

Amaze FACT SHEET Updated Oct 2024

# MENTAL HEALTH

This fact sheet has been written by parent carers for parent carers



For some of our children and young people, mental health issues will be their main area of additional need. Other children with certain conditions may be more vulnerable to mental health conditions because of their disability. Autistic children, for example, can be more likely to develop anxiety, depression, or obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

Mental health issues may be harder to recognise in young people with disabilities because of communication difficulties, the complexity of their condition, or the fact that some mental health symptoms may be confused with their other symptoms.

If your child has a learning disability, you may just feel that something is 'off'; that there has been a change in the way that they communicate, their behaviour has changed, that they are sleeping more or less, or they are no longer enjoying their favourite activities. It's important to trust your instincts and speak to professionals involved with your child if you have concerns.

## Signs that something may be wrong

Many children and young people feel anxious or low at times, or they may have issues with their self-esteem, or face a particular challenge such as bereavement. Often just talking to you or a trusted friend may be enough to help your child through these difficult patches but sometimes problems persist and grow.

You may want to seek some outside advice and support if you notice your child or young person is:

- becoming more anxious, or isolated and withdrawn from friends and family
- having problems sleeping or eating
- neglecting their personal hygiene
- more irritable than usual
- harming themselves or others

## Self help and resources

Your child or young person (and you) can get some excellent information and advice on things like low mood, anxiety and self-harm from the local digital wellbeing service, **e-wellbeing**, or from national organisations like **Young Minds** and **Childline**. See the Ask about and Further info sections below for links to useful resources.

## Getting outside help

If your child is still in education, speak to their **school or college** about your concerns. Most schools now have a mental health worker who supports staff to work with children's mental health and wellbeing, or does direct work such as running mindfulness groups. They may also arrange support such as counselling or cognitive behavioural therapy.

You can also talk directly to your local **school health and wellbeing service** to get some advice. Or you could speak to their **GP** or **paediatrician**.



for families with disabled children  
and young people in Sussex

[amazesussex.org.uk](https://amazesussex.org.uk)



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Parents, carers, young people and professionals can also contact the Single Point of Advice (SPoA) to get support for 0-18 year olds who are experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All referrals will be triaged at the SPoA hub by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and East Sussex County Council Children's Services staff who are experienced in mental health. The young person will then be offered advice or support according to their needs.

Families can also get 24 hour advice, support and signposting from [Sussex Mental Healthline](#)

### Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Children and young people up to 18 with more acute mental health issues may be referred to **CAMHS** for diagnosis and assessment and some intervention. This includes children with issues like anxiety and depression, eating disorders and self-harming. CAMHS is made up of specialist teams including child psychiatrists, family therapists, counsellors, and play and art therapists.

There are also certain conditions for which CAMHS is the normal route to be assessed or diagnosed, e.g. ADHD. But your GP or other professional would refer you to CAMHS in this instance. For details of making a referral to CAMHS for mental health and wellbeing support East Sussex, visit the [Sussex CAMHS website](#).

#### CAMHS Learning Disability Teams

The CAMHS Learning Disability team can give additional support to families of children who have a learning disability where there is concern about their emotional wellbeing, mental health, or there is difficulty managing behaviour. The teams include specialists such as clinical psychologists, consultant psychiatrists, family support workers and therapists. They will develop an individual plan for your child and work closely with you. See Ask about for their details.

### Urgent help with mental health crises

If you think your child's life is in immediate danger, **please call 999** and ask for an ambulance or go to A&E.

If your child or young person is at risk of harm due to experiencing a mental health crisis, contact the **Sussex Mental Healthline** on 0800 0309 500 or by calling NHS 111 and choosing the mental health option.

For text-based support, you can text SUSSEX to 85258.

See Ask about below for other crisis mental health support from Childline, Samaritans, Papyrus and Sane.

### Ask about

#### Local services

- **Amazing Futures peer support and activity groups** - Regular social and support groups for young people with SEND at various venues across East Sussex. Contact [claire@amazesussex.org.uk](mailto:claire@amazesussex.org.uk) or call 07484 915 038. Get details of all upcoming groups at <https://amazesussex.org.uk/events>
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** - specialist mental health support services. Referral is usually via GP, health practitioner or school, after other forms of support have been tried. Young people experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties can refer themselves however, via the East Sussex Single Point of Advice (SPoA) - see below.



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- **CAMHS Learning Disability team** – specialist psychological, emotional and behavioural support for children with learning disabilities and their families. give additional support to families of children who have a learning disability when there is concern about their emotional wellbeing or mental health, or they exhibit behaviour that challenges those around them. The teams include specialists such as clinical psychologists, consultant psychiatrists, family support workers and therapists. They will develop an individual plan for your child and work closely with you. Find out more at <https://1space.eastsussex.gov.uk/Services/4784/Learning-Disability>
- **East Sussex School Wellbeing Service** - school nurses and practitioners who support children and young people with a range of health issues including mental health. Parents, professionals and young people can refer into the service via 'Text your school nurse' - **07507 332473** (for 11 to 19 year olds and parent carers of 5-19 year olds) or call School Health One Point on **0300 123 4062**.
- **e-motion** - free online counselling service for 12-18 year olds in East Sussex. To get support, visit <https://www.e-motion.org.uk/>
- **e-wellbeing** – specialist website, run in collaboration with Sussex CAMHS, to support children and young people with their mental health across Sussex. <https://e-wellbeing.co.uk/>
- **Health in Mind** - free NHS Talking Therapies service for over 18s experiencing emotional stress, anxiety or low mood. Ask your GP to refer or you can do it yourself here: <https://www.healthinmind.org.uk/what-we-do>
- **Holding Space** - for East Sussex parent carers whose children are struggling with their mental health. Support includes coffee mornings, walks, telephone advice, counselling and therapies. Visit <https://www.holdingspace.org.uk>
- **i-rock advice and support** - advice and support on emotional and mental wellbeing for 14-25 year olds in East Sussex. Virtual drop-in: 11am to 6pm, Monday to Friday and limited number of face to face appointments. Email: [irockhastings@gmail.com](mailto:irockhastings@gmail.com).
- **Old Bank Wellbeing Trust:** low cost counselling and psychotherapy services. Call: **01323 502 827** or email: [info@theoldbankwellbeing.org.uk](mailto:info@theoldbankwellbeing.org.uk).
- **Pan-Sussex Children and Young People and Family Eating Disorder Service** - work with children, young people and their families to treat eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia. Young people can self-refer but they recommend a young person speaks to their GP first. Call **01444 472670** or email to [FEDS@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk](mailto:FEDS@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk) or [spnt.feds@nhs.net](mailto:spnt.feds@nhs.net)
- **Single Point of Advice** - first point of contact for support for young people with mental health and other difficulties. Call: **01323 464222** (Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 5pm, Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm) Email: [0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk)
- **Sussex Mental Health Line** - Crisis care 24 hours a day, seven days a week to anyone in Sussex needing urgent mental health support. Call **0800 0309 500** or **0300 5000 101**

### National helplines

- **Childline** - for urgent mental health support or online resources. Call: **0800 1111** or visit <https://www.childline.org.uk>
- **Hopeline** - for young people who are suicidal or those concerned about a young person who is suicidal. Open 9am to midnight. Call: **0800 068 41 41** Text: **07786 209 697** or visit <https://www.thehopeline.com/>
- **Papyrus HOPELINE247** - 24 hour advice and support to under 35s thinking about suicide, and anyone who is concerned about them. Call **0800 068 41 41** or text **88247**
- **Samaritans** – 24-hour help for people who are feeling anxious, depressed or suicidal. You can



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also call if you are worried about someone else. Tel: **116 123** or go to <https://www.samaritans.org/>

- **Saneline** - give help, support and information to anyone affected by mental health. They are open 4.30 to 10.30pm every day. Call **0845 767 8000** or email [sanemail@sane.org.uk](mailto:sanemail@sane.org.uk)

**Further information and useful links**

- **Amaze fact sheet on *Building your child's self-esteem***. Download at <https://amazesussex.org.uk/resources/fact-sheets>
- **Beat Eating Disorders** - information, advice and support on eating disorders. See <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>
- **Contact** – a national charity for families who have a child/young person with a disability. As well as information and resources, it also runs a helpline. Go to: <https://contact.org.uk> or call: **0808 808 3555**.
- **docready** - helps young people get ready for a doctor's appointment if they want to discuss their mental health and wellbeing. <http://www.docready.org/#/home>
- **Harmless** - support and resources for people that self harm and their friends and family. Visit: <https://harmless.org.uk/>
- **East Sussex Local Offer** – read more about mental health services for children and young people in East Sussex on the Local Offer SEND info hub. <https://localoffer.eastsussex.gov.uk/send-information-and-services/conditions-assessments-and-diagnosis/social-emotional-and-mental-health-semh>
- **Mind** – go to their website: [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk) or call their information line on: **0300 123 3393**.
- **Place 2 Be** - lots of parenting advice from child mental health experts <https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/>
- **Sussex CAMHS Parent Page** - advice for parents on their child's mental health and tips for managing together. Visit: <https://www.sussexcamhs.nhs.uk/resources/resources-for-families-carers-and-professionals>
- **Young Minds** – support for young people and advice for parents on their child's mental health <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent>. Also runs a parent carer webchat helpline on: **0808 802 5544**

