

The Spires Cleft Centre

# Questions and Staring

Guide for children and young people



# Dealing with questions

People often ask questions about things they've not seen before because they are curious – they are not usually trying to upset you. We are all curious about what we see around us! Having a plan ready will make you feel more confident and able to cope if someone does ask you a question.

Below are some ideas that may help you deal with the questions. You might like to practice some with a friend or someone in your family. This will help you test out which feel best for you, and you might decide to say or do different things in different situations. Practicing will also help you feel and act confidently. This will help the other person feel more relaxed too, and realise that having a cleft is 'no big deal'. Then you can get on with the important stuff of getting to know them!

## **Try reassuring them that having a cleft isn't a big problem:**

"It's just the way my lip is, it's ok, it doesn't hurt."

"You've noticed my scar – I had an operation,  
but I'm fine now"

## **Try changing the subject:**

"It's the way my nose is. Did you watch the match last night?"

"It's called a cleft lip. I had an operation when I was a baby.  
Have you ever had an operation?"

"I had an operation when I was a baby, but I can still play  
\*football. Do you play \*football?" (\*or ballet, swimming, etc.)

# Coping with staring

For the same reason that people ask questions, they may also stare. Sometimes we all get caught out staring! It might be useful for you to think of staring as a question that someone wants to ask but doesn't know how. They are probably staring because they have never seen a cleft before.

Just like when people ask questions, having a plan ready can really help.

## **It may be that you want to ignore them. In this case:**

- Walk away
- Turn your body away
- Look away

You might want to let them know that you have seen them staring, and that you want them to stop. So try:

- Looking at them and smiling or nodding
- or saying
- "I'd prefer it if you didn't stare at me."

It might be that this person looks friendly and you want to talk to them. Try answering that 'unasked question' about your cleft and start a chat. For example:

- "It's called a cleft lip, have you not seen one before?"
- "My nose is weird; it's cool to be weird, what's your weird thing?"

# How to contact us

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## Further information

You may find the following websites helpful:

[www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)

[www.clapa.com](http://www.clapa.com)

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473**. When we receive your call we may transfer you to an interpreter. This can take some time, so please be patient.

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