

# Coping with a parent who has mental health needs.



The information contained within this pack was correct at the time of sharing. We update this on a regular basis. If you notice any links are broken or information has changed please contact [ShropshireFIS@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:ShropshireFIS@shropshire.gov.uk) and we will update the information. Further Family Information Services and Resource Packs are available through the Early Help website [www.shropshire.gov.uk/early-help](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/early-help).

## **Young Minds**

YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. Driven by their experiences we campaign, research and influence policy and practice

Having a family member who is suffering from mental illness can be tough, but it's more common than you think. You might find it hard to understand what is happening, and sometimes the symptoms might confuse or frighten you. Luckily there are people who can help you and your relative.

Suite 11, Baden Place, Crosby Row, London, SE1 1YW

[ymentquiries@youngminds.org.uk](mailto:ymentquiries@youngminds.org.uk)

[http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for\\_children\\_young\\_people/whats\\_worrying\\_you/mental\\_illness\\_family](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_children_young_people/whats_worrying_you/mental_illness_family)

## **Rethink mental health.**

If you care for someone affected by mental illness, for instance a parent, brother or sister or other relative, you can also find out about our Young Carers project **Young Carers in Focus**. The aims of the Young Carers in Focus project are to enable you, as young carers, to be heard and get better access to practical advice and support, and to tell your own story in a way that feels positive and meaningful.

89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP

0300 5000 927

<https://www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness/young-people/supporting-a-friend-or-relative-with-their-mental-health>

<https://www.rethink.org/carers-family-friends/caring-for-yourself-guide>

## **COMPI (children of parents with a mental illness)**

Emerging Minds created the COPMI national initiative to develop prevention strategies leading to better mental health outcomes for children of parents with a mental illness.

If your parent experiences mental illness, it's normal for you to have all kinds of different feelings. It might be hard to know how to cope with your parent or understand why they act the way they do. This can leave you feeling angry, stressed and helpless...and a whole lot of other things!

Ground Floor, 77 King William Road, North Adelaide. South Australia, 5006  
<http://www.copmi.net.au/kids-young-people>

## **Babble.**

Is an on – line forum for children who care for parents with any kind of illness. Caring or a parent does not necessarily mean living with them. The children of parents with mental illnesses can be under huge significant pressures and as such talking and sharing that burden and understanding what is and what is not acceptable is really important.

<https://babble.carers.org>

## **Mind**

When you are a carer you spend a lot of your time focusing on someone else. It can feel unnatural to think about yourself and your needs. But it's important that you look after your own wellbeing too. Taking positive steps to look after yourself can help you avoid physical and mental health problems

Shropshire MIND, Holywell St, Shrewsbury SY2 6BL  
01743 368647

<http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else/carers-friends-and-family-a-guide-to-coping/>

## **Shropshire Young Carers**

Shropshire Young Carers is a voluntary organisation that supports young people aged 5-18 years who provide a caring role for a family member who is ill, disabled, suffers with mental health difficulties or has alcohol/drug related issues.

01743 457824

[HAT@redcross.org.uk](mailto:HAT@redcross.org.uk)

British Red Cross, Bradbury Park House, 3 Park Plaza, Battlefield Enterprise Park,  
Shrewsbury, SY1 3AF

<http://www.redcross.org.uk/Where-we-work/In-the-UK/Northern-England/Herefordshire-Shropshire-Worcestershire/LocalServices/Young-carers-service?dpid=05ee9cc3-ba53-4f95-a3bb-88372a360177>

## **Sane.**

SANE provides emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including families, friends and carers.

Our mental health support services are completely confidential. Whatever your problems or concerns, you will receive non-judgemental emotional support. Our professional staff and trained volunteers have specialist mental health knowledge; we can help you consider options for support that address your individual circumstances

0300 304 7000

<http://www.sane.org.uk>

## **EPIC Friends.**

Someone listening to you can really help if you've got things on your mind. It can help you feel more contained about your worries, so you can think calmly, rationally and come up with solutions. It restores your ability to think clearly about the whole situation

<http://epicfriends.co.uk>

# **Resources**

## **Sane.**

This factsheet aims to give an overview of the situation that family, friends and carers of those with a mental health diagnosis may encounter, and to provide some helpful information.

St. Mark's Studios, 14 Chillingworth Road, Islington, London, N7 8QJ

0300 304 7000 – Helpline available 6pm – 11pm daily

[info@sane.org.uk](mailto:info@sane.org.uk)

[http://www.sane.org.uk/uploads/family\\_friends\\_and\\_carers\\_2014.pdf](http://www.sane.org.uk/uploads/family_friends_and_carers_2014.pdf)

## **Rethink Mental Illness.**

Caring for yourself is a self-help workbook for family and friends  
Supporting people with mental health problems.

<https://www.rethink.org/carers-family-friends/caring-for-yourself-guide>

## **COPMI (Children of Parents with a mental illness)**

The following links are specifically children and teens there are number of videos from COPMI and they feature subjects such as

1. You are not alone - there are other young people who have a parent with a mental illness.
2. You didn't cause your parent's illness - and it's not up to you to make them better.

<http://www.copmi.net.au/find-resources/resource-library/item/what-you-need-to-know>

'When your parent has a mental illness'

<http://www.flipsnack.com/copmi/when-your-parent-has-a-mental-illness-fdnqd000c.html>





## TALKING ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS WITH TEENAGERS

*For parents with kids in mind*



### Be informed

There are many good websites with information on mental illness signs and symptoms.

[www.sane.org.au](http://www.sane.org.au)

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

### Websites for kids

[www.copmi.net.au/youth](http://www.copmi.net.au/youth)

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

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

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

Teenagers are discovering new choices, responsibilities, life experiences and relationships. Talking about your (or partner's) mental illness with your teenage child helps them understand and make plans for their future.

Discussing your illness with your children can help them make sense of any changes they notice in you and your family. Without your support, children will try understanding these changes on their own. Talking with your children will reduce their confusion, let them know they aren't to blame, and educate them about your illness and the treatments you are receiving.

### Be prepared

When you and your partner understand the illness you'll be more comfortable talking about it with your child. You can research the illness yourself or ask your health professional for information.

There's a lot of information about mental illness, the types of support and treatments available on the internet. SANE Australia and beyondblue have credible information on their websites.

Perhaps you prefer to understand the illness by discussing it with a GP or mental health professional. Ask questions and speak about your personal experiences. Keep in mind that it can take time finding a health

professional you feel comfortable with and has the right fit for you.

Some parents find it difficult to broach the subject with their child as they worry it will burden them. On the contrary, many parents have reported how accepting their children were to learn about illness the first time. It's actually comforting to understand why things might be 'different' and that you're taking steps to manage the illness.

### The teenager's perspective

Adolescents are developing an adult perspective so they may already be interpreting symptoms or signs of mental illness. Giving your teenager factual information about the illness will help them put the pieces together. Teenagers can worry about the stigma often linked to mental illness.

They'll probably have questions about their own mental health and the impact your (or your partner's) mental illness might have on them and whether they'll be like you. They might also worry about their emerging independence balanced against your (or your partner's)



[www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au) | 77 King William Street, North Adelaide SA 5006 | 08 8367 0888