

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

How can we support our young people during difficult times?

Information for Parents/Carers

How can we support our young people when there are particularly difficult things happening in their lives? Though each person's experiences will be personal and therefore different, it is very likely that your child will be having many different feelings and reactions. All reactions are normal, sometimes to very unexpected or unusual events.

Some of the reactions young people may experience when facing especially difficult events in their lives

- Emotional reactions such as feeling afraid, sad, helpless, overwhelmed, angry, confused, anxious
- Disturbed sleep or insomnia
- Changes in eating patterns
- Low mood
- Headaches and other physical symptoms
- Struggling with memory and concentration at school
- Aggression
- Wanting to withdraw and isolate themselves.

Young people can be encouraged to:

- Identify a 'crisis friend' or friends who they can turn to. This maybe someone in their own family or not
- Talk if it helps. Take things at their own pace in terms of how much they want to share or not
- Keep their body going through eating, sleeping and taking exercise in small amounts
- Use their religious/personal beliefs to help them through
- Believe in themselves and their ability to get through this
- Let out their emotions where it is safe
- Imagine good times and places and how they would want things to be
- Use their head to work out plans, what has happened, what they can do and need, who can help, how might they be able to help and plans for the future
- Ask for help at school if they are struggling with concentration, memory and school work. You could do this on their behalf.
- Ask for help if they want to hurt themselves in any way or find that they are turning to drugs/alcohol as a means of coping.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

In the case of young people it is important to recognise that they, like adults want information and support but also have a need to feel that they have some choices and alternatives and some power to choose. Often our desire to protect them, as we would do younger children, can interfere with the process of them maintaining some sense of control in their lives. Even with younger children, fostering resilience and positive coping strategies to cope with the immediate and the future is more helpful than being over protective and trying to shelter them from the truth, however painful this may be.

Does my child need more help?

You can do a lot to help and support them. However some young people may need additional support to help them cope. For example, young people who have had traumatic events happen to them in the past and young people with mental health difficulties may be more vulnerable during difficult times.

It is a good idea to seek help if your child is:

- Feeling upset and fearful most of the time
- Acting very differently to before the event
- Not being able to work at all at school
- Having deteriorating relationship difficulties
- Using drugs or drinking too much
- Self-harming or thinking about harming themselves
- Not able to stop thinking about what has happened
- Not able to enjoy life at all.

You can access help in the first instance by:

- Speaking to a member of the pastoral staff in school.
- Speak to your GP
- If your child already has a CAMHS practitioner involved with them, contact them

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Support for Young People

www.cmft.nhs.uk/childrens-hospitals/our-services/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services

www.kooth.com

Free, anonymous mental health and wellbeing online support including; counselling, chat rooms, messaging facilities, forums and resources.

www.42ndstreet.org.uk

Supporting young people aged 11-25 years: Counselling, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), One to One Support, Groups and Projects, Drop-ins, Arts-based activities.

www.manchestermind.org/YASP_Home_Page.php

Counselling, mentoring, befriending, advice, volunteering and an internet café for young people aged 15-25 years.

www.youngminds.org.uk/about-us/

Help and resources for parents, carers and children.

www.childline.org.uk

Childline number 0800 1111

Support for Parents

www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-survival-guide/

Young Minds