



Advice and information for parents

Counselling Services

About advice services for children and young people

Many young people are struggling with how they feel. They are having problems with friends, family or school, they are anxious, depressed, angry or scared and need to talk to someone, but find it difficult to talk to people they know. Counselling and other advice services can help them talk things through, support them without making judgements and in confidence (unless they disclose that their personal safety is at risk). Advice services can make a positive difference to their lives.

The range of advice services for children and young people includes face-to-face counselling, one-to-one phone calls, webchat, email and forums.

How counselling can help young people

Counselling is the most common form of talking therapy and is sometimes available on the NHS through the GP surgery, or through school-based counselling. It can help young people deal with issues and events and the effects they are having on their mental wellbeing. Counselling could be recommended for young people who are basically healthy but who are struggling with a mental health disorder such as depression or eating disorders; it can address problems with anxiety, bereavement; bullying, anger, relationships, low self-esteem, and self-harm. The counsellor will help explore the problem, the symptoms and strategies for coping.

The different types of counselling

There are different types of counselling, but the most common ones recommended for young people are:

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): The approach of CBT is about thinking more positively about life, looking at how you can get stuck in patterns of behaviour and ways of changing these rather than dwelling on past events. There are typically six or 12 weekly sessions and the therapist sets goals with the young person, often with 'homework' to do in between.

Mindfulness: Mindfulness is often combined with CBT and helps a young person to focus on difficult thoughts and feeling, rather than avoiding them, so that the fear of them gradually lessens. Therapists can also include meditation, yoga and breathing exercises.

Psychotherapy: This is a more long-term therapy and involves talking about the effects of past events and can be more helpful with long-term problems such as depression or eating

disorders. NHS psychotherapists work in clinics or hospitals; some private psychotherapists work from home.

Family Therapy: The whole family works with the family therapist to try and understand the problems they are all having. It can help improve communications between family members and issues such as children's behavioural problems, disability, family breakdown, addiction and domestic violence.

Where can I find a counsellor for my child?

The GP might try to refer a young person to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for counselling, but it is increasingly difficult to do this – the child's symptoms generally have to be quite extreme to meet referral thresholds and waiting lists can be very long. However, they might know about alternative local counselling provision for young people.

Schools can also refer young people to CAMHS. In addition, many schools have their own counsellor or mental health nurse on site and young people can often benefit hugely from having this kind of support in school.

The voluntary sector offers opportunities for young people to get advice, support and solidarity from helplines, group forums and message boards, email- webchat- text- and email services (see Resources page overleaf for further information).

Counsellors and therapists are available privately – it can seem quite overwhelming trying to find someone you think is suitable, so check on bona fide directories and look for recommendations. (see Resources page overleaf for further information).

What can help? What to do.

These are things that may really make a difference:

1. Friends and family can be vital sources of support to help young people cope with stressful situations and difficult times.
2. Notice changes in your child's mood. Your instinct will probably tell you if your child is not feeling their best.
3. Your child may feel that you won't understand but you can often surprise them...and yourself!
4. It is important to let them know that you care about them, want what's best for them and are willing to help if you can.
5. Be open and available for them to talk over problems, things that are bothering or stressing them or how they are feeling.
6. Pick a time that is good for you both, where you have enough time to have a proper conversation without being interrupted.

7. Ask what you can do to help. Stay calm and positive and try to be the 'strong one'.
8. Provide emotional support. Listen and show empathy rather than trying to find answers or solutions.
9. Make it clear you will not say anything to anybody else if they don't want you to. (An exception will be if you have a significant concern for their safety).
10. Help with practical support, e.g. if your child has to go for an appointment but feels uncomfortable about going on their own, go with them, even if you wait outside.
11. Be positive about counselling as an option.
12. Try not to take it personally if your child finds it easier to open up to a professional such as a counsellor or therapist, or to someone else outside the family. Remember that sometimes it's helpful for a child to be able to speak to an adult with some more emotional distance from the situation.
13. If they are having cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) support the recommended coping strategies, introduced as part of their treatment.
14. Your child might well not 'gel' with the first counsellor they see (and this is like people we meet everywhere – we get on with some and not with others). Look for someone else, rather than giving up "*Counselling was rubbish, he wouldn't open his mouth and hated it!*"
15. Pass on information to them about young people's advice and support services. They might feel more comfortable with an online service, rather than a face-to-face.
16. Keep a copy of the [U can cope! leaflet](#) (Royal College of Psychiatrists) nearby to read for practical ideas on coping with difficulties
17. When a young person is feeling down or having a hard time, help arrange time with other people, for chatting and distraction.
18. Suggest ways that a child might decide who to confide in (e.g. mum, dad, sibling, other relative, friend, GP, helpline). They could:
 - Think about who they feel easy talking to about personal matters
 - Think about who they trust
 - Choose someone who is non-judgemental and a good listener
 - Pick someone they have known for a while rather than a new friend
 - Talk to someone who may have been in a similar situation and would have empathy. (This is often why people choose forums because they feel comfortable talking to people who have experienced similar things to them)
19. Be hopeful.

Finding support

All references listed on this sheet are for information only. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, YoungMinds cannot accept responsibility for changes to details made by other organisations.

Finding a counsellor for your child

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

www.bacp.co.uk

A professional body that sets standards for therapeutic practice, and provides information about what counselling and psychotherapy will involve. You can use their directory to search for local private (fee-paying) BACP-accredited counsellors and therapists living locally to you.

Phone: 01455 883 300

UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

www.psychotherapy.org.uk

A professional body that sets standards for therapeutic practice. You can use their directory to search for local private (fee-paying) UKCP-accredited counsellors and therapists living locally to you.

Phone: 020 7014 9955

Association of Child Psychotherapists

www.childpsychotherapy.org.uk

A register of accredited Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists in the UK, which aims to uphold high standards in training and practice. You can use their directory to search for local private (fee-paying) accredited counsellors and therapists living locally to you at www.childpsychotherapy.org.uk/fat

Counselling Directory

www.counselling-directory.org.uk

Lists private (fee-paying) counsellors and psychotherapists who are registered by a professional body. They also provide information on the different types of talking therapies including family therapy.

Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland (COSCA)

www.cosca.org.uk

Scotland's professional body for counselling and psychotherapy. You can search their directory to find private (fee-paying) accredited counsellors and therapists living locally to you.

British Psychological Society

www.bps.org.uk

Information on how psychologists can help with mental health issues, and on how to find a psychologist.

Youth Wellbeing Directory

www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/youth-wellbeing

Lists local services for young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Youth Access

www.youthaccess.org.uk

Offers information about advice and counselling services for young people aged 12-25 years.

Relate

www.relate.org.uk

Face-to-face, telephone and online support and counselling for families and young people – including family counselling. Their website has lots of information for parents around family life and young people's mental health and behaviour. All services are fee-paying.

Phone: 0300 100 1234 or contact your local Relate Centre

Online, phone and text support for children and young people

The Mix

www.themix.org.uk

If you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix about anything that's troubling you over the phone, email or webchat. You can also use their phone or online counselling service.

Helpline open daily 4-11pm: 0808 808 4994

Email: www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team/email-us

Webchat open daily 4-11pm:
www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team

Counselling service: www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team/the-mix-counselling-service

Childline

www.childline.org.uk

If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, chat online or email about any problem big or small.

24/7 helpline: 0800 1111

Chat 1:1 with an online counsellor:
www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat

To email: Sign up on the website, so you can send your message without needing to use your name or email address, at
www.childline.org.uk/registration

Kooth

www.kooth.com

Provides free, anonymous online counselling support for young people. You can also get support from the Kooth community and read personal stories from other young people.

Online counselling available 12-10pm Monday-Friday, and 6-10pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

Sign up on the website to access support.

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

www.thecalmzone.net

Provides support to anyone who is feeling down and needs to talk or find information.

Open daily 5pm-midnight.

National helpline: 0800 58 58 58

London helpline: 0808 802 58 58

Webchat:
www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat

Student Minds

www.studentminds.org.uk

Supports students, and parents of students, to look after their mental health. The website provides information about services offered by universities, and young people can also access their peer and group support programmes.

Email: info@studentminds.org.uk

Phone: 0113 343 8440

Mee Two app

www.meetwo.co.uk

A free app for teenagers providing peer support and resources. Young people can share what's going on for them and send supportive messages to others. All messages are fully moderated.

Download from Google Play or App Store.

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger

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

Text YM to 85258

Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

Emotional support for anyone who needs to talk, day or night.

24/7 Helpline (UK and Republic of Ireland):
116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

PAPYRUS (Prevention of Young Suicide)

www.papyrus-uk.org

Confidential advice and support for young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and for anyone concerned about a young person who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Open 9am-10pm Monday-Friday and 2-10pm at weekends and on bank holidays.

HOPELineUK: 0800 068 41 41

Text: 07786 209 697

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org