



# Social Work Children & Families Residential Services

## A Guide to Mental Illness

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March 2008**



# A Guide to Mental Illness



## What is mental illness?

You may live with someone who has a mental illness, it could be your grandparent or another relative. mum, dad, “Mental Illness” can sound scary if you have not had any experience of it before or if your friends and others have told you stories which may be untrue.

People find it difficult to talk about these things and you may have some questions that you want to ask but do not know who to speak to. After reading this factsheet you may have a better understanding and can tell your friends and others that they got it wrong. We can all have an illness that affects our bodies and in just the same way we all have minds that can become unwell.

## Who can get a mental illness?

Anyone can have a mental illness at any time in their lives including people in your own family or friends. There may be times when you wonder why they:

- **treat you in a different way to usual**
- **cannot help you with the things they usually do**
- **say “weird” things**
- **may cry but cannot explain why or**
- **have to go into hospital but you cannot see anything wrong with them**

## **Different types of mental health**

### **Problems**

Mental health problems, as they are sometimes called, can be treated and do not usually last forever. There are different types of this kind of illness and different names have been given to them. Here are some of those names as well as some information about the illness.

### **Depression**

There are different kinds of depression including a type called postnatal depression that a woman may get after she has had a baby. People who have depression may not seem as if they have much energy, cannot be bothered with things, can seem sad and perhaps do not sleep very well. If your mum or dad has depression maybe housework does not get done or meals are not cooked and it may seem that things are changing and you do not know why. Sometimes just talking things through with someone can help, or the doctor will give them some tablets and this can help too.

Someone with severe depression might need a stay in a psychiatric hospital as well as tablets to take when they come home. This could mean that someone else would look after you for a while, maybe a grandparent or other relative. If they are not able to help then Children & Families Services have people specially trained to look after children whose mums and dads are not able to. It is only for as long as they are unwell and then they can take care of you as usual.

### **Psychosis**

People who experience this may not be able to tell the difference between something which is real and something which is not.

## Schizophrenia

Someone who has schizophrenia may lose interest in everyday things, may not eat and can have what are called delusions and hallucinations.

Delusions could mean they think they are someone they are not. It can also mean thinking they have done something they have not, perhaps something serious like hurting someone.

Hallucinations mean the person can see something that no-one else can or that they can hear someone talking to them but again no-one else can. It can also mean that the person may talk back and answer these voices. This may seem strange to you if you are around when they do, it is a bit like having an imaginary friend.

These are just a few examples of the names given to mental illness. They may not be the names you have heard in connection with your mum or dad as there are other things which can affect the behaviour of grown-ups. Medication can also affect how a person acts, even the tablets a doctor has given them.

Lots of times medication can work quickly to stop more severe problems happening. Sometimes your mum or dad will need to meet regularly with a doctor or therapist to talk over their problems and check out their progress. Sometimes mums and dads may take things they have bought themselves because they think it will make them feel better. Some grown ups also drink alcohol, but too much and too often can mean they do not realise that they are not looking after you the way you feel they should.



## What can I do?

There are grown ups you can talk to and who can help. If you can talk to an adult who you trust that is the best way for you to get help. Your family doctor is a good person to talk to as they listen to your concerns and begin to sort help out for you and your family. Relatives and family friends can help too. Other adults who can help could be your teacher, school nurse and social worker.

It can also help if you know who you should get in touch with if you feel your parent is becoming unwell. Try talking to your mum or dad and ask them who they would like you to contact first Make a note of it below so you have a list of who to talk to.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's telephone no: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Other places for help and advice**

**Childline:** 020 7239 1000  
**Website:** [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)  
**Email:** [info@childline.org.uk](mailto:info@childline.org.uk)

**The Samaritans:** 01753 532713

**Young Minds:** [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)





## Regulated Services

If your complaint is about the Regulated Care Service, you can also contact the Scottish Care Commission. Regulated Care Services include Residential Care Homes for Children and Young People or Adults, a Support or Day Care Service, a Home Care Service, a Housing Support Service or a Fostering or Adoption Service. Please note the Care Commission will generally advise you to have attempted to resolve your complaint locally before making contact with them. For East Dunbartonshire Council area, the contact address and telephone number is:

**Care Commission  
Central West Region  
4th Floor  
1 Smithhills Street  
Paisley, PA1 1EB  
Tel: 0141 843 4230**

## Would you like to comment on the service you get?

If you would like to make a suggestion, comment or complaint about the service you have received from us please speak to a member of staff at your local area office. Any comments we receive help us plan our future services. You could also pick up a leaflet called 'Comments, suggestions & complaints about Social Work' at your local office, which explains how to comment in writing or by phone.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you will then have the right to refer the matter by writing to:

**The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman  
4 Melville Street  
Edinburgh, EH3 7NS  
Tel: 0800 377 7330  
Email: [ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk)**

You must do this within 12 months of first being notified of the matters you are complaining about.

## Is this leaflet useful?

We would like you to tell us if this leaflet was useful. Please complete the tear off slip overleaf and return it to us (no stamp required).

# List of useful Social Work addresses

## **Advice & Response**

126 Cowgate

Kirkintilloch

G66 1HF

Tel: 0141 775 1311

Fax: 0141 578 0051

## **Kirkintilloch Area Team**

2 Luggiebank Road

Kirkintilloch

G66 1HF

Tel: 0141 775 2110

Fax: 0141 777 6450

## **Milngavie & Bearsden Area Team**

38 Stewart Street

Milngavie

G62 2BW

Tel: 0141 570 2400

Fax: 0141 955 0197

## **Bishopbriggs Area Team**

1 Balmuildy Road

Bishopbriggs

G64 3BS

Tel: 0141 772 6384

Fax: 0141 762 4677

## **Social Work Headquarters**

William Patrick Library

2/4 West High Street

Kirkintilloch

G66 1AD

Tel: 0141 775 9000

Fax: 0141 777 6203

**Is this leaflet useful?**

Does it answer your questions? If you think we can improve this leaflet, why not complete the tear off strip and return it to us.

Name: .....

Address: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**When and where did you get this leaflet/booklet from?**

.....

**If you took it from a reception point, were the staff helpful?**

Yes       No

**Was the leaflet/booklet easy to obtain?**

Yes       No

**Was the layout of the leaflet/booklet easy to follow?**

Yes       No

**Was the information:**

Understandable?      Yes       No

Useful?      Yes       No

**Please detach the form along the perforated line**



### Other formats

This document can be provided in large print, Braille or on audio cassette and can be translated into different community languages.

Contact the Public Affairs Unit at: East Dunbartonshire Council,  
Tom Johnston House, Civic Way, Kirkintilloch G66 4TJ, tel 0141578 8000

本文件可按要求翻譯成中文，如有此需要，請電 0141 578 8152。

Gabhaidh an sgrìobhainn seo cur gu Gàidhlig ma tha sin a dhìth oirbh. Cuiribh fòn gu 0141 578 8152

अनुरोध करने पर यह दस्तावेज हिन्दी में भाषांतरित किया जा सकता है। कृपया 0141 578 8152 पर फ़ोन कीजिए।

ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0141578 8152 ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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Social Work Headquarters  
East Dunbartonshire Council  
2/4 West High Street  
Kirkintilloch  
G66 1AD