

PARENT SUPPORT  
PACK FOR  
CHILDREN  
EXPERIENCING A  
MENTAL HEALTH  
CRISIS

*Kalmer*  
COUNSELLING



## WHAT IS A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AND HOW TO MANAGE IT

As parents there may be times where we become really concerned about our children's wellbeing especially when they feel so overwhelmed that they can't calm down, they feel out of control or may be in sudden danger of hurting themselves or others.

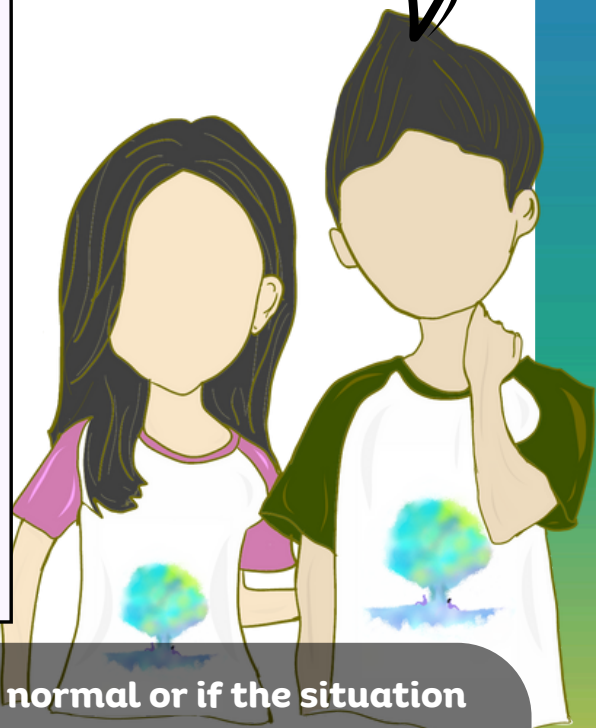
Experiencing a mental health/emotional crisis means feeling unable to cope with overwhelming or upsetting thoughts and feelings. Crisis is different for everyone. There is no right or wrong way to think or feel as there are different triggers and ways in which people experience crisis.

A crisis situation exists any time that they are no longer safe to themselves or others or when there is a need for immediate action or intervention.

## SOME SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY BE EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

- Rapid mood swings
- Extreme energy or lack of it, sleeping all the time, or being unable to sleep
- Severe agitation and or pacing
- Talking very rapidly or non-stop
- Confused thinking or irrational thoughts
- Thinking everyone is out to get them or seeming to lose touch with reality
- Experiencing hallucinations or delusions
- Making threats to others or themselves
- Isolating themselves from friends and family, not coming out of their room
- Not eating or eating all the time, rapid weight loss or gain
- Suicidal thoughts and statements such as "I want to die" or even possible vague statements such as "I don't want to be here anymore"

Remember you are the expert when it comes to your child.



If you feel your child is behaving differently than normal or if the situation seems like it is getting out of control and you fear you may not be able to de-escalate it - then your child is most likely experiencing a crisis

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS IN CRISIS

If you feel your child is in crisis, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do you feel your child is in immediate danger to themselves or others?
2. Can you handle the situation yourself or do you need help?
3. If you need help- what type of help do you need and from who?

**If the answer to question 1 is yes and your child's life is at risk or someone else's life is in danger you need to get help right away!**



**Below are numbers for the crisis team in the North East  
Available 24 hours a day 7 days a week**

### Newcastle and Gateshead

Adults - 0800 652 2863  
Children & young people - 0800 652 2864  
Text number for the Deaf 07919 228 548

### North Tyneside & Northumberland

Adults – 0800 652 2861  
Children & young people – 0800 652 2861  
Text number for the Deaf 07887 625 277

### North Cumbria

Adults – 0800 652 2865  
Children & young people – 0800 652 2865  
Text number for the Deaf 0779 565 6226

### Sunderland and South Tyneside

Adults - 0800 652 2867  
Children & young people - 0800 652 2868  
Text number for the Deaf 07889 036 280

**When you call a mental health crisis service be sure to let them know that your child is in crisis.**

**Try to give the person you talk to as much information as you can about what specifically is happening and anything else you feel may be important.**



## TIPS TO HELP CALM AND CONTROL THE SITUATION

You may also want to consider some of the following tips to help de-escalate the situation:

- Try to stay calm
- Stay with your child but try not to restrict their movement
- Realise it may be difficult to communicate with them during this crisis
- Listen attentively and try to give positive support and reassurance
- Say, "I'm here. I care and love you and want to help. How can I help you?"
- Speak slowly and confidently with a gentle, caring tone of voice
- Ask simple questions and repeat them if necessary
- Use positive words instead of negative words
- Empathise with how your child is feeling
- The intensity of the situation can sometimes make it difficult to hide our own fears or opinions so do your best to stay calm
- Try not to raise your voice or talk too fast
- Do not argue, challenge or threaten your child even if what they are saying seems unreasonable or shocking to you
- Try not to take your child's actions or comments personally
- Don't handle the crisis alone. If you have people who can support you such as family, friends, neighbours, reach out
- Don't threaten to call 999 unless you are in danger yourself. When you call the police and/or an ambulance, they are likely to come to your house which might trigger your child.

## TIPS TO HELP CALM AND CONTROL THE SITUATION

### KEEP IN MIND ✨

- Your child may be frightened by the feelings they are experiencing
- Symptoms such as suspiciousness or distorted thinking can cause them to be fearful and not trust other people even you.
- It can sometimes be helpful to take a break from the conversation for a while when you are waiting to get help.



### Things you can say or do that may be helpful:

- Let them know that they are not alone that you are there for them no matter what!
- Reassure them that lots of young people have suicidal thoughts but do not act on them. Sometimes just knowing that other children and teens sometimes have those thoughts can create some relief
- Try not to discount their feelings or convince them they shouldn't feel this way. We don't want them to feel dismissed or unsupported.
- Let them know that you want to help and that you can find some support they might need.

**Talking about self-harm & suicide is maybe one of the hardest things you have to do as a parent. However, by talking about it allows them to understand that it's ok to come to you no matter how bad or hopeless they feel.**

**You can be a protective factor that helps to lower your child's risk.**

**SOMETIMES JUST HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK ABOUT HOW BADLY THEY FEEL CAN BE A GREAT RELIEF**



## PLANNING AHEAD FOR SAFETY

For some children it is not a question of 'if', but rather a question of 'when' a crisis will occur and, in those cases, some advance planning can make a big difference in getting the care and intervention needed for your child and for your family.

If you have a safety plan in place it should list steps and strategies to help you. If you can plan what you will do, who will contact and where you might go for help during a crisis it can be incredibly helpful.

It is important to think about your child's safety and also the safety of other members of the household.

### **A child who is struggling may:**

- Not use good judgment, self-control or even be aware of the consequences of his or her actions.
- Be fuelled by emotions and may not be able to think logically.
- For some children and young people the 'fight or flight' response often takes over during a crisis and their actions may be sudden, reckless and even dangerous.

### **Additional Preventative Safety Steps:**

- Lock away knives and other sharp objects
- Removing furniture and heavy objects from the child's room that might be thrown
- Locking up all medications and other substances to keep out of reach
- Having a plan and a safe place for when a crisis occurs

### **Please Remember:**

It is important to keep in mind that children and young people who may have a learning disability or difficulty will sometimes find it more challenging dealing with stressors and that their struggles may lead to a crisis situation for no apparent reason.

In addition, changes in medication or other factors may make a mental health crisis more likely. Sometimes even when we have all the right supports services and treatment in place mental health crises can still occur.

It is essential to keep in mind that even if you do everything right and follow all the steps situations can still get out of hand and may be more than you can handle.

It doesn't mean you have done anything wrong, just that you may need some additional support to help your child. King for help and knowing where to and how to get it is sometimes the hardest part.

**Crisis situations can be stressful, frightening & exhausting for you, your child & other family members too.**

**It is important to make sure you are taking care of yourself and getting the support you, all need as well**



## I'M NOT SURE IF MY CHILD IS SUICIDAL

It is really important that you follow your instincts in these situations. If you have a feeling that your child may be considering taking his or her own life, you need to pay attention.

Many parents are fearful that if they ask their child if they are considering killing themselves that it will put the idea in their head or that talking about it may cause them to attempt to take their life, but research actually shows that talking about suicide reduces the risk.

We understand that having this conversation with your child is not an easy thing to do.

In fact, it can be terrifying and overwhelming so we have listed some steps and tips below to help you start the conversation.

1. Talk with your child about what you have observed that is worrying you.

For example:

*'I've noticed that you have been sleeping a lot, staying in your room and you're not interested in going out with your friends or being around us anymore. I also noticed that you wrote down I don't want to be on this earth.'*

Or *'I think I heard you say you "you wanted to die".'*

2. Let them know you love them and you want to help.

*I'm worried about you and want to help.*

3. Ask them as calmly and directly as possible if they have considered killing themselves or taking their own life?

4. If they don't say a strong no then ask:

*Have you thought about how you might do this? or Do you have a plan?*

**Having a plan may mean they are at a higher risk level/not having a plan does not mean there is no risk.**

5. Do not leave them alone if you feel they are at immediate risk. If you feel they are in immediate danger please call the crisis team.



**Who are the people I can all upon for support ?**

(Those people that will listen to you, give you good advice & help you to keep calm)

**What things can I do to stay calm ?**

(If you are calm and regulated this will help your child when they're in crisis)

**What types of behaviours would I need to see to call the crisis team?**

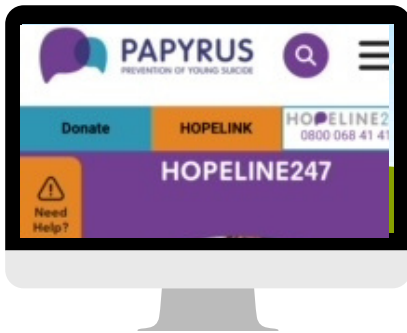
**Number of the Crisis Team**

**If we need help for professionals we will follow these steps:**

(e.g who will look after other children/pets. What room will we use to make phone calls. Do you need to remove objects to keep them safe etc..)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.





**A Papyrus HOPELINEUK - 0800 068 4141**  
**TEXT - 07860 039967**

Support for anyone under 35 experiencing thoughts of suicide, or anyone concerned that a young person may be experiencing thoughts of suicide.

[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)



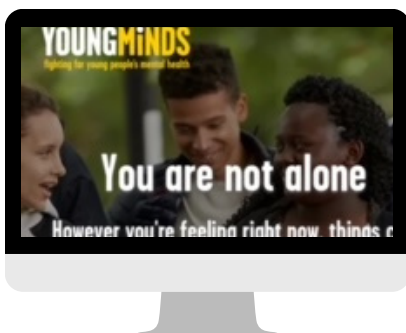
**ChildLine**

**Helpline: 0800 11 11**

ChildLine is a phone line counselling service for children and young people.

You can also post messages to the ChildLine message boards.

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

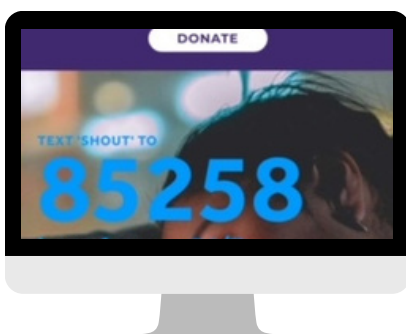


**YoungMinds**

**Parents Helpline: 0808 802 5544**

A service for all young people to get the mental health support they need as and when they need it no matter what.

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

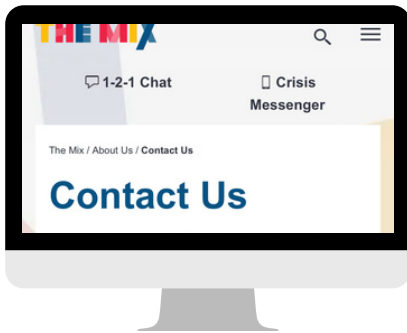


**Shout**

**Text Shout to 85258**

Shout is the UK's first free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.

[www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)



[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

### The Mix

**Helpline: 0808 808 4994**

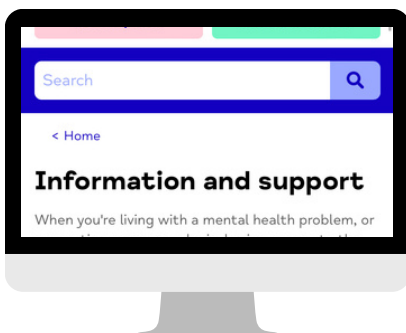
Whether you're 13, 25, or any age in between, we're here to help. They are a free and confidential multi-channel service.



[www.mollyrosefoundation.org](http://www.mollyrosefoundation.org)

### Molly Rose Foundation

The aim of the Molly Rose Foundation is suicide prevention, targeted towards young people under the age of 25.



[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### Mind

**MindInfoline: 0300 123 3393**

The MindinfoLine offers thousands of callers confidential help on a range of mental health issues.



[www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)

### CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

**Helpline: 0800 58 58 58**

The Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) works to prevent male suicide and offers support services for any man who is struggling or in crisis.

The services are open 5pm–midnight daily and are free, anonymous and confidential.