



# Parenting with a mental health problem

Explains difficulties you may face as a parent with a mental health problem, support available and suggestions on how to help yourself and your children.

If you require this information in Word document format for compatibility with screen readers, please email: [publications@mind.org.uk](mailto:publications@mind.org.uk)

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## How might my mental health problem affect me?

Many people worry that it will be difficult to cope with parenting if they have a mental health problem. It is natural to be concerned about the impact this will have on you and your children.

With the right support and resources though, it is perfectly possible to be a good parent while managing a mental health problem, and to care for and support your children in a positive way.

All parents face challenges, but if you are coping with a mental health problem, you may face additional concerns or difficulties.

## Coping with the everyday challenges of parenting

A mental health problem can make the day-to-day challenges of parenting feel harder. For example, [anxiety](#) may make you more easily worried, or [depression](#) may mean that you have low energy.

## The impact of your mental health on your children

You may worry about how your mental health affects your child; for example, whether they may experience [stress](#) or mental health problems themselves.

## Dealing with other people's negative ideas about mental health problems

You or your child may have difficulties because of other people's assumptions or judgements about mental health. For example, people may judge your parenting abilities because you have a mental health problem, or your child may be bullied or teased.

For more information on dealing with assumptions people might have, see our page on [stigma and misconceptions](#).

*"It feels like you are on the outside of your family looking in. You so desperately want to feel part of it but can't find a way to."*

## Asking your children for extra help around the home

If your child has to take on responsibilities around the home to help you, such as preparing food or getting younger siblings ready for school, this may have an impact on their school work or the amount of free time they have to play or see their friends.

## Feeling safe to ask for help

You may find it hard to seek help because you are worried that people may see you as a less capable parent, and you may put pressure on yourself to cope for longer than you are able.

## Managing in a crisis

There may be [times when you become unwell](#) and can't carry out your usual parenting responsibilities, or have to go into hospital. This can cause practical issues, and stress and worry for you and your family.

### No parent is 'perfect' - it's ok to struggle

It can be easy to blame any difficulties you have as a parent on your mental health problems, or to over-compensate by trying to be a 'perfect parent'. It's important to remember though that all parents have difficult times and there is no such thing as being perfect.

Try not to put too much pressure on yourself or give yourself too much of a hard time. Remember that you have general skills as a parent – regardless of any mental health issues – that will remain useful.

*"Most illnesses don't have society making you feel guilty about raising a child while sick. Mental health conditions, though, make the guilt huge – it's as if others think you have a choice in it."*

## What can I do to help myself?

Parenting with a mental health problem can be difficult and there is no one solution.

However, there are lots of things that can make a positive difference. This section suggests several things you can try that might help.

*"Perfect people or perfect parents don't exist – just focus on one day at a time and do the best you can."*

### Taking steps to look after your mental health

- Try to do some physical activity. Many people find exercise a challenge but activities like yoga, swimming or walking can be a big boost to your mood. If you don't feel confident doing exercise, you could start off with smaller activities - such as gentle chair-based exercises in your own home. See our pages on [physical activity](#) for more information.
- Think about your diet. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can make a difference to your mood and energy levels. See our pages on [food and mood](#) for more tips.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try spending time in green space or bringing nature into your everyday life. Some people find this boosts their physical and mental wellbeing. See our pages on <a href="#">nature and mental health</a> for more tips.</li> <li>• Explore how different relaxation techniques can help you feel less stressed or worried. See our pages on <a href="#">relaxation</a> for more tips.</li> <li>• Try to make regular time for yourself with no external demands ('me' time) – even 10 minutes a day can help.</li> <li>• Explore different <a href="#">treatment options</a> so that you know what works for you. Remember that different things work for different people at different times.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Having a support network in place</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to identify one or two people who you can ask for emotional and practical support.</li> <li>• Let people know as early as you can if you are finding it hard to cope and need support.</li> <li>• Ask for help with practical tasks such as childcare, transport and cooking meals.</li> <li>• Ask the school or nursery to keep an eye out for any behaviour changes in your children.</li> <li>• Find out if your employer offers flexible working arrangements, such as flexible hours, to help you manage the demands of working while parenting. See our pages on <a href="#">workplace mental health</a> for more tips.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Being organised</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan ahead for the busy morning times each evening by making lunches and packing bags.</li> <li>• Try to stick to regular times for routine tasks like mealtimes and bedtimes.</li> <li>• Have a clear and quiet homework space for your children.</li> <li>• Make advance plans to reduce your responsibilities during unwell periods, and check out options for extra support during these times.</li> <li>• Write down family routines so anyone supporting you can keep things consistent.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Talking about mental health</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfortunately, not everyone understands mental health problems. Some people may have misconceptions about</li> </ul>

	<p>what certain diagnoses mean. They may also use language you find dismissive, offensive or hurtful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This can be very upsetting - especially if someone who feels this way is a family member, colleague or healthcare professional.</li><li>• But it's important to remember that you aren't alone, and you don't have to put up with people treating you badly. See our information on <a href="#">dealing with stigma</a> for some options for you to think about.</li></ul>
<p><b>Seeking help when you need it</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local authorities have a duty to provide social care if your mental health makes it harder for you to do certain things, such as looking after your children. They also support children whose caring responsibilities are too much.</li><li>• Ask someone you trust to either find out about or go with you to a <a href="#">support service</a> for the first time.</li><li>• Make a list of all the questions that you'd like to ask the support service.</li><li>• Reaching out for help can sometimes bring up very difficult fears about having children taken away. Remember that organisations will have supported lots of other parents before you, and their family support staff will be experienced in how best to help you manage your situation.</li></ul>

*"Let other people babysit, have your kid overnight, make their tea. Your kid won't mind and they'll love the extra attention. You aren't a bad parent for needing help."*

### How can I help my children?

Many parents who have a mental health problem worry about how this might affect their children. This section suggests a few things that you can try to help reduce any impact that your mental health problem may have on your children.

*"It was extremely hard for me to admit to my boys that I wasn't OK. But I saw it as vital for their own future mental health to know that this was alright and they could ask for help whenever they needed it."*

## Honest communication

Talking to your child honestly about your mental health can reduce any fear or confusion they may be feeling, and help them understand your actions and behaviour. The following list suggests things to consider that will help make the conversations a little easier.

- Speak with a trusted friend first and decide what you want to say to your child, or talk it through with a support service like the [Carers Trust](#).

- Stick with clear and age-appropriate information.
- Explain as simply as possible how your mental health affects how you feel and how you behave.
- Make regular time to talk to older children about how they are feeling.
- Be available to listen if they are having problems or if they just want to talk.
- Answer questions as honestly as possible, or find someone else who can answer them instead.
- Reassure them that they are not responsible for how you feel – instead, be a team with your children and help each other at different times.
- Agree what information about your mental health you feel happy for them to share, and with whom.
- If your child doesn't feel comfortable discussing their feelings with you, identify a trusted teacher, friend or family member that they can talk to if they feel worried. [Childline](#) can also offer them confidential information and advice.

## Keep track of their mental wellbeing

It is a good idea to keep track of your child's wellbeing, to make sure that they are OK and that their own mental health is not being adversely affected. If you keep an eye on how they are, you will be able to notice if they are having difficulties and deal with any issues quickly.

- Devise a simple way to check in with your child about their stress levels, eg: 'On a scale of 1–10 how relaxed are you feeling? What is one thing that will bring that score closer to 10?'
- Keep an eye out for changes in their behaviour, such as becoming quiet and withdrawn.
- Notice if your child doesn't want to participate in activities that they usually enjoy.
- Pay attention when children become angry or aggressive; try to acknowledge their feelings and set boundaries without becoming angry back.
- Attend parents' evenings at school, nursery or any after-school clubs as much as possible, to find out how your child is coping; or make arrangements for a trusted relative or friend to go on your behalf.
- Ask people you trust to also keep an eye on your child's wellbeing; close friends and family members can let you know if your child appears different, and they may notice things you don't.
- If you feel concerned about your child's mental health, you can ask your GP to assess them, or make contact with a local support organisation for young people such as [Young Minds](#).

*"Parenting with a mental health problem is about using the skills and practices all parents can use. The arrangements I make for my children's care should I need to go into psychiatric hospital are no different to those I would make for a stay in general hospital."*

## Make sure their caring responsibilities are manageable

If your child has responsibilities around the home, this might mean they are classified as a young carer. These could include looking after the household, shopping or money, or helping you with your basic needs such as washing, dressing or taking medication. Try to keep track of how much they are doing and make sure this isn't having a negative impact on them.

- Be aware of the relationship between responsibility and [stress](#), and makes changes that reduce the pressure on your child if their stress levels rise.
- Ensure that they balance any caring responsibilities with activities of their choice.
- Build in rest time each week where your children can 'do nothing'; this will help them avoid becoming overly tired or resentful of having too many 'grown up' things to do.
- If it feels difficult for you to help balance your child's caring responsibilities, ask for some advice from a support organisation such as the [Carers Trust](#), or seek [social care support](#) from your local authority.

## Think about what they need in their own lives

Helping your child to have the different things they need in order to be happy and healthy is a satisfying part of being a parent.

- Talk to them about their experience of school, find out what they are enjoying and which aspects they are finding harder, so that you can support them with these.
- Create a quiet and clear place at home where they can study and prioritise time each week for them to do homework.
- Support their friendships to develop and strengthen; if you don't feel able to have their friends around, see if you can help them to set up times where they can meet outside the home.
- Help them take part in activities they enjoy.
- Respect their privacy by letting them have their own space.
- Encourage [physical exercise](#), to let off steam and reduce [anxiety](#) or worry.

If you are concerned that your child's caring responsibilities are having a negative impact on them, there are lots of organisations that may be able to offer advice and support. See our page on [support available](#), including social care, for more information.

*"Most importantly love yourself. You are your child's role model. They know if you don't look after yourself and they will do the same."*

## What support is there?

If you are parenting with a mental health problem, there may be times when you need additional support to help you cope. Different types of services are available for you and your family.

Type of support	How this can help
<p><b>Advocacy</b></p> <p>If you are finding it hard to get the help you need, an advocate might be able to support you. An advocate is an independent person whose role is to listen to your needs and support your choices.</p> <p>The Mind <a href="#">Infoline</a> can help you find out whether there's an advocacy service in your area. See our guide to <a href="#">advocacy</a> for more details.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• listening to your views and concerns</li><li>• helping you to find out information</li><li>• exploring different options for support</li><li>• helping you contact relevant people</li><li>• attending meetings and appointments with you</li><li>• supporting you to express your views and wishes</li><li>• helping make sure your voice is heard.</li></ul>
<p><b>Mental health services</b></p> <p>If you would like to access a mental health service, talk to your GP or a mental health worker.</p> <p>They can tell you what support is available and refer you to a local service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• health visitor – these can offer support, advice and information on parenting young children while managing your mental health</li><li>• community mental health team (CMHT) – these offer intensive support to help you manage your mental health problem more effectively and cope better as a parent</li><li>• Parent and baby unit – this is a place where you can look after your baby, under the care of a specialist mental health team, while being treated for a mental health problem.</li></ul>

See our page on the [Care Programme Approach](#) for more information.

## Social Care

### Adult services

If you need extra support your local authority may be able to advise you and provide some help through social care. To access this, you need to ask for [social care needs assessment](#).

The assessment should be carried out in such a way that ensures your involvement and that takes enough time to capture all of your needs.

For more information on assessments see our guide to [Health and social care rights](#).

Examples of the types of support that adult social care might be able to help you with are listed in the right hand column.

### Children's services

In addition to support from adult social care services, you and your child may also be entitled to support from children's social care services.

In England, local authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of any children 'in need' and their families under section 17 of the [Children Act 1989](#). This automatically includes disabled children and any child whose health or development is likely to be negatively affected if the local authority doesn't provide support.

The fact that you have a mental health problem won't automatically mean that your child is in need. The local authority has to carry out an assessment of your child's needs to decide this.

In Wales, local authorities have a duty to assess children who may need care and

- managing money, such as budgeting or paying the bills
- housework tasks of cleaning, cooking and shopping
- accessing local services such as peer support groups, employment services, or day centres
- organising transport or applying for travel passes to attend appointments or services
- training in parenting skills
- managing relationships with friends, family or neighbours
- aids and adaptations to your home or help with mobility issues
- personal care, such as washing or dressing
- benefits and housing, such as help with applications, attending appointments or getting advice or information
- accessing or staying in training, education or employment
- support from a specialist social worker or support worker
- support for your child, such as supervised youth clubs or day trips, and respite
- direct payments so that you can arrange the additional support you need.

support under section 21 of the [Social Services and Wellbeing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#). They must meet the needs of children and adults who meet the statutory eligibility criteria.

Children who perform caring roles are likely to meet the criteria for being a child in need, in recognition that the role can often impact on their health and development.

Adult and children's services should work together in assessing your family's needs.

See our pages on the [care and support planning](#) and [direct payments](#) for more information.

## Charities and voluntary organisations

### Support for adults

In certain areas voluntary mental health organisations and family charities may offer services that might be able to help you - these might be face to face, via email, text or via a helpline or online forum.

You can usually refer yourself by telephoning, emailing to make an appointment or attending a drop-in session.

Find out what support is available in [Useful contacts](#), by getting in touch with the [Mind Infoline](#) or by contacting your [local Mind](#).

### Support for children

Children with parents who experience mental health problems can also benefit from extra support sometimes. There are a wide range of services that offer different kinds of services for varying ages.

To find out what support is available in your area, search online or talk to a relevant professional, such as a GP.

- parenting courses – see [Family Lives](#)
- online forums and discussions
- online counselling
- drop in services for information and advice – see [Citizens Advice](#)
- wide range of support for parents – see [Family Action](#) or [Family Rights Group](#)
- specialist support for single parents – see [Gingerbread](#)
- outreach services where workers can visit you in your home – see [Home-Start](#)
- drop in groups
- [peer mentoring](#) and support groups
- time out for carers – see [Barnardo's](#).

## Care Programme Approach

If you are being treated through the [Care Programme Approach](#) (CPA) your role as a parent and the needs of your children should be taken into account when considering your health and social care needs.

*"It's the hardest thing to do but admitting you're struggling and asking for help and support is very important."*

## What will help me prevent or manage a crisis?

- If you're in crisis now and you need urgent help, see our page on [getting help in a crisis](#).
- If you want to help someone else, see our page on [how to help someone else seek help](#), including how to help someone else in an emergency.

Even if you do your best to manage your mental health, there may be times when you become very unwell and are unable to care for your children. It can be a difficult time to make clear decisions, so it might be helpful to think through what would need to happen in advance.

## Become aware of any patterns in your mental health

Tracking your mental health and identifying what increases your distress can help you plan to put extra support in place during pressured times. Some people may be able to identify clear patterns in their mental health, whereas for others it may feel a lot less predictable.

Ask yourself:

- Does your mental distress increase in any specific circumstances?
- Are there certain times of the day, month or year that typically increase your distress?
- What are the main things that are hard to manage during times of increased distress?
- What helps you when you are finding things difficult?
- Which individuals or organisations can you turn to for extra support?

## Reduce your responsibilities during times of illness

If you have periods when you are unwell or find it more difficult to cope, you may find it helpful to think in advance about what practical steps you could take to reduce some of your responsibilities during these times.

- Try to organise extra childcare for your children, such as an after-school club, nursery or childminder. Perhaps you can ask a family member, friend or neighbour for help with childcare arrangements.
- Explore if older children can use public transport to get to school or to after-school activities.
- If you're in work, ask your employer if you can work fewer hours or work from home some of the time.
- See if family members or friends can cook occasional meals for you and your children.
- Try to find other adults who can help your children with their studies.
- Ask for more general help from friends, family and any other sources of support you have, including looking into [social care support](#).

## Think about your support in a crisis

Talking to the people closest to you about how you would prefer to manage a crisis can be a good way to plan for the future. This could even prevent a crisis from happening. If it would be helpful to have a record, you could take notes of what you agree.

- Identify how they can spot the signs of a [crisis](#).
- Explore how you would like them to help you.
- Identify who should be contacted.
- Talk through what treatment you would like.

There are also more formal ways that you can plan for times when it may be hard to make decisions. For more information, see our pages on [advance statements and decisions](#).

## Plan what you'll do if you become too unwell to care for your children

Planning in advance for times when you become too unwell to care for your children can reduce stress and worry about what will happen, and minimise any disruption to your children's lives. It is a good idea to plan the following with someone you trust while you are well:

- Decide who will do what for your children.
- Have a clear plan about how that will happen (for example, if your children will go and stay with them or if they will come to your house).
- Discuss weekly routines and useful contacts.
- If you are a single parent, it is particularly important to decide who will take over your role as the legal responsible parent if you are unwell.

## Plan what will happen if you need to be admitted to hospital

If there is a chance that you may be admitted to hospital during a crisis, you might also find it useful to plan the following:

- Check and write down visiting hours of local hospitals.
- Find out whether there are facilities for family visits.
- Decide whether you want your children to visit you in hospital or not, and arrange with someone to bring your children to visit if you do.
- Explain to your children in advance that you might have to go to hospital and what will happen while you are there, to help them feel more prepared.

*“It’s like a juggling act – people keep saying I must take time to deal with my mental health but when the children need things it can be almost impossible.”*

### Checklist and planning resources

Use this checklist to remind yourself of things you have tried and what helps:

- I take positive steps to look after my mental health
- I can ask for help if I need it
- I am organised about daily parenting tasks and have a good routine
- I have developed a support network I can rely on when I need to
- I know who to ask to help me with day-to-day responsibilities if I need to
- I have spoken to my friends and family about what to do if I have a crisis or need to go into hospital
- I have an [advance statement](#)
- I know what professional support is available for me if I’m not coping
- I have spoken to my child about my mental health and they understand my condition

- I keep a close eye on my child's wellbeing and they have someone to talk to if they are worried
- I know what support is available for my child if they are finding it difficult to cope
- I keep track of my child's caring responsibilities and make sure they aren't taking too much on.

## Could my child be taken into care?

Some parents with mental health problems worry that their child will be taken into care. This can be upsetting, and can increase stress and worry for you and your family.

This section explains more about when children could be taken into care and what would happen.

## Will my child be taken into care?

There are several important points to remember:

- **Children are only taken into care in extreme circumstances** – this will only happen if other forms of support haven't worked, or if social services feel you cannot keep your children safe.
- **Being in contact with social services doesn't mean your child will be taken into care** – social services can provide a wide range of support to help you look after your children yourself. For many parents, this is a positive experience.
- **If your child is taken into care, it doesn't mean it is permanent** – care is often temporary until you are well enough to look after them yourself again.
- **Unless it's an emergency, your child cannot be taken into care straight away** – you would receive many warnings and be given months of notice that the care process is beginning.

For more information on what would happen if a child was going to be taken into care, see [Citizens Advice](#).

## Getting support if your child is taken into care

It is really important that you don't go through this process alone. There are lots of things to think about and different types of support that can help you through it.

- Make sure you are aware of your legal rights – information on local authority care and kinship care are available on the [GOV.UK](#), [Citizens Advice](#), [Family Rights Group](#) and [Granparents Plus](#) websites.

- Get a solicitor who specialises in childcare law to help you with the legal process – ask your social worker how to do this or check the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website. You will be able to get free advice and representation from a solicitor, no matter what money you have coming in, what savings you have or whether you own your home.
- Make sure you get continued mental health support to manage your mental health – talk to your GP or [community mental health team \(CMHT\)](#) about what might help.
- Make sure that you understand any treatment plan your social worker has given you. Talk to your social worker, GP or a mental health worker if you don't understand or disagree with any part it.
- You may want to contact a support charity for families involved with social services, such as the [Family Rights Group](#), for information and advice.
- You may also benefit from [talking therapy](#) to help you deal with any difficult feelings you have.

*“Sometimes I worry about how my mental health problems affect my ability to parent my children – and then I look at them and see how tolerant, kind, caring and understanding they are towards others. It's then that I remember I've still done a good job!”*

### How can friends and family help?

*This section is for friends and family who want to support someone who is parenting with a mental health problem. Support from friends and family is very helpful when looking after children. This is particularly true if someone is unwell.*

## If you're concerned for a child's safety

Sometimes complex problems like mental distress or disorientation can make it hard for parents to meet a child's needs.

In some instances, this situation can develop into a more serious one of neglect or abuse. If you notice any warning signs, it is important that you take them seriously – even though it can feel very hard to do so.

- If you have a strong enough relationship with the parent, see if you can find a way to voice your concerns without judging their parenting.
- Ask them if you can help them to find the support that is needed.
- If you are unsure about what to do in this situation, you might find it helpful to contact the [NSPCC](#) to find out your options and discuss your concerns in confidence.
- If you are genuinely worried about a child's safety, you may want to talk to [your local authority's](#) Children's Services department.
- It is likely that you will be worried about whether you are doing the right thing, and you may feel as if you are betraying your friend or family member. It is important that you also find [support for yourself](#) during this time.

## Practical help

Practical help is invaluable when someone is unwell. There can be any number of things that you could do to support someone that would make a huge difference to their stress and anxiety levels:

- helping with day-to-day tasks like transport, childcare, housework or shopping
- organising parenting responsibilities over a period of time by working out daily and weekly routines and identifying the most important tasks
- taking the children to activities and making sure they still get to see their friends
- looking after pets
- acting as an emergency contact person who can have the children to stay at short notice, or help with basic tasks, if your friend or family member becomes unwell
- asking your friend or family member how you can best help – they will know what's most helpful for them.

If your friend or relative is more seriously ill, you may have to decide whether to do things for them (possibly including looking after the children for a bit) or to keep encouraging them to try to carry on for themselves. There are no easy answers to this situation.

It will help if you can find someone who you can discuss these and other issues with, and who may be able to share the responsibility with you.

## Emotional support

If your friend or family member is finding it hard to look after their family, they may worry that they will be judged or criticised if they ask for help, so it's important to be supportive and reassure them that it's ok to seek support.

Encourage them to be open about their mental health problem, so they feel comfortable coming to you if they need support.

Things you could consider or try include:

- letting them know that you respect them for talking to you about how they are feeling
- being empathic and understanding in your response, rather than trying to 'fix' them
- exploring with them any ways that would help them to recognise when they are becoming unwell, and what their triggers are
- if you sense that they are not coping, asking them how they are – they may not know how to ask for help
- understanding that they may feel very sensitive to being judged and being as supportive and kind as you can in the way you speak with them.

*“I didn't realise becoming a parent was going to be hard but having depression and looking after a baby made me feel blank. All I can say is thank God for family and positivity.”*

## Helping them find other support

It is important that you don't offer more support than you can genuinely give. If you feel that your friend or family member needs additional support, you could help them find the extra support they need by:

- researching what support is available for them, or doing it together
- putting together a list of contact numbers and opening times for local support services
- signposting them to useful websites and information services
- acting as an advocate to help them get the support they need, including contacting schools, other friends or family members on their behalf to enlist support (if you have previously agreed that they are happy for you to do this).

## Looking after yourself

It can sometimes be really challenging to support someone with a mental health problem – you are not alone if you feel overwhelmed at times.

It is important to remember to look after your own mental health too, so you have the energy, time and distance that is necessary to be able to help. Be clear about what you can and can't do, and how much time you have available.

For example:

- **Set boundaries and don't take too much on.** If you become unwell yourself you won't be able to offer as much support. It is also important to decide what your limits are and how much you feel able to help.
- **Share your caring role with others, if you can.** It's often easier to support others if you're not doing it alone. See our information on [how to cope when supporting someone else](#) for suggestions.
- **Talk to others about how you're feeling.** You may want to be careful about how much information you share about the person you're supporting, but talking about your own feelings with someone you trust can help you to feel supported too.
- **Find support for yourself.** The organisations listed on our [useful contacts](#) page are there to support you too. It could also help to explore [peer support](#) and [talking therapies](#).

*“Those who love me for who I am as me – rather than my diagnosis – and who are not afraid to stand up to stigma, are those I love and want around me.”*

## Useful contacts

### Mind's services

- **Helplines** – all our helplines provide information and support by phone and email. Our Blue Light Infoline is just for emergency service staff, volunteers and their families.
  - Mind's Infoline – 0300 123 3393, [info@mind](mailto:info@mind)
  - Mind's Legal Line – 0300 466 6463, [legal@mind](mailto:legal@mind)
  - Blue Light Infoline – 0300 303 5999, [bluelightinfo@mind](mailto:bluelightinfo@mind)
- **Local Minds** – there are over 140 local Minds across England and Wales which provide services such as [talking treatments](#), [peer support](#), and [advocacy](#). [Find your local Mind here](#), and contact them directly to see how they can help.
- **Elefriends** is a supportive online community for anyone experiencing a mental health problem. See our [Elefriends page](#) for details.

### Who else could help?

#### Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

020 7794 2313

[annafreud.org](http://annafreud.org)

Offers a range of support for children, young people and families.

#### Barnardo's

[barnardos.org.uk](http://barnardos.org.uk)

Support for children experiencing mental health problems and young carers.

#### Carers Trust

[carers.org](http://carers.org)

Provides support and advice for carers, including initiatives for young carers.

#### Childline

0800 1111

[childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)

Confidential helpline for children and young people in distress.

#### Citizens Advice

03444 111 444 (England), 03444 77 20 20 (Wales)

[citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)

Confidential advice on a range of issues, including legal rights and parenting.

## Family Action

[family-action.org.uk](http://family-action.org.uk)

Services for families, including mental health and young carers' support.

## Family Lives

Helpline: 0808 800 2222

[familylives.org.uk](http://familylives.org.uk)

Information and support for parents and families.

## Family Rights Group

helpline: 0808 801 0355

[frg.org.uk](http://frg.org.uk)

Support for families whose children are involved with social services.

## Gingerbread

Helpline: 0808 802 0925

[gingerbread.org.uk](http://gingerbread.org.uk)

Advice and practical support for single parents.

## GOV.UK - Local authority finder

[gov.uk/find-local-authority](http://gov.uk/find-local-authority)

Information about public services specific to your local authority, including childcare benefits and social care to support adults and children affected by mental health problems.

## Grandparents Plus

[grandparentsplus.org.uk](http://grandparentsplus.org.uk)

Information for kinship carers.

## Home-Start

[home-start.org.uk](http://home-start.org.uk)

Local support networks for families with young children.

## Kooth

[kooth.com](http://kooth.com)

Provides anonymous online support for young people - counselling, messaging and personal stories. Only available in certain parts of England and Wales.

## Mumsnet

[mumsnet.com](http://mumsnet.com)

Forums about parenting, including parenting and mental health.

## NHS Choices

[nhs.uk](http://nhs.uk)

Information on health conditions and services.

## NSPCC

Adult helpline: 0800 800 5000

Child helpline: 0800 1111

[nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.org.uk)

Support for children and anyone worried about a child.

## Papyrus' HopeLineUK

Helpline: 0800 058 4141

Text: 07786 209 697

[pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

[papyrus-uk.org](http://papyrus-uk.org)

Confidential support for young people with suicidal thoughts and advice for people concerned about a young person.

## Samaritans

24-hour free helpline: 116 123

[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK

PO Box 90 90

Stirling FK8 2SA

24-hour emotional support for anyone feeling down or struggling to cope.

## Sane's Support Forum

[sane.org.uk](http://sane.org.uk)

Mental health forum for discussion and mutual support, aimed at adults.

## Time to Change

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[time-to-change.org.uk](http://time-to-change.org.uk)

Anti-stigma campaign led by [Mind](#) and [Rethink Mental Illness](#).

## YoungMinds Crisis Messenger

Text YM to 85258

[youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)

Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK for young people experiencing a mental health crisis.

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References are available on request.