

- my child is getting into trouble with the law?
- my child is abusing substances?

#### Who else might be involved in my child's care

- Who else may be able to help?

#### Getting help

- If things get worse, how can I contact you?
- Who else can I contact?
- Who do I contact in an emergency?

#### Medication

Some children will be helped with medication, but the vast majority do not need this sort of treatment.

- Will medication help?
- What would medication do?
- Is it safe for children?
- What are the side-effects?
- Does my child have to agree to take it?
- How long might my child have to take medication?
- Have trials been carried out with children?
- Have tests been carried out?

#### Hospital admission

Very few children will need to go into hospital. However, for a very small number, an admission to hospital might be necessary.

- How will hospital help my child?
- What will it be like for my child?
- How often can I visit?
- What will be the age of the other children there?
- Can I stay with my child?

#### Confidentiality

- Will you share the information that I give you with other professionals?
- If my child talks to someone, will they tell me what he/she has said?

#### Consent

- Can my child give their consent to treatment?
- What if they don't – can I decide for them?

#### What if I am not satisfied with my child's treatment and care, who do I speak to:

- to make comments?
- to get a second opinion?
- to make a complaint?

#### Further help

##### Young Minds

Provides information and advice on child mental health issues. 102-108 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1M 5SA. Parents Information Service; tel: 0800 018 2138; [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk).

##### ADD Information and Support Service (ADDISS).

The ADDISS Resource Centre, 10 Station Road, London NW7 2JU; tel: 020 8906 9068; fax 020 8959 0727; email: [info@addiss.co.uk](mailto:info@addiss.co.uk); [www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk). Provides information and resources about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder to anyone who needs assistance - parents, sufferers, teachers or health professionals.

##### The Princess Royal Trusts for Carers

Further information for carers is also available from The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, 142 Minories, London EC3N 1LB; tel: 020 7480 7788; [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)

##### The Royal College of Psychiatrists

Produces a series of 36 factsheets for parents, teachers and young people entitled 'Mental Health and Growing Up'. These cover the main

emotional, behavioural and mental health problems that can affect children and young people. Available from the Royal College of Psychiatrists, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG, tel: 020 7235 2351 ext. 146; [www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk).

With grateful thanks to Dr Margaret Bamforth and members of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Children's Emotional Well-being Group for producing this leaflet.

This leaflet has been produced as part of a joint campaign of The Royal College of Psychiatrists and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers. One of the aims of the campaign is to show that if all those involved in the care of people with mental health problems or learning disabilities can work together, a trusting partnership can develop between carers, patients and professionals which will be of benefit to all.

For copies of this leaflet and details of other materials produced by the Partners in Care campaign, contact the External Affairs Department, Royal College of Psychiatrists, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG; tel: 020 7235 2351 exts. 131 or 127; or e-mail: [awedderburn@rcpsych.ac.uk](mailto:awedderburn@rcpsych.ac.uk) or [dhart@rcpsych.ac.uk](mailto:dhart@rcpsych.ac.uk).

Further information about the campaign can be downloaded from [www.partnersincare.co.uk](http://www.partnersincare.co.uk).



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for Carers

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# A checklist for parents

with children with mental health problems

Working in partnership with psychiatrists,  
members of the Child and Adolescent  
Mental Health Service and parents



Partners in  
**Care**

Working together to make a real difference

# A checklist for parents with children with mental health problems

## Working in partnership with psychiatrists, members of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and parents

### Introduction

This leaflet is aimed at:

- the parents or the carers of a child with mental health problems who provide continuing help and support, without payment;
- the psychiatrists or other members of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) who are involved in the care and the treatment of the child.

It suggests ways of improving communication and partnerships when the child has first been identified or diagnosed with a problem.

### For the parents/carers

This leaflet has a list of questions which we hope will be helpful to you – the parent/carers.

Going to see a psychiatrist or other mental health professional about a child's difficulties can be a very daunting experience for a lot of parents. Parents often feel anxious and worried. The CAMHS team is there to work with you, in partnership, to help sort out the difficulties that you bring to them. They understand that parents can feel that nobody appreciates what it is like to have a child with problems, and that sometimes, parents feel that professionals do not believe them.

If a problem is easy to sort out, then most parents will be able to do this themselves. Sometimes, a problem needs more than that, but it is not always easy to ask for help.

If you are nervous about being able to explain clearly what the problem is, then taking a relative or friend along can be a great help.

Children can have a variety of different emotional and behavioural problems. Some of these will be short-lived, and others will be disorders that will need treatment. This checklist is to help you ask the questions to ensure that you get the information that you need as a parent seeking help for your child. However, this checklist cannot cover all the questions that could be asked.

When a parent takes their child to a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, they will be asked a lot of questions by the person who sees them, in order to gather information (carry out an assessment) to help determine the nature of the problem (or make a diagnosis), and decide what should happen next (treatment).

Not all the questions in this checklist will be relevant to your situation.

At the end of this checklist are some sources of information and support which you may find helpful.

This checklist provides some questions to ask about your child's:

- problem and/or diagnosis
- how to understand the problem and/or assessment
- treatment and/or help needed.

### About the problem

Not every child will have a formal diagnosis. Many children have short-lived problems which will be resolved with help and support. Some may have behavioural problems which do not have an underlying diagnosis.

- What sort of problem does my child have?
- Is it mainly behavioural?
- Is it mainly emotional?
- Is it a mixture of both?
- Is it a mental illness?
- Is it a problem of learning and/or development?
- Is it a problem with relationships?

### Assessment

Getting more information to help sort out a problem is important. You should be told how this information will be gathered.

- How will you find out if there is an illness or diagnosis?
- What information is needed?
- What information do you need from me?
- Will the school need to be contacted?
- What if we don't want the school to know we have asked for help?
- How long will it take to find out what is wrong?
- What tests are needed?

### If a diagnosis has been made

At this stage, parents will have a great many questions. Make sure that you are given time to obtain the information you need. This is really important for parents.

- Is any further assessment needed?
- What does the school need to know?
- How will my child be affected?
- Will he/she grow out of it?
- Where can I get information about what is wrong with my child?

- Are there any groups for parents whose children have this problem?

### If a diagnosis has not been made

- Is this problem going to go away by itself?
- What sort of help can you give?
- What do I need to do to help my child?
- Who else needs to know about the problem?
- Is any further assessment needed to make sure nothing else is wrong?

### How might I be involved in my child's care and treatment

Parents are very important in helping to sort out their child's difficulties, whatever they are.

- How can I manage my child's behaviour better?
- What sort of help and support can I expect?
- Will I be expected to join a parents' group?

### The role of the school

Children spend a great deal of time at school. It is important for CAMHS to have good communication with schools, and to keep parents informed.

- How can school help my child?
- Who do I need to talk to?
- Will we all need to meet together?
- If the problem gets better, will my child do better at school?

### How might social services help

- What services are provided by social services for children with mental health difficulties?
- In what circumstances should I contact social services?
- How can social services help if:
  - my child is aggressive or hurting others?