most of his normal duties at work. However, since the accident Tony has been struggling with a chronic pain condition. At first he tried pain medications, but found that these made him “feel like a vegetable” and affected his ability to concentrate on his work. He also did not want to become too dependent on pain medications after watching the impact they had on his father when he was dying.

Instead Tony started to manage his pain levels with alcohol. At first he would only have a couple of drinks each night “to take the edge off the pain”. However, as the months progressed and the pain continued to persist, and at time intensify, he began to drink more and more. In the last month or so before Kate asked him to leave, he found himself drinking so much that he would black out and not remember going to bed; sometimes waking up on the couch or even the floor of the bathroom. Each morning he would promise that he would not drink again, yet by the afternoon when the pain became worse, he would start to drink once again.

**Kate’s Story:**

For Kate, Tony’s drinking has been very frustrating. Coming from a big Italian family where the adults drank socially, she does not understand why Tony feels the need to numb himself or manage his pain with alcohol. She is angry with Tony for his drinking and sees this as a sign that their relationship and the children are not enough for him. “Surely if we were enough”, she ponders, “he would not feel the need to drink like this, or at least he would be able to stop when the pain subsides”.

Kate is also angry about the financial cost of Tony’s drinking. As both are self-employed the money they earn is seen as precious; there are times when the business is thriving and times when things are very quiet. Early on Kate and Tony were committed to not spending more than they needed to in order to ensure the success of the business. However, over the last 12 months Kate has noticed that they were starting to spend more and more, so much so that for the last two months they were spending more than they were bringing in. Kate blames Tony’s drinking for this excess spending, and has therefore lost a lot of trust in Tony’s ability to contribute to his family.

**The children**

James is really angry with his mum for kicking his dad out. He feels that his mum, Kate, is being too harsh on his dad, for what he sees as just a one off situation. James had not really noticed Tony’s drinking and subsequent behaviour as he had been hanging out more often with his friends, so has not been home as much as Michael and Emily.

Michael was much more aware of Tony’s drinking and is very angry at him. He is angry that his Dad was not able to “deal with his issues”, like he had been encouraged to do. He is also angry that his Dad’s drinking is affecting his Mum, as is the separation. He has noticed that Kate is a lot more exhausted and short-tempered than she use to be. Michael wonders why his Dad needed the alcohol to manage, when his friend’s parents don’t.

Emily is feeling guilty about her dad leaving home. She feels that it is her fault; if she did not have violin lessons that afternoon perhaps Dad would still be at home. Once Dad left, she remembered that she had noticed Mum and Dad fighting more at night, especially when she went to bed, but did not really know what these fights were about.