



As parents and carers, you play an important role in teaching children and young people how to understand and manage their feelings as they grow up.

First steps in supporting my child or young person with their mental health

It's normal to feel angry, sad, worried or stressed sometimes. However, your child might need extra support if they struggle to cope with those feelings.

Look out for:

- sudden changes in behaviour
- negative thoughts and low self-esteem
- arguing and fighting
- sleep problems
- avoiding school or staying with you all the time
- aches and pains.

Remember – everyone is different, and these signs might not be related to a mental health problem. They may just be experiencing big emotions.

Children and young people, like adults, can be affected by significant changes such as:

- death or illness in the family
- parents separating
- moving school or moving house
- tests and exams
- adolescence and puberty
- relationship and friendship problems

What can I do at home?

- **Find time to talk, just the two of you** – 'Check in' with them while you're doing things together, so they get used to talking about their feelings.
- **Every emotion is completely normal** - Praise your child for being so open and honest about how they are feeling.
- **Play together** – Play builds connection - so the world doesn't seem so lonely. It helps them to be curious, learn new things, solve problems and express feelings without words.

- **Be a role model** – Use it as an opportunity to connect: tell them about a time you felt the same and share what you did to manage your emotion. Show how you cope with difficult feelings and look after yourself.

Where can I get more information?

Child Mental Health and Wellbeing

- **NHS**
- **Young Minds**
- **MindEd**
- **Place2Be's blog.**
- **Kooth (for children age 11)**
- **Anna Freud**

Big Changes

- Bereavement and grief - **Child Bereavement UK**, **Once Upon a Smile** or **Winston's Wish**.
- Divorce and separation - **Young Minds**.
- Getting ready to start school - **Place2Be**.
- Adolescence and growing up - **The Mix**.
- Exam stress - **Place2Be**.
- Children Looked After **Kinship Compass**

Conditions and Challenges

- Eating disorders - **Beat**.
- Addiction and drugs - **FRANK**.
- Abuse - **NSPCC** (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).
- Trauma – **Beacon House**

Difference and Diversity

- Special needs and disabilities - **Scope**.
- Autism - **National Autistic Society**.
- LGBTQ+ - **Strong Family Alliance**.
- Race and ethnicity - **BAATN** (The Black, African and Asian Therapy Network).
- Gender identity - **Gendered Intelligence**.
- Disability and parent support in Bolton **Breaking Barriers NW Bolton**
- Bolton support for families with parents or children with autism **Kidz2gether**

*Please note this is not an exhaustive list, and we are unable to signpost to every organisation. Please refer to the **NHS** or **BBC Action Line** for a more comprehensive directory.*

If you are concerned about your child's Mental Health and believe that their life is at risk, please do **speak to your GP**.

Alternatively, you can contact the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (**CAMHS**) **01204 483222** or e.mail: <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/bolton-camhs>

10 MENTAL HEALTH TIPS FOR PARENTS

Encourage communication and talking openly. Support your child in talking about their feelings



Encourage your child to interact with friends and family and to connect with others



Listen to what your child has to say. Be patient and understanding with them

Support your child in problem solving when they experience worries. Help them to find solutions



Engage in some coping skills with your child (i.e. relaxation or deep breathing)

Make sure your child knows that you will be there for them



Don't struggle in silence. If you need extra help go to your doctor or a mental health charity



Make sure your child is looking after their physical wellbeing (Sleep, food, exercise)

Regularly praise, support and encourage your child. Show them love and affection



Help your child to challenge unhelpful thoughts and to think rationally

