

Herefordshire Community Network

Support for Ukraine – information for guests

How to talk to your child about their mental health?

Signs of depression or anxiety in children can sometimes look like normal behaviour, particularly in teenagers who might keep their feelings to themselves. So, knowing how to talk to your child about their mental health is important.

Many children or young people will feel stressed or anxious about things like exams or moving to a new school. But while these experiences can be challenging, they're different from longer-term depression or anxiety, which affect how a child or young person feels every day.

It can help to think about what's normal for your child and if you've noticed signs that they've been behaving differently.

Signs of depression in children can include:

- ongoing low mood or lack of motivation
- not enjoying things, they used to like doing
- becoming withdrawn and spending less time with friends and family
- experiencing low self-esteem or feeling like they are 'worthless'
- feeling tearful or upset regularly
- changes in eating or sleeping habits.

Signs of anxiety in children can include:

- becoming socially withdrawn and avoiding spending time with friends or family
- feeling nervous or 'on edge' a lot of the time
- having panic attacks
- feeling tearful, upset or angry
- having trouble sleeping
- changes in eating habits.

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You can help a child who is struggling by:

- letting them know you're there for them and you're on their side
- talking to them over text or on the phone if they don't feel able to talk in person
- being patient and staying calm and approachable, even if their behavior upsets you
- recognizing that their feelings are valid and letting them know it's OK for them to be honest about what they're feeling
- thinking of healthy ways to cope. You could try things like yoga or breathing exercises together
- encouraging them to talk to their GP, someone at their school or Childline. Especially if they're finding it hard to talk at home.
- taking care of yourself and getting support if you need to. Try not to blame yourself for what's happening and stay hopeful about your child's recovery.

Getting mental health support for your child

- [Speak to their GP](#)
- [Talk to your child about Childline](#)
- [Get help from your child's school](#)
- [The CLD trust \(8-26 y.o.\)](#)
- [MIND \(adults\)](#)

Information correct as of 28.11.2024