**Top tips to support children and young people**

**Be there to listen**

Regularly ask how they're doing so they get used to talking about their feelings and know there's always someone to listen if they want it. Create a space where they will open up.

**Support them through difficulties**

Pay attention to their emotions and behaviour, and try to help them work through difficulties. It's not always easy when faced with challenging behaviour, but try to help them understand what they're feeling and why.

**Stay involved in their life**

Show interest in their life and the things important to them. It not only helps them value who they are but also makes it easier for you to spot problems and support them.

**Encourage their interests**

Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team help connect us with others and are important ways we can all help our mental health. Support and encourage them to explore their interests, whatever they are.

**Take what they say seriously**

Listening to and valuing what they say, without judging their feelings, in turn makes them feel valued. Consider how to help them process and work through their emotions in a more constructive way.

**Build positive routines**

We know it still may not be easy, but try to reintroduce structure around regular routines, healthy eating and exercise. A good night's sleep is also really important – try to get them back into routines that fit with school or college.

**Looking after your own mental health**

Parenting or caring for a child or young person can be tough. It's important to make sure you look after your own mental wellbeing, as this will help you support yourself and those you care about.

Try to recognise and acknowledge when you're feeling low or overwhelmed. Struggling with something or experiencing your own mental health problems does not make you a bad parent or carer.

It's completely normal to be worried, scared or helpless during difficult times, and feeling this way is nothing to be ashamed of.

Is there a friend, fellow parent or carer you trust enough to tell how you're feeling? Maybe there's family, friends or a colleague who could support you or allow you a break?

There's plenty of help out there. You should never feel like you have to cope on your own.

[Young Minds has lots of support for parents](https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/), including a helpline and guidance around [parenting with a mental illness](https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-parental-mental-illness/).