

We all have mental health

We all have mental health, like we all have physical health. It's important we take care of both as they are part of our overall wellbeing.

When someone experiences a mental health problem, it can affect their thinking, their mood, and their ability to relate to others as they usually would.

Actually, you might be surprised how common mental health problems are. 1 in 4 of us are affected in any year. (It's 1 in 10 young people, or 3 people in the average classroom). So, even if your family isn't affected directly, you or your children will know someone who's going through the experience right now.

Considering all this, you'd think we'd speak about mental health more, wouldn't you? But it's still often a topic we avoid.

If discussing mental health isn't everyday and ordinary in your house, you're not alone. It's really important though, and just being open to speaking and listening as a parent can make a real difference.



Elizabeth experienced symptoms of depression a few years before her diagnosis, aged 19, but she didn't want to worry her parents. For a long time she didn't speak with anyone about how she was feeling.

Elizabeth:

"As a teenager, you think it's something that happens to adults, not young people. When my parents tried to talk to me, I denied there was anything wrong – I didn't want to talk about my feelings. So, when the GP diagnosed me with depression I think it was a bit of shock to all of us."

David:

"We didn't really know much about mental health and, to be honest, weren't aware how many young people experience mental health problems. Still, my wife and I noticed a change in Elizabeth's overall demeanour and that prompted us to ask whether everything was OK."

I really think talking to children more about mental health would remove the stigma. And from a parent's perspective, we would understand what to look for."

Ten tips for talking

1. Mental health isn't just about illness. It is also about wellbeing.
2. Showing you're happy to talk and listen will mean a lot.
3. You don't need to set aside hours. Just opening up the conversation helps.
4. You could chat while doing something else, like driving or preparing dinner.
5. Explain that every one of us has mental health.
6. You don't have to be an expert, or have the answers.
7. Hypothetical situations might be easier to talk about than personal experiences.
8. Familiar ideas might include feeling stressed, depressed, low or anxious
9. You could suggest learning together.
10. There are lots of good information resources on the internet.



Find out more about mental health, stigma and discrimination, and how you can start your conversation.

[Time-to-change.org.uk/parents](https://time-to-change.org.uk/parents)

Mental health problems affect people of any age, race, religion or income. The most commonly diagnosed mental health problems are anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression, eating disorders, schizophrenia, OCD, personality disorders and phobias. 9 in 10 people who have a mental health problem say they have experienced stigma and discrimination as a result. Similar to other types of discrimination, people who experience mental health stigma describe feeling isolated, ashamed, misunderstood and demeaned. Talking about mental health can be really helpful. You don't need to be an expert. The more we talk about mental health, the more we can break down the taboos surrounding it – enabling young people to look after their own health, reducing the stigma around asking for help, and allowing them to support peers.

it's time to talk. it's time to change
let's end mental health discrimination



D'you think we should talk to Sarah about

Mental Health?



No - it's just I saw a leaflet about how mental health issues are common, but we don't talk about it

I don't want her to think it's a *taboo*...

— Well OK...

But I can just picture the response...



Get off my back, OK?



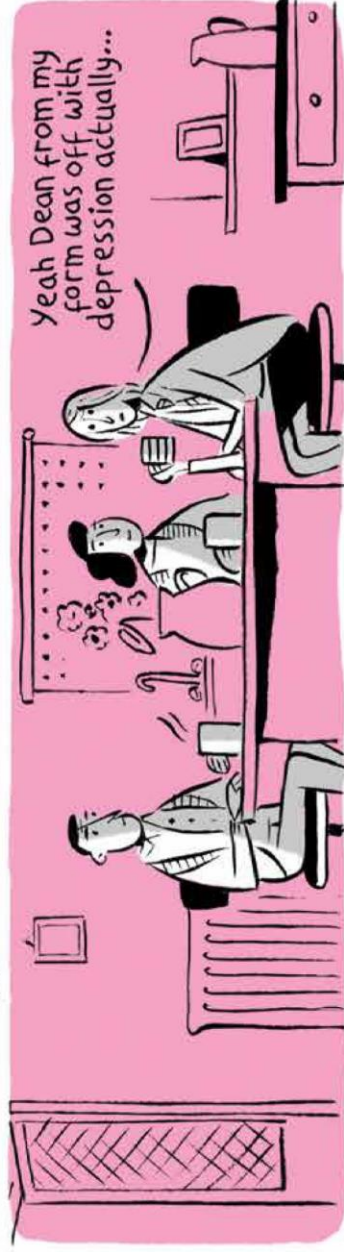
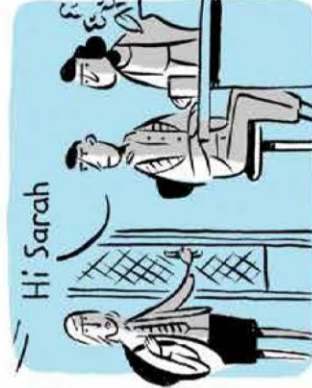
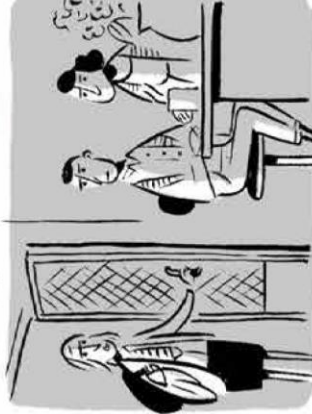
So what am I crazy now?



GOD this is so embarrassing



Mmp



Find out how to start your conversation today at time-to-change.org.uk/parents

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