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Arabic لمزيد من المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الرجوع إلى تفاصيل الاتصال الموجودة في المربع أدناه.

Bangali যদি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় আরও তথ্য চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে নিজের ঘরে মোবাইলের বিস্তারিত তথ্য দেখুন।

Cantonese 有關您需要繁體中文列印的材料，請參見下方方格內提供的聯絡詳細信息。

Mandarin 有关您需要简体中文印成的材料，请参见下方方格内提供的联系详细信息。

Pasuti ستاسو حوله زيه كسب د نورو معلوماتو لبارہ، هيله كيري جب لاندې وركړ شوي بكس كسب د اړيكو نيولو لپاره تفصلات وگورئ.

Polish Aby otrzymać więcej informacji w języku polskim, prosimy o kontakt z numerem podanym w ramce na samym dole.

Punjabi ਅਪਣੀ ਖੁਦ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਖਾਤੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਵੇਖੋ।

Slovak Pre viac informácií vo vašom jazyku pozrite kontaktné údaje nižšie.

Somali Wixii warbixino dheeraad ah oo ku qoran luuqaddaada, faclan arag faahfaahinaha wada xidhiidh ee sanduuqa hoos ku yaal.

Urdu اپنی زبان میں مزید معلومات کے لیے، برائے مہربانی نیچے کے خانے میں رابطے کی تفصیلات ملاحظہ فرمائیے۔

Parenting Handbook



A guide for mums, dads and carers of 5-19 year olds in Sheffield

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Sheffield Information Link (SIL) 0114 275 6699
www.sheffinfolink.org.uk • www.asksid.net



Welcome to our Parenting Handbook, a guide for mums, dads and carers of 5-19 year olds in Sheffield.

Being a parent is the most rewarding experience, but it can also be tough. Every child is different and at every age we are faced with new challenges and situations to handle. There is no such thing as the 'perfect parent' and we all need a little help and support at times.

This handbook aims to offer practical advice and positive ways to manage some of the challenges you may encounter. You'll find information, warning signs, as well as ideas and tips that can be used to tackle specific issues. There is also information on how to get further support.

We do hope you find this guide helpful.

Sonia Sharp

Dr Sonia Sharp
Executive Director
Children and Young People's Services
Sheffield City Council

Andrew Sangar

Councillor Andrew Sangar
Cabinet Member for
Children's Services and
Lifelong Learning



There is also an additional Parenting Handbook available for mums, dads and carers of birth-5 year olds in Sheffield

Key contacts

- Sheffield Information Link (SIL) 0114 275 6699 www.sheffinfolink.org.uk
www.asksid.net
- First Point your one stop shop for all council services 0114 272 6444
www.sheffield.gov.uk
- Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) A team of professionals from education, health and social care, supporting families 0-19 in your local area.
0114 205 3158 www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/servicedistricts
- Parent Know How www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow

Learning and enjoyment

- Attendance** - The importance of being at school 4
- Education & careers** - Support your child's learning 6
- Extended services** - Meeting the needs of children and families 8
- Moving on** - Changing schools 10

Being healthy

- Eating disorders & self-harm** - Getting the balance right 12
- Healthy lifestyles** - Looking after their health 14
- Mental health & well-being** - Helping them cope 16
- Puberty & adolescence** - Your child still needs you 18
- Sexual health & teenage pregnancy** - Communication is important 20

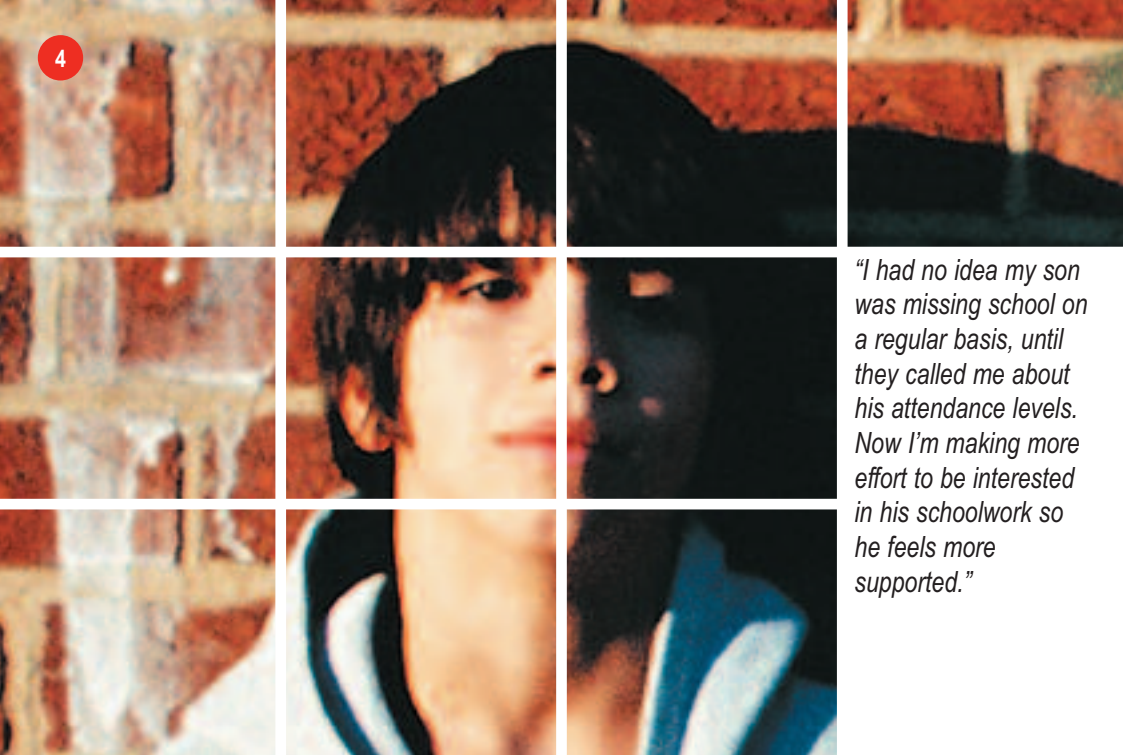
Keeping safe

- Alcohol, drug & substance misuse** - How would I know? 22
- Anti-social behaviour** - The right to feel safe 24
- Domestic violence** - How it affects children 26
- Gangs** - Recognising the signs 28
- Internet safety** - New technology, old problem 30
- Bullying** - The real story 32
- Missing** - From home 34
- Worried about a child or young person?** - Should you mind your own business? 36

General information

- Children with disabilities** - You're not alone 38
- Importance of friendships** - Coping with demands 40
- Positive parenting & self-esteem** - Make them feel great! 42
- Separation & bereavement** - It's not their fault 44
- Teenage parents** - Getting the support they need 46
- Young carers** - Getting what you are entitled to 48





"I had no idea my son was missing school on a regular basis, until they called me about his attendance levels. Now I'm making more effort to be interested in his schoolwork so he feels more supported."



WARNING SIGNS

Notice what times your child is around, if they should be in school and check up if they say school has allowed them out. You may not even know until you are told by the school or police.



ACTION

Find out why your child is missing school and talk about any problems such as bullying or fear of failure. Discuss what your child wants for their future and how to reach short-term goals.



WHAT TO SAY

Talk to your child about any school problems and listen to their worries. Take an active interest in schoolwork or activities such as arts or sports clubs.



PREVENTION

It is your job to make sure that your child gets an education. Always take an interest in their school life and what they are doing, so your child knows they can talk to you about any problems before they get out of control.



CONTACTS

- Your child's school
- Your Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)
0114 205 3158
- Advice and Conciliation Service
0114 205 3939
- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)
0808 800 5793
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS

www.ace-ed.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.parentscentre.gov.uk • www.ukparentslounge.com

- Young people missing school is a big problem
- Try to understand why they are not going to school
- Missing school affects the chances of getting a good job
- It is your job to make sure your child goes to school

Attendance - The importance of being at school

The results of missing school are serious for your child

The more schoolwork they miss, the harder it is to catch up and the more likely they are to skip days or even want to drop out. They are missing out on building friendships and keeping friends who are often a real support when they are growing up.

The issue of children not attending school also reaches into the community, as there is a knock on effect of higher levels of anti-social behaviour and crime. If your child misses school they are more likely to come across situations of risk.

Allowing children to miss school is also a problem. Some parents need their child's support at home more than others, perhaps because they have an illness or other younger children at home. Contact the school or Multi Agency Support Team to talk about this. Any time away from school, even for a short family holiday can affect your child's education.

How to stop children missing school

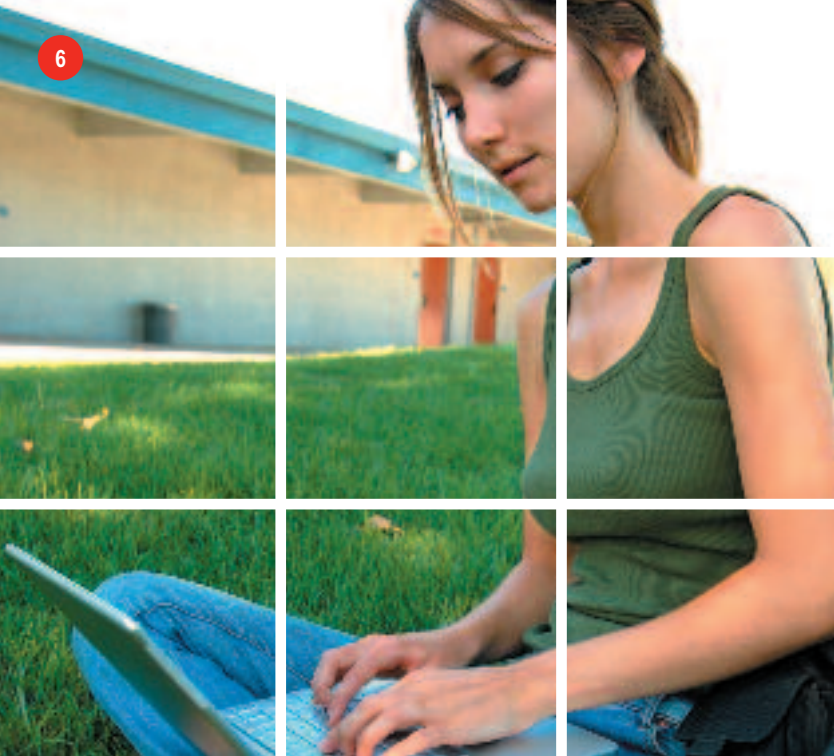
If this is a problem, you need to find out why your child wants to miss school. They may find school frightening, lack self-confidence, feel they are failing or maybe they are experiencing problems at school. The school

will help you get your child back into school with the help of professionals such as Education Welfare Officers. Once you understand the causes, it may be easier to get your child to return to school.

Make sure they understand that education and going to school every day is important for their future. Take an interest in what happens during their school day and with homework. Praise them when they do well and listen to any concerns they may have. Talk to teachers about how they are getting on.

Attendance and the law

It is the law for parents to make sure that their child receives an education and you are breaking the law if you fail to do so. Parents could get a fine, a community sentence or even a prison sentence of up to three months if their children do not go to school. Courts can also give a Parenting Order of up to twelve months. If ignored this order could result in a criminal record or fine. You may be offered a Parenting Contract (an agreement between you and the school or the Children and Young People's Directorate (CYPD)) which asks you to follow certain rules. The school or CYPD would help you to do this.



"We'd always wanted Ruth to stay on at school for her A-levels, but she researched all her options and decided to do an apprenticeship to become a chef instead."



WARNING SIGNS

If you feel your child doesn't understand how important education is, explain that without qualifications they're less likely to find a job they enjoy later on.



ACTION

Find out about the subjects your child is studying and take an active interest in their school and homework. If you can't agree between you what your child is going to do after 16, research all the options together.



WHAT TO SAY

Talk to the school about their education and career choices and how you can best help your teenager. Remember that in the end, it's your child's decision what they do. Try to respect and support whatever they choose.



PREVENTION

Children who have a stable home life and parents who take an interest in their education and future career tend to stay longer in education and do better.



CONTACTS

- Sheffield Futures Connexions Helpline 0800 652 9900
- General local enquiries about education 0114 273 5722
- Course Hotline 0114 260 3603
- Student Finance 0114 273 5479
- EMA Helpline 0800 121 8989
- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0808 800 5793
- Connexions Direct 080 800 13 2 19

WEBLINKS

www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk • www.direct.gov.uk/moneytolearn • www.ace-ed.org.uk • www.connexions-direct.com • www.princes-trust.org.uk

- Getting a good education will make it easier for your teenager to find a job they enjoy
- Show an interest in their studies
- Help with homework when possible
- Encourage your child to keep learning
- Whatever decision your child reaches, support and encourage them

Education & careers - Support your child's learning

As a parent, you probably have high hopes for your child's future and naturally want the best for them. If they receive a good education and get qualifications at school or college, this will make it easier for them to find an interesting job which they enjoy later on.

Modern secondary schools now offer many different subjects that young people enjoy, to help them stay in education for longer.

You can help to make your child more interested in their education, too, by taking an active interest in the subjects they have chosen and helping with homework when you can. Ask their school for advice or look at some education websites (see contacts).

When your child is 16, they have a choice. They can do one of these things:

- Stay on in the sixth form at their school or go to a sixth form college to do A-levels or AS-levels.
- Find a place at a further education college to do vocational qualifications like GNVQ or BTEC National Diploma.
- Start an apprenticeship, which means working but learning and getting a vocational qualification at the same time.
- Work full-time.

If your child continues to study after 16, this is called further education. If they're between 16 and 19, they might also be able to get money for carrying on with their studies, in the form of an Educational Maintenance Allowance.

Schools can give young people lots of help when they are choosing what they'd like to do in the future. But the support you give as a parent is important too. Helping your teenager decide what to do after 16 is one of the most important things you'll do as a parent but it might cause some arguments in your family.

Some parents put a lot of pressure on their children to do well at school and go to college afterwards, but their ideas don't always match what their child wants to do - maybe they'd rather leave school at 16 and get a job.

Your child may feel that you're putting them under too much pressure, so it helps to explain that you just want the best for them. It's better for you to research the options and come to a decision together, rather than you telling them what to do. As a parent, you're probably used to being in control of your child's life but it's important to respect and support their decision, whatever it is.



“Attending the parenting group has made such a difference to my family life.”



WARNING SIGNS

If you are unhappy with any of the services contact the Extended Services Team.



ACTION

Get involved with activities in your school and community. If there is something you would like to see tell your child's school.



WHAT TO SAY

Ask at your child's school what services are available to you and your child. Schools have changed a lot and are there for you and your community!



PREVENTION

Find out what's on offer in your area and get involved! There are many benefits for you and your child.



CONTACTS

- Extended Services Team 0114 281 1881
- Ofsted 08456 404045

WEBLINKS www.sheffield.gov.uk/education/services-to-schools/extendedservices/aboutus • www.ofsted.gov.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Putting schools at the heart of the community
- A range of services in and around school providing activities and support for children, young people and families, often outside the school day
- Extended services may include childcare, family and adult learning, parenting programmes, community based health and social care services, multi-agency teams and after school and holiday activities
- Lots of services are available for parents as well as children

Extended services - Meeting the needs of children and families

Extended Services is about making it easy for families to access advice, activities and the support they need, close to home, and when they need it. Extended services are usually offered outside the normal school hours and may include:

High quality childcare (if needed)

This is offered outside the school day from 8am-6pm. Often supporting working parents, breakfast and after school clubs can be offered on the school site or in the local community.

Activities for your children

These may include activities such as homework clubs and study support, sport, music tuition, dance and drama, arts and crafts, special interest clubs such as chess and first aid courses, visits to museums and galleries, learning a foreign language, volunteering, business and enterprise activities.

Additional support services

For families who may need extra support extended services offer additional support services such as speech therapy, child and

adolescent mental health services, family support services, intensive behaviour support, and (for young people) sexual health services.

Activities for the community

If schools have the facilities they may open their doors to offer clubs and classes for the community including ICT, sports, arts and adult learning courses.

Support for parents

This includes support for parents when their child starts school and moves onto secondary school, activities to involve parents in their child's learning, parenting courses and general advice, guidance and support in their role as a parent.

If you want to find out more about what is on offer through extended services in and around your school, you can do this by contacting your local school. Each school has a School Organiser who can be contacted through your child's school or the Extended Services Team.

www.sheffinfolink.org.uk • www.asksid.net • www.sheffield.gov.uk • www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow



“When Liam started primary school it was an exciting time for him - and us, too! He wasn't the only one who had to get used to a whole new routine - there were big changes for the whole family.”



WARNING SIGNS

Your child might not want to leave their primary school. They might feel nervous and insecure about the big changes and say they feel too ill to go to school. They might be angry towards you or cry, too. These feelings are all quite normal.



ACTION

Start thinking about which secondary school you want your child to go to well in advance. Your child's primary school will probably arrange visits to local secondary schools. If it doesn't, try to visit them yourself. Remember to make the decision with your child, not for them.



WHAT TO SAY

If your child feels nervous, talk about how you felt when you changed schools. Explain that it's natural to feel like this but that everyone's in the same situation. Talk to your child about bullying. Explain that it's wrong, and let them know you're there for them if they want to talk about it.



PREVENTION

If you're feeling anxious about your child starting at secondary school, try not to let them see this. Be positive about the exciting change they're about to go through. Talking to your child openly and often about what's going to happen will help them feel prepared about the next stage in their life.



CONTACTS

- Your child's school
- Your Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) 0114 205 3158
- Choice adviser 0114 273 5233
- Secondary School Admissions 0114 273 5790
- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0808 800 5793
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS

www.sheffield0to19.org.uk •
www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.direct.gov.uk •
www.parentscentre.gov.uk • www.edubase.gov.uk •

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Moving from primary school to secondary school will be a huge change for your child
- Start thinking about which secondary school you'd like them to go to well in advance
- Find out as much as you can about their new school
- It can sometimes be a difficult time for parents too

Moving on - Changing schools

Choosing which secondary school your child will move to can be a very stressful time for parents. There are lots of questions that need to be answered and decisions to be made.

Start thinking about it during year five. During the summer term of year five you will receive an application pack for transfer to secondary school.

Find out as much as you can about the schools near you. Go to open days and read recent Ofsted reports if you can. Of course, you should make the decision with your child. Which school would they prefer to go to? A school might not have enough places for everyone who wants to go there. Make sure you know what happens if this is the case.

A choice adviser can give you support and guidance to help you decide which secondary school you would prefer your child to attend.

When you've decided which schools you're interested in, fill out the Common Application Form. You can do it online or on paper (see Contacts). This needs to happen in the autumn term a year before your child would start there. Do this by the closing date, or you might not get the school you want. You'll find out if your child has been accepted by 1 March. If they haven't been given a place, you can appeal against the school's decision.

When your child starts secondary school, it's a big change for them. They're used to being the oldest in their school - soon they'll be the youngest. Everything will be brand new and much bigger. They'll have more books, more teachers and more homework.

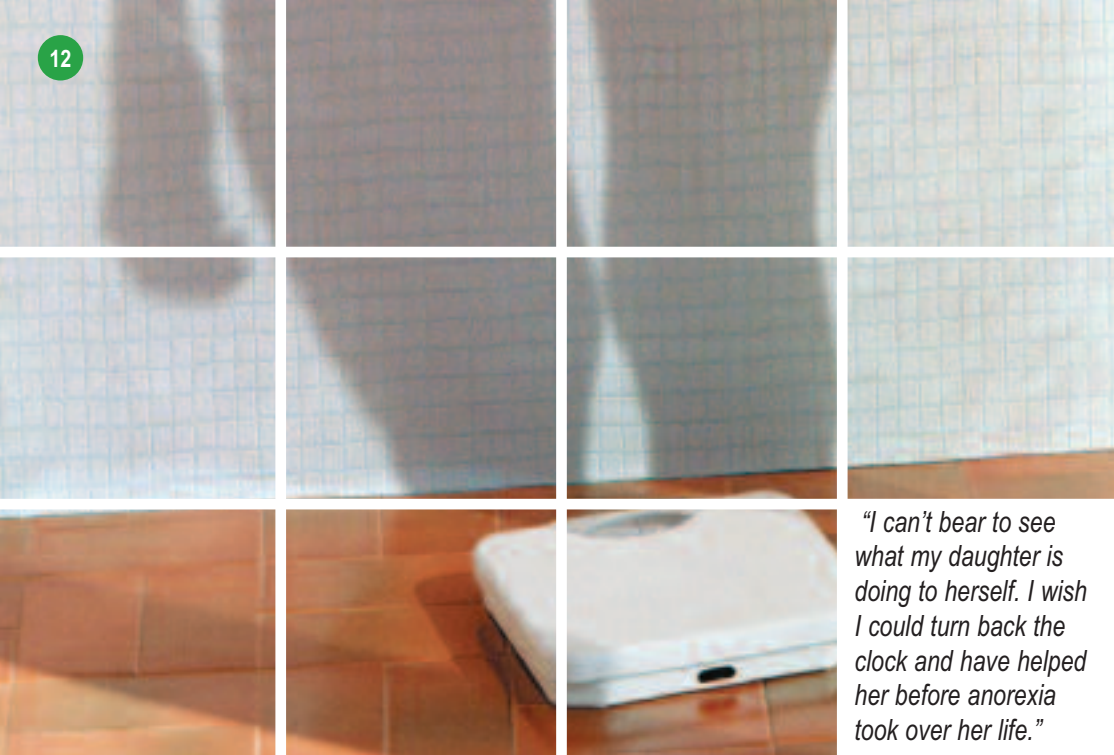
Moving school can be scary but exciting, too, so give your child lots of support to make it easier for them. Make sure they know what's happening and make your decisions together.

Visiting the school with your child to meet their teachers before they start can help. Find out who else is going to their new school. Can you go together on the first day?

There are lots of things that your child will need when they start at secondary school, so try to be prepared - think about their uniform (if they wear one), a bag for their books, sports kit, stationery and equipment.

As a parent, you might worry how your child is going to cope with new friends and new subjects to learn, or how they'll deal with the pressures of being a teenager. While you probably feel excited for them, maybe you also feel a little sad that your child is growing up and doesn't need you so much any more. It's natural to feel like this sometimes.

www.sheffinfolk.org.uk • www.asksid.net • www.sheffield.gov.uk • www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow



"I can't bear to see what my daughter is doing to herself. I wish I could turn back the clock and have helped her before anorexia took over her life."



WARNING SIGNS

For what to look out for see box on opposite page.



ACTION

Let them know that you are there to help them, no matter what. It may also help for you to speak to other parents who have gone through similar experiences with their child and to share information and support each other.



WHAT TO SAY

Try not to judge them. Try to get them to talk about any problems that may be causing this. If they feel they can't talk to you, encourage them to talk to someone they trust like a friend, relative or teacher.



PREVENTION

Giving your child the time to talk to you, discussing difficulties they have and letting them know you are there for them will help. Your support will make them feel better about themselves.



CONTACTS

- Your doctor
- Beating Eating Disorders 0845 634 1414
- YoungMinds 0800 018 2138
- NHS Direct 0845 4647
- ChildLine 0800 1111
- The Samaritans 08457 90 90 90 (24-hour helpline)

WEBLINKS www.b-eat.co.uk • www.youngminds.org.uk • www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk • www.childline.org.uk • www.samaritans.org • www.nshn.co.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Controlling food is a way of controlling their lives
- Recognise the problems that can cause eating disorders or self-harm
- Find out how to help your child

Eating disorders & self-harm - Getting the balance right

Food is an important part of our lives. For some, mostly young people, how much or how little food they eat becomes the most important thing in their lives. Eating disorders develop when food is used as a way of dealing with personal problems. How much is eaten, when, and where, can sometimes seem like the only thing they use in their lives that they can control and have a say about.

There are many reasons why people have eating disorders and if your child has a problem, you will need to try to understand what started it in the first place. Triggers may include abuse (physical, emotional or sexual abuse), bullying, family problems, parents pushing their child too hard at school (people with anorexia are often high achievers), not being able to express feelings, lack of self-esteem, feelings of self-hatred or guilt, wanting to look like people in magazines and on TV and wanting to be popular.

Self-harming or hurting yourself can take many forms. This may include cutting, burning or scalding, hitting, picking skin, head banging against a wall or other object or taking an overdose.

People who self-harm often use it as a way of dealing with problems, such as depression, bullying, abuse or feeling unloved. Young people who self-harm say it is a way of being in control and use it to help them cope, as the physical pain takes their mind off their problems.

How to help

Try to find out what the real problems are. If they don't feel they can talk to you, try to get them to talk to a friend, relative, teacher, school nurse or youth or social worker. You should also talk to their doctor, to discuss any further treatment. Counselling, self-help groups and therapy are all helpful. In very serious cases, they may need to go into a hospital or clinic.

Anorexia - experiencing excessive weight loss, avoiding food while obsessing about it, pretending to have eaten already, hiding body shape, loss of periods.

Bulimia - binge-eating, sore throat and related infections, dental problems from vomiting, missed periods, disappearing after meals.

Self-harm - look out for injuries such as cuts, burns, scalds or bruises. Your child may try to hide them from you.

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"I encourage my children to be as active as possible. We do a lot of activities as a family which is good for my health too!"



WARNING SIGNS

An unhealthy diet can lead to health problems for all the family. Your child may not sleep well, be able to concentrate, feel less active and not have sufficient energy to live life to the full.



ACTION

Make sure they eat a healthy balanced diet. You can ask your doctor for diet and exercise advice for a healthy lifestyle for you and your family. If you are a smoker get help to give up. Take your child to the dentist regularly.



WHAT TO SAY

Explain to your children the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Suggest activities you can do as a family like cycling or swimming so you can get fit and have fun together.



PREVENTION

Balance is the key! Too much saturated fat, salt and sugar are bad for the body. Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep and exercise.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor or school nurse
- School Health Service 0114 226 2010
- Activity Sheffield 0114 273 4266
- NHS Stop Smoking Service 0800 022 4 332
- Beating Eating Disorders 0845 634 1414

WEBLINKS

<http://gosmokefree.nhs.uk> • www.b-eat.co.uk • www.nhs.uk/Change4Life

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Balance is the key to a healthy lifestyle
- If you eat more calories than your body burns, you will put on weight
- Act now and protect your children from second hand smoke
- Healthy teeth give you something to smile about
- Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep and exercise

Healthy lifestyles - Looking after their health

What you eat

It can be confusing to know how to plan healthy meals for you and your family. Obesity and heart disease are major problems in the UK today, because we eat too much saturated fat, salt and sugar in fast food and snacks, and not enough fresh fruit and vegetables. Balance is the key.

It's important to make sure your child eats a good variety of foods in sensible amounts. Ensure your children eat regular meals and make time to sit down to eat and to enjoy food together as a family. To get the best possible start to the day it is important that children have a good healthy breakfast. Encourage your children to drink water and milk rather than fizzy drinks and juice.

Exercise

Encourage your children to be as active as possible. The whole family can get involved with swimming, long walks, bike rides and kicking a ball around the park. Even walking to school counts as exercise. There are often after-school clubs where your child can take part in activities such as football or dance classes.

Sleep

As a parent you know that lack of sleep can affect your mood and ability to function at work or as a parent. The same is true of children. Recent studies have concluded that

not having enough sleep as a child can impact on their behaviour and achievement at school. Establish a good bedtime routine and agree a set time for bed. Children are growing and use lots of energy so can need up to 12 hours sleep a night so make sure your children get a good night's sleep.

Smoking

The health problems associated with cigarettes such as cancer and heart disease are well known, which is why you and your family should stay smoke free. However if you smoke you should protect your child from second hand smoke and reduce the risk of them becoming ill. Your doctor can help you kick this damaging habit for good.

Teeth

Special care is needed for teeth. No one likes going to the dentist, but it's much less unpleasant if you take your child for regular check-ups and help them look after their teeth in-between times. Children should not have too many sugary snacks and drinks, which can lead to tooth decay. Where possible use non-sugar alternatives and always make sure they brush their teeth regularly (twice a day) with a family fluoride toothpaste. If your child has problems with their teeth please ensure you take them to the dentist. This will help to prevent serious problems in the future.

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"When my son fell out with his friends at school recently he got really upset and anxious. At first, I wondered what all the fuss was about but then I realised how important friends can be at his age."



WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs that your child is stressed include mood swings, trouble sleeping, nightmares, bedwetting, trouble doing schoolwork, stomach aches, headaches, preferring to spend time alone, overreacting to minor problems.



ACTION

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and healthy food. Exercise can reduce stress, so encourage your child to run around with friends outside.



WHAT TO SAY

Your child will find it easier to cope with stress if you talk to them about what's causing it. Tell them it's normal to feel stressed now and again, but it's also good to know how to relax and make yourself feel better when you're upset.



PREVENTION

Make time for your child every day so they feel they can talk to you if anything's worrying them. Look ahead to times when your child might worry, like going back to school after the holidays for example, and talk about the events well in advance.



CONTACTS

- Your doctor
- Your Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) 0114 205 3158
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
- YoungMinds 0800 018 2138

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- Children can feel stressed for many reasons
- Sometimes parents don't realise they're putting too much pressure on their child to do well at school
- Children can pick up on their parents' worries and get stressed too
- Exercise is a great way to reduce stress

Mental health & well-being - Helping them cope

As a parent, you might think that childhood is always a happy and carefree time. Children don't have to pay bills or have jobs like adults, so what do they really have to worry about?

But sometimes children do get stressed and feel anxious, and there are many reasons why this can happen:

- They're being bullied at school. Feeling in danger every day can greatly affect a child's state of mind.
- They're not getting on with their friends. It's natural to want to fit in, and falling out with friends can seem like a really important thing to a child.
- They're anxious about moving house or school, or going back to school after the holidays.
- A family member, friend or even pet has died. Sometimes, children can blame themselves for these things, even if they had nothing to do with it.

Another reason children feel anxious is if their parents divorce or even just fight. When they see their parents arguing it can affect a child's sense of security and it can make them feel very alone and frightened. It's worse when divorced parents make their children choose

sides or say hurtful comments about the other parent in front of the child.

Some children worry about schoolwork, tests or exams. It's perfectly normal wanting your child to do their best, but some parents might not realise they're putting too much pressure on them to achieve.

If you send out the message that your child must do well in tests, it can create too much anxiety for them. It's also important to be realistic about your child's abilities - maybe you did well in exams when you were at school, but that doesn't mean that your child will, too.

As a parent, be careful what you say - even when you don't think your child is listening to you. Sometimes, children overhear parents talking about money worries or problems they're having at work and they start to feel anxious about these things themselves.

You'll probably be able to help your child when they feel stressed. But if their anxiety goes on for longer than a month, or if it greatly affects how they are at home or their behaviour at school, you might want to speak to their teachers or even ask your doctor for professional help.

www.sheffinfolink.org.uk • www.asksid.net • www.sheffield.gov.uk • www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow



"My daughter spends ages in the bathroom getting ready for school. I'd forgotten what it's like to be a teenager!"



WARNING SIGNS

Mood swings, arguments, talking back, an 'over-the-top' interest in hygiene, or a complete lack of it are quite normal. Difficulty in saying what they feel calmly and untidiness. As well as coping with emotional changes your child will also have to deal with physical changes.



ACTION

Listening and talking to your teenager will help you understand what they are going through emotionally and physically. One of the best things you can do for your child is to let them know that you are there for them.



WHAT TO SAY

Teenagers can be clever, interesting and thoughtful as well as having set ideas, being sarcastic and sulky. Talk things through rather than arguing. You will probably have to answer lots of questions about puberty. Don't be embarrassed and be well prepared with simple facts.



PREVENTION

Remember you are the adult! Avoid having temper tantrums yourself! Being flexible and bargaining works better than making rules and demands. The more information your teenager has the better he or she will be able to cope with the changes that come with puberty. Talk together.



CONTACTS

- Your doctor or school nurse
- Sheffield Futures Connexions Helpline 0800 652 9900
- Centre for HIV and Sexual Health 0114 226 1900
- Parent to Parent 0114 226 1917
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
 - NHS Direct 0845 4647
 - RU Thinking? 0800 28 29 30

WEBLINKS

www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk • www.raisingkids.co.uk • www.familyandparenting.org • www.teenagehealthfreak.com

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Listening is the key to a good relationship
- Your teenager wants independence - but still needs you!
- Growing up can be frightening for teenagers
- Hormones set off physical changes, mood swings and changes in feelings
- Give your teenager the information they need

Puberty & adolescence - Your child still needs you

Adolescence is a time of change. It is the time in a young person's life when they develop from a child into an adult. For some parents the teenage years can seem like a struggle when your teenager is unwilling to answer even the most simple question about school or how their evening went.

The most likely cause for the mood swings of your teenager is hormones. At the start of puberty, hormones are triggering physical changes and emotional feelings that are not only hard to deal with, but hard to talk about.

Boy's bodies can start to change from around the age of ten with sexual development soon after. This will include a deepening voice, developing muscles, hair growth, more active sweat glands and growing quickly. The penis grows larger and regularly becomes erect, often when there are sexual thoughts. This is normal but your child may not feel comfortable with these changes. Boys also begin to have 'wet dreams', when they sleep.

Puberty in girls can begin from around nine years old. Breasts and nipples swell, the body becomes curvier, body hair appears, sweat glands become more active and periods start.

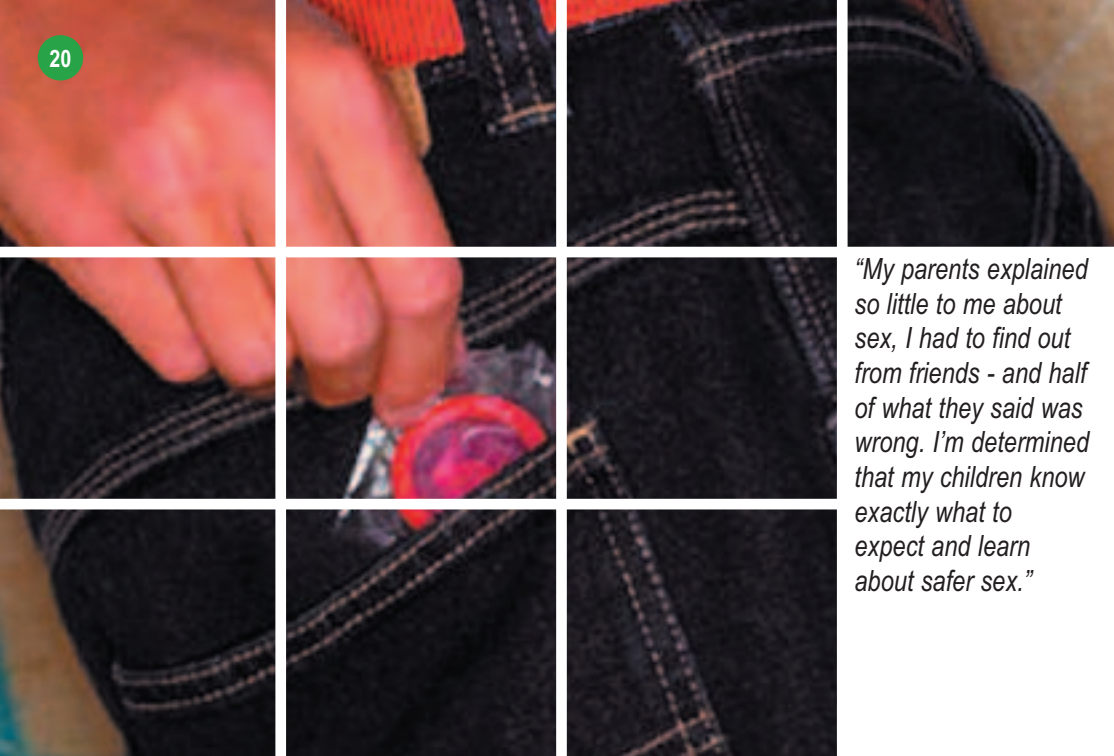
They may also begin thinking about sex and relationships.

Your teenager is also developing deeper and more complicated relationships; any worries or arguments, for example pressure from mates to do things they may not feel comfortable with, can affect their sense of well-being and confidence. They will be having new sexual feelings that they may find difficult to cope with and may have worries about their looks.

They will also be trying to work out who they are. Your child is learning about views, opinions and beliefs that may not be the same as those they have grown up with.

Talking to your teenager about what's going on in their life will help you understand them and help build up their confidence. Listen to their ideas and try to understand their thoughts and feelings. Respect your teenagers' privacy - remember you were a teenager once! Be open-minded and do not judge your teenager, so they feel they can trust you and turn to you when they need help and support. Don't forget when things go wrong, the person they'll often turn to for comfort is you!

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"My parents explained so little to me about sex, I had to find out from friends - and half of what they said was wrong. I'm determined that my children know exactly what to expect and learn about safer sex."



WARNING SIGNS

Young people are starting to have sex younger and younger. Don't think that this won't happen to your teenager. By the time you see the warning signs it may be too late to give them the help they need. Make sure they learn about sex early on.



ACTION

There are many leaflets, books and websites that can give you advice on how to tackle the subject of sexual health with your teenager. The more you read, the more comfortable you will be talking to them about it.



WHAT TO SAY

Rather than sitting down and having a one off talk about sex, STIs and relationships it may be better to have regular chats, like when doing the washing up, for example. Use magazines and TV programmes to help bring up subjects and to use as examples.



PREVENTION

The more your teenager knows about sex, the longer they are likely to wait for their first time. The more likely they are to use contraception to stop STIs and pregnancy. Young people want their parents to talk to them about sex so make sure you have the information to help them.



CONTACTS

- Your doctor or school nurse
- Sheffield Futures Connexions Helpline
0800 652 9900
- Central Health Clinic
0114 271 6811
- The Centre for HIV and Sexual Health
0114 226 1900
- RU Thinking?
0800 28 29 30
- Ask Brook
0808 802 1234
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222
- NHS Direct
0845 4647

WEBLINKS

www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk • www.ruthinking.co.uk • www.brook.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Talking to young people openly about sex can help to delay the age at which they first have sex and make it more likely that they will use contraception when they do
- Many Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) do not have any symptoms, therefore you may not know if you have one. Testing is the only way to know for sure
- If left untreated some sexually transmitted infections can cause problems with fertility
- If a young person is sexually active condoms help protect against STIs and pregnancy

Sexual health & teenage pregnancy - Communication is important

Young people receive many different messages about relationships and sex. They get information from TV, magazines, friends and Sex and Relationship Education. Some of this information will be accurate, other bits will not. As a parent you have an important role in ensuring that your son/daughter learns about relationships and sex and that the information they get is appropriate and factually accurate.

Even though it can be difficult to talk about sex with your child, it is important that you do give them accurate and/or sufficient information about relationships and sex. Good parent-child communication about relationships and sex can help delay the onset of sexual activity. Young people who talk to their parents openly about relationships and sex are more likely to practice safer sex when they do become sexually active.

It's important that your child learns about relationships, love, sex, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and using contraception before

they have sex. Although the law says that both boys and girls can have sex at 16 one third of young people under this age are already having sex. Therefore it is important to start talking to young people from an early age to make sure they are informed. They should know that it is okay to say 'no' to sex even if their friends say that they are doing it. They should also have information on where to go for advice and support and for testing and treatment.

How to tell them

Answer questions your son/daughter has with simple, clear, accurate answers. If you are not sure about something they ask be honest - tell them you don't have the answer but that you are happy to try and find out or maybe suggest that you find out together. Use magazines and TV programmes to help bring up subjects and to use as examples. Remember there are plenty of useful books and leaflets, as well as websites for both parents and teenagers that can help you.

www.sheffinfolink.org.uk • www.asksid.net • www.sheffield.gov.uk • www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow



“At first I thought it was just a teenage thing - Paul just wanted to be out all the time. He started to come home late, a row always started and he'd storm off to his room. He was losing weight and looked terrible.”



WARNING SIGNS

In general terms if your child's appearance, behaviour or financial situation changes dramatically you should include drug and alcohol use in your list of “I wonder if...” questions.



ACTION

Observe and talk to your child if you are worried. In an emergency contact an ambulance immediately. If your child is not in immediate danger talk with them about their drug use at another time when they are not using.



WHAT TO SAY

Use every opportunity to discuss alcohol and drug use, for example, when they are mentioned on a TV programme. You can give accurate information regarding the risks of drug use at an early age.



PREVENTION

Ensure that you are informed about drug use and the effects of different types of drugs. There are many helpful guides available from the helplines listed.



CONTACTS

- SHED
0114 272 9164
- Sheffield Alcohol Advisory Service (SAAS)
0114 258 7553
- RODA
0114 231 4443
- FRANK
0800 77 66 00
- Al-anon
for young people
020 7403 0888
- ADFAM
020 7553 7640

WEBLINKS

www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/2-5-shed.php • www.sheffielddaas.org.uk • www.sheffielddaat.org.uk/Pages/roda.aspx • www.talktofrank.com • www.al-anonuk.org.uk • www.adfam.org.uk • www.addaction.org.uk

- Make sure you know about drugs and their possible effects
- Prevention is better than cure
- Talk to your children about drugs from a young age

Alcohol, drug & substance misuse - How would I know?

There are many tell-tale signs, which include a young person who is panicky, tense or drowsy, complaining of sickness, has impaired concentration, lack of energy, depression, skin problems or aggression. There may be a change in relationships with family and friends, a change in behaviour, a change in performance at school, changes in a financial situation and personal possessions 'disappearing'.

Why do young people use drugs?

Because they are curious about them, they want to break the rules, to relax if they are feeling very stressed, to escape reality, to cope with difficult situations or feelings and because their friends do it.

If you find out that your child has or may have taken drugs, it can be worrying. This can be due to your lack of knowledge about drugs and not feeling confident about talking about them. That is why it is vitally important that children are aware of the potential risks of using drugs, alcohol and volatile substances (e.g. solvents).

It is important to discuss drugs use early

Some parents/carers worry that doing this encourages their child to use drugs. Avoiding talking about drugs will not protect them. Children will be aware of drugs in some way before they leave primary school. It is likely that at this early stage, children will be more responsive to being told about the risks of drug use. Make sure you tell your children about the risks. Accurate information and support will help them decide what to do. It does not guarantee non-use but will increase the chance of an informed choice.

Drug and alcohol misuse by parents

Drug and alcohol misuse by the adults in a household can seriously affect the care and well-being of children. If you are concerned contact one of the helplines listed.



"I love my son, but I just don't understand why he's always getting into trouble. I need help to get him back on the right track."



WARNING SIGNS

Missing school or being in trouble at school, stealing, having unexplained amounts of money, mixing with a bad crowd, using drugs and/or alcohol, rudeness or violence towards you or others are all signs of disruptive behaviour that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible.



ACTION

Talk to your teenager about their behaviour, why they are doing it and what action can be taken to stop it. Do not feel you are alone. There are schemes in place to help your child to aim towards education, training or employment rather than crime.



WHAT TO SAY

Try not to judge, but explain that you want to help stop this behaviour and you need to work together, maybe also with outside help, to steer them back onto the right path. Explain where this behaviour could lead unless it is stopped now.



PREVENTION

Keeping an open relationship and talking to your child will help them. Young people from good family homes are less likely to offend. Take an interest in schoolwork and encourage after-school activities such as sports, art programmes or courses.



CONTACTS

- Youth Offending Service (YOS) 0114 228 8555
- Sheffield Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership 0114 273 6734
- Youth Justice Board For England & Wales 020 7271 3033
- Connexions Direct 080 800 13 2 19

WEBLINKS www.sheffield-yos.org.uk • www.sheffield.gov.uk • www.yjb.gov.uk • www.connexions-direct.com • www.parentscentre.gov.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Positive parenting can help your child's behaviour
- Prevention is better than cure
- Peer pressure and boredom are some reasons given by teens for offending
- Your local council can advise you about ways of solving problems in your community

Anti-social behaviour - The right to feel safe

Anti-social behaviour is a phrase used very regularly these days. There are different sorts of anti-social behaviour. Some of it might just be described as high spirits. Adults can often distrust young people and be very quick to form opinions. However, some young people do take part in wrongful behaviour that is very damaging and frightening. People have the right to live without fear, that includes young people affected by the behaviour of others.

There are many causes of disruptive behaviour. An unstable family life due to violence or divorce may not help. Living in an area with few things to do and few family activities could be another. Pressure from friends can also be a problem with mates encouraging them to join in. Problems at school or bullying may also be a factor.

Research shows that young people's bad behaviour can be stopped by:

- A stable and loving family home.
- Good parenting.
- Always attending school, training or work experience.

It is a parent's job to provide the best care they can for their child. This does not mean you have to cope alone. There are organisations that can help families with teenagers to stop their bad behaviour.

The Youth Crime Prevention Team is managed by the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and works with young people at risk of crime or anti-social behaviour. They also work with parents/carers to avoid problems getting worse. They can help or families may be offered help from other special agencies.

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) aims to stop young people carrying out crimes. There are lots of different staff which include social workers, probation officers, education workers, health workers, police officers, substance misuse workers, Connexions advisers and others. Together they work with the whole family offering advice and support to prevent the child from committing further crime.

A good home life and taking an interest in your child will help them in every area of their life.

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"I crept downstairs because I heard arguing. Dad was shouting at mum. When mum came upstairs she was crying and we stayed there until dad went out."



WARNING SIGNS

Any violence between adults can affect children badly. Get support and help as soon as possible. The longer it lasts the more damaging violence is.



ACTION

Report your concerns about yourself or someone else to the Police. If you are worried that your child might be affected, talk to them about what is happening. Spend time together talking through worries they have.



WHAT TO SAY

Children need time to talk about the feelings they have about violence. Children need to know that it is not their fault and that this is not the way it should be.



PREVENTION

A violent partner must seek help to stop their actions. Make sure that you offer a good role model for children so that they learn better ways of acting.



CONTACTS

- Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum
0114 275 0101
- Sheffield Alcohol Advisory Service (SAAS)
0114 258 7553
- Ashiana
0114 255 5740
- National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 2000 247

- Domestic violence teaches children to use violence
- Violence can affect children in serious and long-lasting ways
- Where there is domestic violence there is often child abuse
- Children will often blame themselves for domestic violence
- When violence occurs in families, alcohol is often a cause
- Pregnant women are often victims of domestic violence

Domestic violence - How it affects children

Domestic violence is a crime and a major social problem affecting many families. Children who see, get involved or hear violence are affected in many ways. What is certain is that children do hear, they do see and they are aware of violence in the family.

Children will learn how to act from what their parents do. Domestic violence teaches children bad things about relationships and how to deal with people.

For instance:

- It can teach them that violence is the way to sort out arguments.
- They learn how to keep secrets.
- They often do not trust those close to them and think that they are to blame for violence, especially if violence happens after an argument about the children.

Many people find it difficult to understand why people stay in or return to violent situations. Fear, love, the risk of homelessness and financial issues can make it very difficult for partners with children to leave and some may just not want to.

Short-term effects

Children are affected in many ways by violence, even after a short time. These can include feeling frightened, becoming shy and quiet, bedwetting, running away, violence, poor behaviour, problems with school, poor concentration and emotional upset.

Long-term effects

The longer children are around violence, the worse the effects on them are.

These can include a lack of respect for the non-violent parent, loss of self-confidence which will affect how they form relationships in the future, being over-protective of a parent, loss of childhood, problems at school, and running away.

If you are worried about domestic violence, discuss it with someone else such as your health visitor or the domestic violence helpline. If you are violent and have children, you can seek help to stop what is happening.

If you are a victim you can apply, without the need for a solicitor, for a Non-Molestation Order in the Family Proceedings Court. Contact the duty clerk at your local magistrates court.

WEBLINKS www.sdaf.org.uk • www.sheffielddaas.org.uk • www.womensaid.org.uk • www.refuge.org.uk • www.netmums.com/support



"When I found out my son had joined a gang - I was shocked and worried. So I am now finding positive ways to get him involved in new things."



WARNING SIGNS

Unusual changes in behaviour.
Sudden loss of interest in school and not going.
Unexplained money or possessions.
A new nickname.
Constantly talking about another young person who seems to have a lot of influence. Loss of contact with old friends. Spending all their time with one group. Friendly with known gang members.



ACTION

Encourage your child to get involved in positive activities.
Contact Sheffield's Targeted Youth Support Team.



WHAT TO SAY

Have open and honest discussions about things and listen to them.



PREVENTION

Set firm but fair boundaries and encourage your child to take part in positive activities. Get to know your child's friends.



CONTACTS

- Your local school
- Targeted Youth Support Team 0114 283 5927
- South Yorkshire Police 0114 220 2020
- Crimestoppers 0800 555 111
- ChildLine 0800 1111

WEBLINKS

www.southyorks.police.uk • www.nspcc.org.uk • www.crimestoppers.co.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.childline.org.uk

- Images of gangs on TV, in films and in the news tend to glorify drugs, sex and violence as an acceptable way of life
- Being in a gang puts your child at more risk of becoming involved in criminal behaviour, including using drugs and may lead to a prosecution or even prison
- Children and young people face all sorts of pressures and it may be that your child is feeling the pressure to follow friends who may be in a gang

Gangs - Recognising the signs

What is a gang?

A gang is a group who see themselves and are seen by others as a gang, they have a shared identity and are often involved in violence and crime.

Parents often assume that it is only boys who are gang members but more girls are becoming involved as members or associates.

As part of a gang your child is more likely to become involved in crime including using drugs or carrying a knife which may lead to prosecution and even a prison sentence.

Why do young people join gangs?

Young people have said they become gang members because of peer pressure, bullying and intimidation. Gangs often use networking websites to do this. Other reasons young people join gangs include to get friends and be recognised, to be accepted, for excitement, for power and respect, for protection, for money and crime.

How can I help my child?

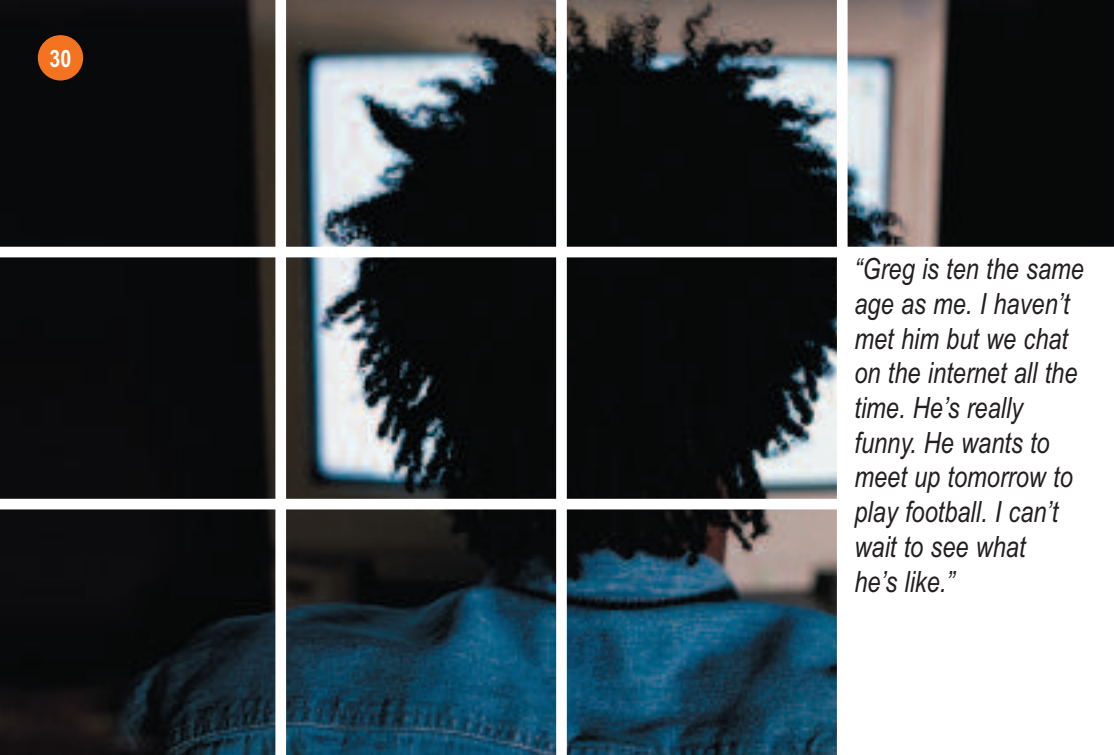
There are things you can do to help your child from becoming involved in a gang in the first place. Having open and honest discussions about things, listening to and knowing your child and their friends, setting firm but fair

boundaries and encouraging your child to take part in positive activities can all be preventative measures.

Discovering your child is in a gang will be upsetting and worrying, but by recognising the signs (see warning signs) and getting the help you need, you could make positive steps towards changing your child's life for the better. In Sheffield our Targeted Youth Support Team actively supports children and families where a child is involved in a gang or at risk of joining a gang. The team works closely with schools, so if you do have concerns about your child you can contact the service direct or through your local school.

What the law says?

- The sentence for possessing a knife in a public place without a good excuse has been increased from 2 to 4 years.
- The sentence for unlawful possession of a prohibited firearm is 3 years for 16-17 year olds.
- Police and school staff can search someone if they believe they are carrying a gun, knife or other weapon.
- In courts however, if an offender was part of a group or a gang, this may lead to a longer sentence.



“Greg is ten the same age as me. I haven’t met him but we chat on the internet all the time. He’s really funny. He wants to meet up tomorrow to play football. I can’t wait to see what he’s like.”



WARNING SIGNS

Secretly using the internet. Changes in how they act. Unusual sexual questions. Leaving clues (such as emails) that they are having chats with others which seem sexual or you are not comfortable with. Problems at school. Not telling you where they are going or who they are meeting.



ACTION

Set up internet use ground rules and stick to them. Learn all you can about the internet and how to use it yourself so you can understand what your child is viewing and whether it is suitable.



WHAT TO SAY

Discuss the dangers of chatrooms and unsuitable websites. Make sure they know that no personal information, including their real name, should be passed on to anyone else.



PREVENTION

Keep the computer in a family room, with the monitor facing outwards, so you can always see what’s on screen. Discuss which websites your child is looking at and take a look for yourself. Make sure your child is aware of the dangers.



CONTACTS

- South Yorks Police 0114 220 2020
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre 0870 000 3344

WEBLINKS www.southyorks.police.uk • www.ceop.gov.uk • www.kidsmart.org.uk • www.chatdanger.com • www.parentscentre.gov.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- The internet can be fun and is useful
- Have family internet rules to encourage safer use
- Paedophiles can use the internet to contact children
- It is important that parents understand the internet

Internet safety - New technology, old problem

The internet is a wonderful and quick way for young people to find information, help them study and keep in contact with friends or meet new ones.

Unfortunately, the internet is also an easy tool for child abuse. Paedophiles use chat rooms to become friendly with children or young people, often by pretending to be another child. Other risks include people who want to get personal information like names, addresses or telephone numbers for fraud. Using the internet too much can lead to an unhealthy lifestyle and can be addictive.

Keep it safe

Keep an eye on what’s going on by keeping the computer in a family room, rather than in a bedroom. Learn how to use a computer, access internet sites and try out a chatroom for yourself so you understand what can happen. Check out which sites your children are visiting to see if they are acceptable and age appropriate. Look for sites that check messages in chat rooms and those, which include clear guidelines for use, child-friendly advice, warnings and how to report concerns. On social networking sites make sure the privacy settings are set to private.

You can buy software filters which block access to websites with a sexual content.

These don’t make use totally safe so it is still much better for you to take an active interest in the sites your child is browsing and use the parental controls.

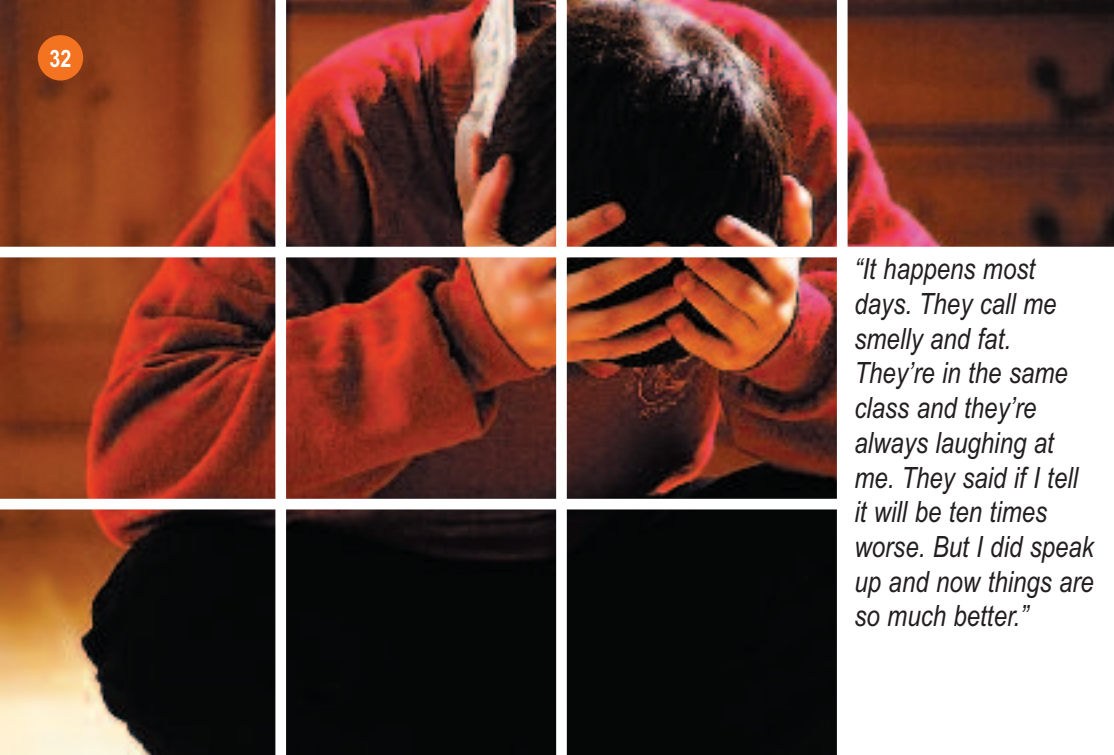
Set ground rules:

- Limit the amount of time your child spends on the internet and stick to it.
- Discuss the kind of websites they can visit which are right for their age.
- Make it clear to your child that they must never give out their real name, address, home or mobile phone numbers or any other personal details or post photos of themselves on the internet.
- They should always let you know if someone is asking questions or wanting details they don’t feel happy about giving.

It’s important that your child understands why there needs to be rules. Explain that because they can’t see or hear the people they chat to on the internet, they may not be who they seem. Remind your child that strangers on the internet can be just as dangerous as strangers on the street.

Let them know that if they are worried about anything they see or read, they can talk to you.

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"It happens most days. They call me smelly and fat. They're in the same class and they're always laughing at me. They said if I tell it will be ten times worse. But I did speak up and now things are so much better."



WARNING SIGNS

Running away, non-attendance at school, unusual changes in behaviour. Your child has injuries with no feasible explanation for them.



ACTION

If your child tells you about a friend or any other child who is being bullied - listen carefully and take this seriously. See the class teacher or headteacher at the school for their support and action. If bullying is occurring outside school, consider contacting the family of the child who is bullying and try to find a way to work together to sort it out.



WHAT TO SAY

Tell them to refuse to put up with bullying, walk away, tell an adult or friend and avoid fighting. Listen to your child, reassure and be there for them. Tell them to tell the bully how they feel and that they want them to stop.



PREVENTION

Talk to your child about their school day. Teach your child to respect others from a young age and to be kind. Teach your child that prejudice and bullying is unacceptable.



CONTACTS

- Your Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)
0114 205 3158
- Advice and Conciliation Service
0114 205 3939
- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)
0808 800 5793
- ChildLine
0800 1111
- Kidscape
08451 205 204
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS www.sheffield0to19.org.uk • www.ace-ed.org.uk
www.bullying.co.uk • www.childline.org.uk •
www.kidscape.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk

- **Bullying behaviour is never acceptable**
- **Bullying can happen to any child at any age**
- **Speak to your child's school immediately if you have any concerns**
- **Act immediately if you think your child is being bullied**
- **Children need ways to protect themselves and seek help**
- **Encourage your child to tell and keep a diary**

Bullying - The real story

What is bullying?

Bullying is deliberate, is intended to cause hurt or harm, is repeated and involves an imbalance of power. It can be carried out physically, verbally or in cyberspace. Bullying is a frightening experience and it can isolate and damage a young person's self-confidence. Some ongoing bullying can have negative long-term effects on children, leading to depression and even suicidal thoughts and actions.

What isn't bullying?

It is not bullying when you reply to nastiness from another child or young person and it is not bullying when children and young people have the same power, strength and numbers and fight or argue from time to time.

What you can do

- Listen to your child and discuss ideas on how to sort the problem out for themselves.
- Refer to your child's school anti-bullying policy. By law all schools should have an anti-bullying policy.
- Write a bullying report listing all the incidents of bullying and take it to the school.
- Get your child to keep a bullying diary.
- Meet with school to work out a plan of action. Write down all your questions and concerns to take to the meeting.
- Teach your child coping strategies

- If you are unhappy with the meeting or the action taken by school to support your child follow the school complaints procedure, which will involve you writing to the school governing body. Send a copy to the Children and Young People's Directorate (CYPD).
- If you are still not satisfied you should write directly to CYPD.

At any stage during this process you could get advice and support from Sheffield's Advice and Conciliation Service or your local Multi Agency Support Team (MAST).

Cyberbullying is a method of bullying and can be through text, instant messaging or email messages. It can be making insulting comments about someone on the internet through a website or through social networking sites such as Bebo or Facebook. It can be through uploading embarrassing videos or photographs on the internet or distributing them by mobile phones or email.

If your child is being bullied through text messages, instant messaging or email, advise your child not to respond to the message. Save the messages or take a screen print as evidence. Your child can 'block' or remove people from 'buddies lists'. You can inform the internet service provider of the abuse as there are 'report abuse' facilities on many websites.



"I was shocked when she ran away. I now know that she had been missing school quite a bit. We stopped talking when my partner moved in but had been really close before that."



WARNING SIGNS

There may be none but does your child seem to be unhappy? Are you sure that they are not missing school? Has anything happened in the family that you haven't talked to your child about?



ACTION

If your child seems unhappy about anything in their life, talk to them and try to find out what the problem is before it gets any worse. Contact the police if your child goes missing and you don't know where they have gone.



WHAT TO SAY

Make sure that your child knows how important they are to you. When you have to tell your child off, tell them that it's the way they are acting that's the problem - not them. If something has gone wrong in the family, don't let your child think that it's their fault.



PREVENTION

Keep an eye out for any unexplained changes in the way they act. Spend time with them and be interested in them. Do you know who your child's friends are? Be very careful about their access to the Internet and 'chat rooms'.



CONTACTS

- Safe at Last 01909 566977
- South Yorks Police 0114 220 2020
- Missing Persons Helpline (24hrs) 0500 700 700
- Message Home 0800 700 740

- Make time for your child to talk to you about their worries - even when you have to tell them off
- Be honest about things that might be happening in the family
- Look for early signs that your child might not be happy and talk to them
- Help is out there please don't be too embarrassed or afraid to ask

Missing - From home

When children run away, they are not being naughty - they are trying to tell us that they are unhappy or trying to find out just how much we do care about them.

Some children who run away from home might be looking for somewhere else to live because they feel unsafe in their own home, they may have problems which they feel they are unable to talk to their parents about.

Children from all sorts of backgrounds run away from home for lots of reasons. Many of us will remember planning to run away when we were younger because we felt unable to cope with our problems, or thought that nobody cared about us or because we thought we had been treated unfairly.

Usually, if a child does go missing from home, it will be for a very short period - usually until the child thinks that the parents have noticed they are not there. Often, they will turn up at the home of a friend or relative.

Young people who run away from home and end up sleeping rough are extremely vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse, and are likely to be offered drugs and alcohol.

If your child goes missing and you don't know where they have gone, contact the police.



“Everyday I hear the young child next door crying her parents constantly shout at her. This is probably none of my business but I am worried and not sure what to do.”



WARNING SIGNS

There are many possible signs of abuse that may cause you concern, ranging from physical injury to changes in behaviour. Alternatively you may witness an incident, or a child or young person may tell you that he/she is being harmed.



ACTION

If you think that a child or young person has been harmed, contact the duty social worker or the police. If you are not sure, you can speak to a confidential helpline, namely the NSPCC.



WHAT TO SAY

Explain exactly what you have seen or been told. If you can, keep a note of dates, injuries and the exact words used. These will help you when talking about your concerns.



PREVENTION

Make sure your child knows who they can share worries with, if and when they need to. Listen carefully to all children and young people, and be alert to changes in them.



CONTACTS

- Sheffield City Council
0114 272 6444
- South Yorkshire Police
0114 220 2020
- NSPCC
0808 800 5000

WEBLINKS www.sheffield.gov.uk • www.southyorks.police.uk • www.nspcc.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Protecting children and young people is everybody's business
- Adults have a responsibility to report abuse
- Consider offering some support if you are worried
- If in doubt share your concerns about a child or young person
- Reporting concerns rarely leads to a child or young person being removed from their family

Worried about a child or young person? - Should you mind your own business?

When we suspect, witness or are told that a child or young person has been harmed we can react in many different ways. We may feel guilt, anger, disbelief or denial. Some of these reactions can prevent help getting to a family who need it.

All parents experience difficulties at times. But they can be helped by other family members or close friends. If someone you know is having difficulties, you could offer:

- A listening ear.
- Ideas to cope with problems.
- Encouragement to get some help.
- Practical support for example with childcare or shopping.

Many people do not report their concerns because they may:

- Fear that the child or young person will be at further risk of harm.
- Believe that nothing will be done.
- Believe that the child or young person will be taken away from their family.
- Worry that the family may find out who reported them.
- Ruin family relationships.

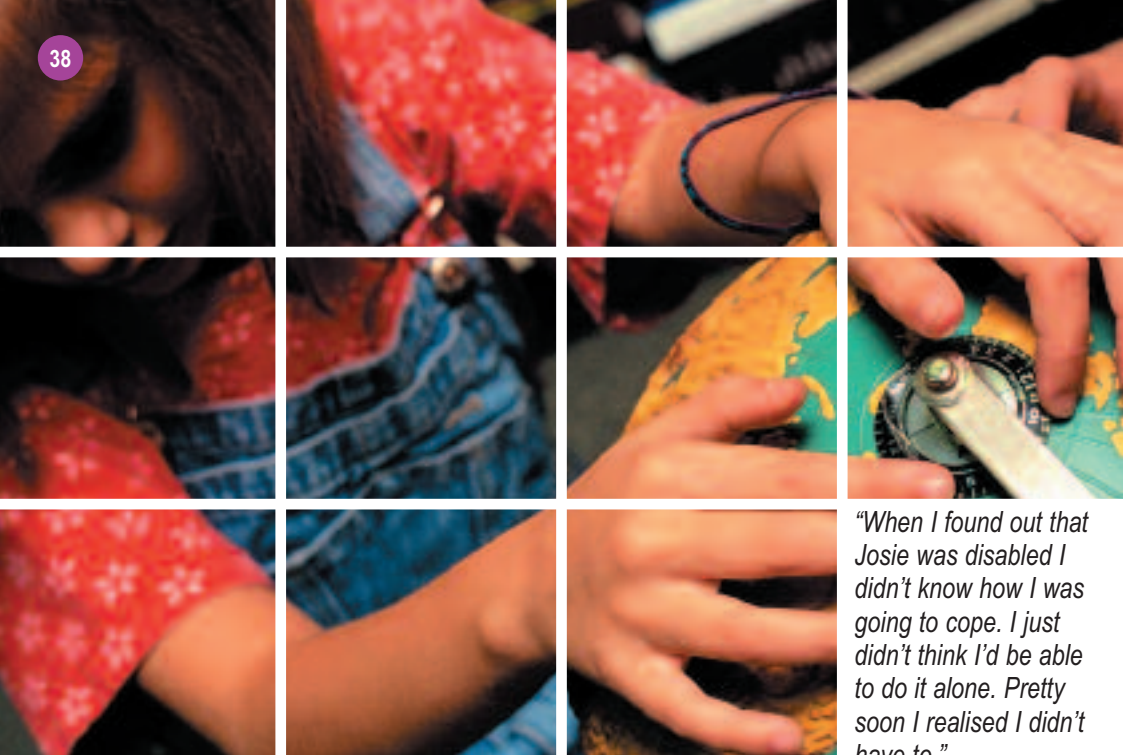
However there may be times when a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm and professional support is needed. It is best that action is taken early to stop things getting worse. Long-term abuse is much more likely to cause problems for a child or young person as they get older. Even if you think an incident is just a one off, other professional agencies may already have concerns. So your information could be very important.

You can discuss your concerns in confidence by ringing 0114 273 4855, 24 hours a day, and ask to speak to a social worker for the area where the child lives. The information will then be passed to the duty social work team in Children's Specialist Services for an initial assessment, if this is necessary, or passed to the agency outside of Children's Specialist Services which can offer the most appropriate support to the child and its family.

If you wish, you will be given feedback in due course about what action has been taken in response to your concerns.

Don't think: 'What if I'm wrong?' - think 'What if I'm right?'

www.sheffinfolink.org.uk • www.asksid.net • www.sheffield.gov.uk • www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow



"When I found out that Josie was disabled I didn't know how I was going to cope. I just didn't think I'd be able to do it alone. Pretty soon I realised I didn't have to."

- Your child is protected by the Disability Discrimination Act
- The Government, your local council, education and health authorities are there to help
- You may be able to receive financial help to assist with caring for your child
- Support groups, parent groups and other organisations are there to help you cope

Children with disabilities - You're not alone

If your child has a disability, the future may seem like a daunting struggle, not just for them, but for you. Don't think you have to go it alone. Get as much information as you can about your child's condition and the services and support available to you.

You are helping your child by making sure they get the best support available and by remembering that they have rights. The word 'disabled' covers a very wide range of different conditions. Sometimes getting a diagnosis for a child can take a long time.

However support can and should be put in place around a child's individual needs, without having to wait for them to receive a name for their condition. The Government, local council, health and education authorities provide a wide range of benefits, facilities, support and advice for disabled children and their parents and carers.

Sheffield City Council supports children and families with disabilities through area based inclusion teams. Hearing, visually impaired and autism support services are centrally based offering support city-wide.

Early signs

Some children's disabilities are spotted early on around the time of their birth. Others only appear gradually and it can be difficult for a parent to know whether there is a problem, or

whether their child is simply a little slow in developing.

Getting assistance early on is important, as early interventions can sometimes prevent problems from getting worse. If you are concerned about how your child is developing contact your health visitor or doctor for advice. Your local Sure Start Children's Centre will also be able to help you.

Behaviour

Certain conditions affect the way a child behaves. Children with learning disabilities face more challenges in learning what is acceptable behaviour. Children who find it difficult to communicate or be independent of others can easily get frustrated, which can impact on their behaviour. The organisation, Contact a Family has useful leaflets on subjects such as, understanding challenging behaviour, encouraging good sleep habits, feeding/eating and potty training. There are some specialist courses where parents can learn how to manage difficult behaviour in children with disabilities, your local services can tell you more. There are many local, national and international organisations and charities specially set up to give further help, advice and support to people just like you.

Make contact

You're not alone, so make contact today and get the support you need.



WARNING SIGNS

Some children's disabilities are spotted early. Others take time to appear or happen suddenly. If you think your child may have some form of disability, contact your health visitor or doctor for advice.



ACTION

Don't think you have to go it alone. Get as much information as you can about your child's condition. Find out what services, support, benefits and advice is available and make contact.



WHAT TO SAY

There are many organisations specially set up to give support and advice to parents of children with a disability. Contact them and tell your story. There will be others out there just like you.



PREVENTION

You can't stop your child's condition. But you can help with the disability they experience by making sure that they get the best support available, and by remembering that they have rights.



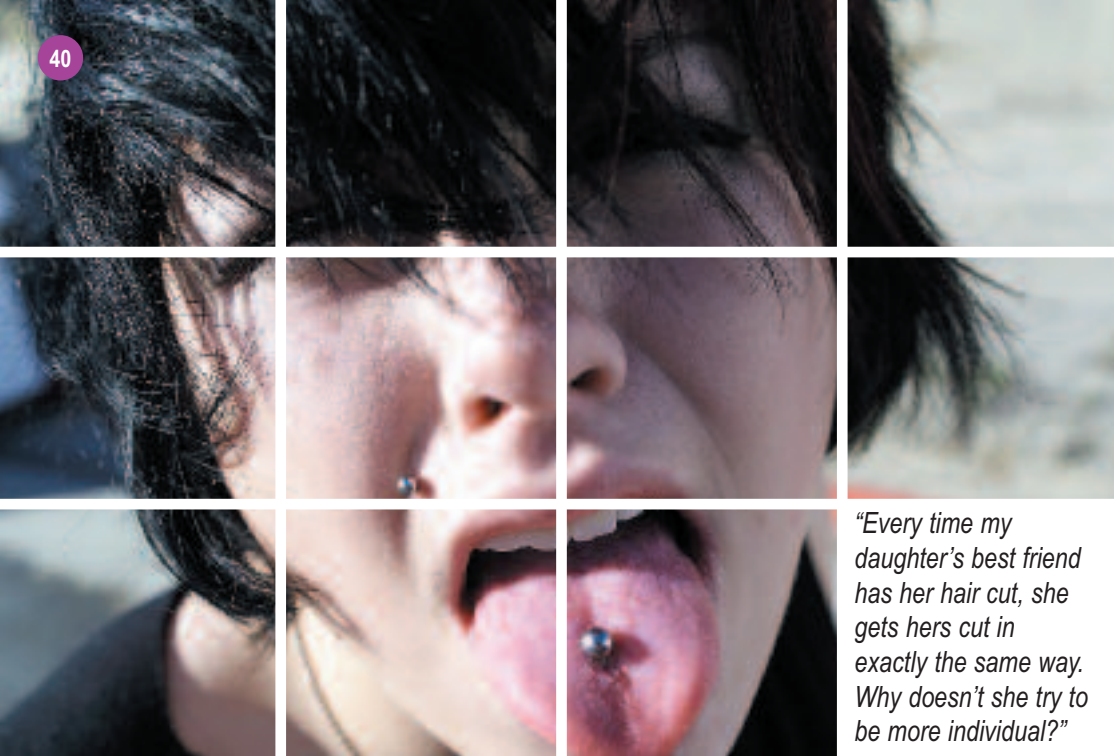
CONTACTS

- Your Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) 0114 205 3158
- SIGN 0114 266 9476
- Parent Partnership Service 0114 264 0033
- Specialist Support Services for Children 0114 239 8336
- Contact a Family 0808 808 3555
- NHS Direct 0845 4647

WEBLINKS www.sheffield0to19.org.uk • www.cafamily.org.uk • www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk •

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

www.sheffinfolink.org.uk • www.asksid.net • www.sheffield.gov.uk • www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow



“Every time my daughter’s best friend has her hair cut, she gets hers cut in exactly the same way. Why doesn’t she try to be more individual?”



WARNING SIGNS

If your child is unusually quiet or seems unhappy, there may be friendship problems. Suddenly having money or new clothes, unusual behaviour that you think may be caused by drink or drugs and not wanting to tell you what they are doing are all signs that your child may be getting into trouble. It’s unlikely they’re acting alone.



ACTION

Find out if your child is having any problems at school or with friends. Ask if there is anything you can do to help and let them know you are always there for them. If the problem carries on, talk to the school or a social worker.



WHAT TO SAY

Talk to your child calmly and try not to judge them, as this will only make it less likely that they open up to you and feel they can trust you. Problems or friendship break-ups that may seem small to you are very important to your child.



PREVENTION

Even though you may not be the first person your child turns to when in trouble, your support is still important. To help stop your child from keeping problems in, let them know you are always there for them when they need you.



CONTACTS

• Parentline Plus
0800 800 2222

WEBLINKS www.bbc.co.uk/parenting • www.raisingkids.co.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk

- Friendships help your child to develop in many ways
- Most young people like to look the same as everyone else and be part of the crowd
- Pressure from friends to act in a certain way can be powerful
- Family support is important but be prepared, your child could turn to their friends first

Importance of friendships - Coping with demands

Friendships are very important to young people. Having a close friend or group of friends and belonging to a group helps them feel good about themselves, learn to deal with people, and develop their own identity. This helps them learn about the values and ideas of others.

of a group because their friends are, even if they don’t really like what everyone else does. As they get older they will probably make up their own minds rather than going along with the crowd.

The meaning of friendship

Girls tend to have smaller groups of friends. Fitting in with a group and sharing secrets is very important. How you look, what band you like and the length of your hair all need to be just ‘right’.

Friendships are important to boys too, but they usually form larger groups of friends. They may play sports with some mates or just hang out with others. Boys want to look good but they don’t talk about fashion as much as girls do. Worries about who’s ‘doing it’ and who’s not are more important!

Peer groups

Peer groups (or groups of children of the same age) often form in school or at after school clubs. Belonging to a group is very important. Young people may want to be part

Putting on the pressure

Many young people feel under pressure to do things they are not happy about because they don’t want to stick out from the crowd. This might mean wearing certain clothes or shopping in the right places. On a more serious level, this might mean being absent from school, trying alcohol or drugs, shoplifting or going further with a boyfriend or girlfriend than they feel ready to.

Worried about friends

You may feel worried about the effect certain friends are having on your child. They may be worried about what they are doing and do not know how to talk to you about it. Support your child by letting them know they can talk to you and that you will help. You can show your child how to trust their own feelings and values, building up an emotional strength that will help them as they get older.



“Some of my friends moan that their parents are too busy for them. But my mum’s great - she always finds time to talk to us about stuff and makes us feel special - I know I can talk to her about anything.”



WARNING SIGNS

There may be none. Is your child eating well? Getting enough exercise? Any changes in how they act? Is your child trying to tell you something? Are they constantly unhappy, with mood changes and temper tantrums?



ACTION

Be involved and develop a good relationship with your child before they reach their teens. Lead a healthy lifestyle. Do things together.



WHAT TO SAY

With younger children, set rules. With teenagers, remember that you are in charge. Even if you only get a grunt, don't give up on talking.



PREVENTION

Be a little crazy! Have fun with your child. Try to get them to make friends and have outside interests. Listen carefully to your child's point of view. Help them think through choices.



CONTACTS

- Your Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) 0114 205 3158
- C'mon Everybody 0114 231 2731
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS www.sheffield0to19.org.uk • www.cmoneverybody.org.uk • parentlineplus.org.uk • www.gotateenager.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Children need to feel secure, loved and valued - this is the basis of self-esteem and confidence
- Noticing and praising good behaviour is the best way of having a good effect on how your child acts
- Be realistic about what you expect from your child
- Listen to and talk to your child - it's good to talk!
- Do things together with your child that you both enjoy - have fun!

Positive parenting & self-esteem - Make them feel great!

Positive parenting is about bringing out the best in your child, by listening and understanding, praising and encouraging their efforts, noticing and rewarding good behaviour and doing things together that you both enjoy. In trying to be helpful, it is often easy to point out where a child is going wrong and forget to notice the things that go right. By doing this you are giving your child lots of attention for the unacceptable things that they are doing, rather than for the good things you would prefer them to do. It can also undermine your relationship with your child. Parental attention and praise affects children so you need to use it in the right way! Not only will this have an effect on your child's behaviour in a positive way, it will also make your child feel happy, loved, wanted and secure and this is the basis of life-long confidence and self-esteem.

Children have to learn to make their own decisions and establish their independence from their parents. Unfortunately their decisions might not always fit with yours. That is why tension is normal. Choose your battles and let some go! Be friendly and supportive

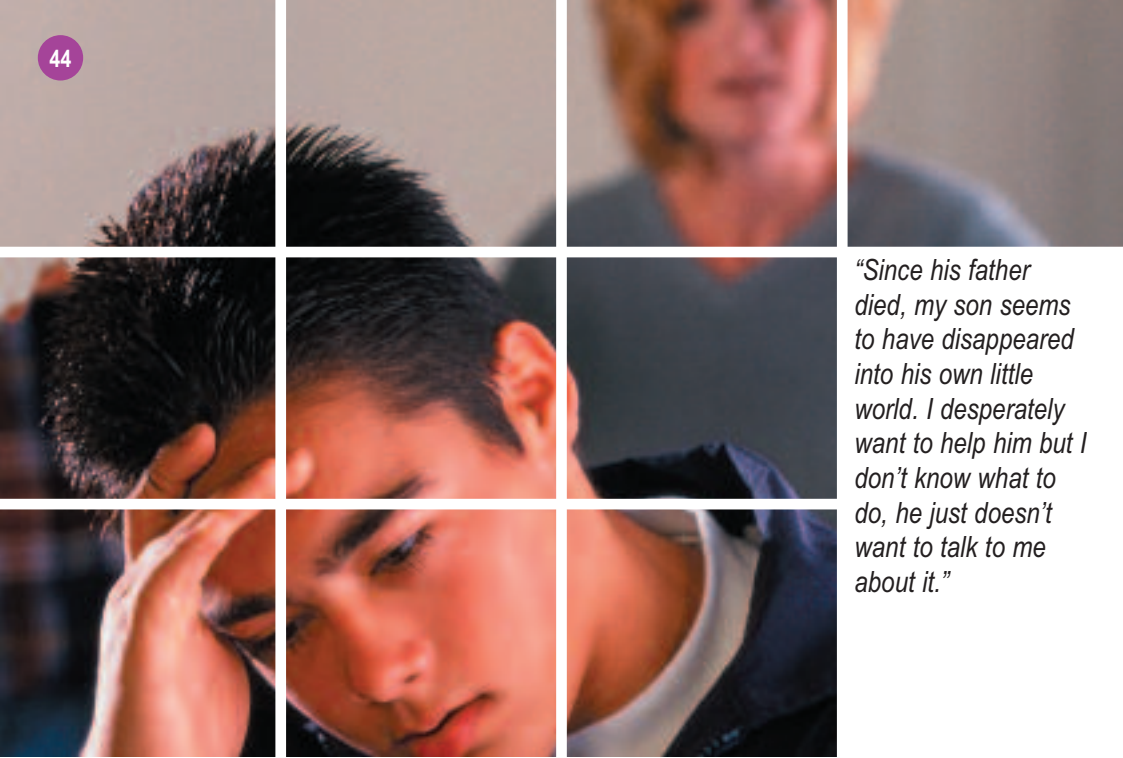
and let them know you have been through it and that you are always willing to listen.

Remember to give them the practical information they need about physical and emotional changes and reassure them that their development is perfectly normal. Keeping your child fit and healthy is something that most parents do without even thinking about it. Whether it involves getting your child to brush their teeth or reminding them to pay attention to personal hygiene, you are an important source of information and advice and a role model for your child.

A sense of self-esteem is your child's best protection from other difficulties. You can help to make them feel good about themselves in many ways. By being a good role model, giving good feedback, understanding and helping your child and being natural and affectionate.

If you feel you need support and advice in managing your child's behaviour contact your child's school or MAST. You may choose to attend a local parenting course.

www.sheffinfolink.org.uk • www.asksid.net • www.sheffield.gov.uk • www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow



"Since his father died, my son seems to have disappeared into his own little world. I desperately want to help him but I don't know what to do, he just doesn't want to talk to me about it."



WARNING SIGNS

Everyone reacts to death differently and it takes some people longer than others to come to terms with a loss. Give them as much time and patience as they need. Saying bad things or fighting with your partner in front of them is only going to hurt them.



ACTION

Tell them about what's happening and how it will affect their lives. You may not be the person they find it easiest to talk to, so encourage others to be there for them. Show them that their well-being is important to you both by listening to their feelings and wishes.



WHAT TO SAY

If someone has died, remember to let them know it's alright to still laugh or have fun - it doesn't mean you're grieving any less. If you are separating, explain why you are breaking up and that it is nothing to do with things they may have said or done.



PREVENTION

Keep the lines of communication open as the more you talk, the easier the healing process will be. If you do separate or divorce try to stop your children feeling hurt, guilty, or unloved. Talk to them so they understand why you are breaking up and how this will affect their lives.



CONTACTS

- The Dawn Project
01709 309132
 - Cruse
0114 249 3328
 - Cruse Bereavement Care Helpline (National)
0844 477 9400
 - Winston's Wish
08452 03 04 05

WEBLINKS

www.dawnproject.org.uk • www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk • www.rd4u.org.uk • www.justice.gov.uk • www.itsnotyourfault.org • www.winstonswish.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Loss or death is difficult for everyone
- Young people need a lot of support and understanding to help them work through their grief

Separation & bereavement - It's not their fault

There is no right or wrong way to react and everyone handles things in different ways. There will be a range of feelings your child is likely to go through such as:

- Feeling numb as they try to understand that someone is really not coming back.
- Anger at the person who died, at you, at others or themselves.
- Guilt possibly blaming themselves in some way, or feeling guilty because they don't think they're grieving 'enough'.
- Sadness or depression.

It is easy for young people to think they are the only ones who have lost someone and that no one else understands them, but talking to other people will help. Talk to your child about what has happened as much as they want to, they may find this hard, so encourage friends or a teacher to be there for them too. It may help if they talk to a bereavement counsellor.

Separation and divorce

When a relationship breaks down it is hard for the whole family. While you may think it is kinder to try and protect your children from the details, the truth is that the more your child understands what is going on, the easier they will find it to cope.

If possible, have both parents there when you explain what's going to happen and why. Try not to fight in front of them and make clear that even though you will be living apart you will both be there for them whenever they need you. They may have mixed feelings during this time including feeling hurt, confused and unloved. You both need to be patient and understanding of their needs as well as your own.

Young people can often think that their parents' breaking up is somehow their fault. They need to understand that what's happened is not their fault. You may find them taking the side of one parent. Hopefully, this will pass and by explaining the facts, a good relationship can be kept with both parents.

Talk and listen to what they have to say. How you handle the break-up is important for their well-being. Try to get them to talk about their feelings and involve them in making choices about the future and about what changes may happen.

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"It has taken a while for me to accept my teenager is a parent herself, but I'm helping her be the best mum she can."



WARNING SIGNS

Your teenager may be finding it hard to cope if she seems very tearful, finds looking after the baby hard, shows little interest in the baby or seems too protective and is not eating or sleeping well.



ACTION

Your teenager needs to learn to look after the baby, but help when you can and ensure your teenager is eating well and sleeping while the baby sleeps. Local organisations can offer support and advice to teenage parents. Advice can also be given on returning to education, training or work.



WHAT TO SAY

Offer support and encouragement when you can and let your teenager know that you will give advice when asked. Avoid telling them that they are doing things wrong, but try to suggest different ways of doing things if you need to. Your teenager may be happier to get advice from friends rather than you.



PREVENTION

The more support your teenager has during pregnancy, the more likely they are to be able to cope once the baby is born. Ask about local support groups and encourage meeting other teenage parents.



CONTACTS

- Your midwife, doctor, health visitor or local Sure Start Children's Centre
- Sheffield Futures Connexions Helpline 0800 652 9900
- Scoop Aid 0114 253 7672
- Ask Brook 0800 0185 023
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS

www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk • www.scoopaid.org.uk • www.brook.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk

- Help your teen to be a good parent
- Find out what benefits your teenager may be entitled to
- Give support - but let your teen try things their way
- Involve teenage dads as much as possible

Teenage parents - Getting the support they need

You may still be getting used to the idea that your child is now a parent, but encourage them to care well for their baby and give him or her a good future.

The majority of teenage parents stay at home with their own parents after the birth of their child. If your daughter is living at home with you, she will need your support but may also want to look after her child in her own way. This means being there for her, but knowing when to let her make her own decisions. Even if you do not agree with them, (unless they are putting the baby's life at risk), it's important she tries things out for herself. Give the baby's father the opportunity to get involved too.

If your son has become a father, encourage him to see his child as much as possible and to be a part of the child's life. Even if the parents are no longer a couple, help them to make decisions together about their baby.

It may be some time before your teenager returns to school or college. They will be missing their friends, going out and even their

schoolwork. Offer to look after the baby while they see their friends or find out about returning to school. Think about taking some childminding or parenting courses, as things have probably changed since your child was a baby.

Getting support

There are organisations that help support teenage parents. They can advise on parenting skills, eating well (and feeding their baby well), benefit assistance, and returning to education, training or work.

There is also advice and help with childcare and travel costs for young parents going back to education. You may want to look after your grandchild when your teenager returns to school, college or work. If you want to be paid for this you may need to be registered as a childminder.

Supporting your child as a teenage parent will help them to become good parents.



"She didn't say anything, but I could tell that having to look after me was having an affect on Jessie. But how could I care for my daughter, when she was caring for me and her baby brother? I made a few phone calls and found out that even with my illness, I can still be a good parent."



WARNING SIGNS

Late homework, missing school, feeling tired all the time and acting unusually may be signs that your child is struggling with their caring role. It is very important that you talk and listen to your child so you can take action to help them cope.



ACTION

Don't think that you and your child have to deal with things alone. Get as much information as you can and find out what services, support, benefits and advice are available. You're not alone - make contact!



WHAT TO SAY

Make sure your local Department of Social Services, your Local Education and Health Authorities, and your doctor know about what is happening and keep them up to date if things change.



PREVENTION

Being a young carer could have a bad effect on your child's health, education and well-being. You can help stop this by making sure that they get the best support and advice available.



CONTACTS

- Sheffield Young Carers
0114 258 4595
- Benefit Enquiry Line for People with Disabilities
0800 88 22 00
- Carers UK
0808 808 7777

- Young carers are protected by the Children Act 1989, Carers (Recognition and Services Act) 1995 and Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
- The Government, your Local Council, and Education and Health Authorities are there to help and will act once concern is raised
- There are many types of support to help you and your child cope with their caring
- You care about your young carer! So make contact with the support groups and organisations that are there to help

Young carers - Getting what you are entitled to

Many people need special care in their homes. They may be ill, disabled or elderly, or they may have drug or alcohol problems. Care from a member of the family can be a help. When the carer is a child or a young adult it is very important to make sure that they are getting everything they need too.

If your child has any caring role, for yourself or another member of their family, it is very important that they do not suffer because of their caring. Most importantly, tell your local Department of Social Services about this. You don't have to cope alone, they can help you and your child get the support and advice you both need.

Education

You will want your child to do well at school. Many young carers achieve good results but research has shown that caring can have a bad effect on a child's education. To help stop this, it is important that your child's school are told about their caring role. This way the school can give your child extra help if needed and will understand and support them.

Health

Sometimes young carers can be so busy looking after others, that they forget to look after themselves, and can become ill, stressed or depressed. The best way to avoid this is to get help from your doctor and Local Health Authority. Let them know all about what is happening so that they can give the help and advice that both you and your child need.

Extra support

Your council can give extra support to carers. This can include special breaks for carers and extra support services for particular needs. There are also many local and national organisations set up to help young carers and their parents.

