



## Facts for 5-8 Year Olds

Welcome to Facts for 5-8 yr olds. This is an info sheet for children who have a parent with a Mental illness. Mental illness can make people think, feel, and act differently from other people. This may mean that your mum or dad may seem different than what you are used to. If there is anything you don't understand ask an older person to help.



## About Mental Illness

Mental illness can be very confusing. Here are a few things that are important for you to know:

- Mental illness is nobody's fault
- You cannot "catch" mental illness from another person, like you can catch a cold.
- Because someone in your family has a mental illness it does not mean that you will have a mental illness.
- Having a mental illness can be stressful for the person with the mental illness as well as for the people in their family.
- Mental illness can be harder to understand than other illnesses, because you can't see mental illness, like you can see a broken arm, or you can see if someone has a bad ear ache.
- Mental illness can develop in all different sorts of people, of different ages, in the country or the city
- Mental illness happens in lots of families
- Mental illness is not just about thinking or feeling differently. People with a mental illness also have chemicals in their brains that work differently.

Several things go together to cause mental illness - people who have a mental illness will have more than just one of these things...

- Different way the brain works
- Extra worries or stress
- Sometimes using drugs that did not come from the doctor or chemist can trigger mental illness.

There are lots of different types of mental illnesses. Your mum or dad may seem very sad or grumpy, they may be jumpy or getting worried about small things, they may believe things are happening which are not real.

## How do children feel when their parent has a mental illness?

Children are not alone in feeling worried, and mixed up if someone in their family has a mental illness. All children, at times have different sorts of feelings about what is happening in their life. It is important that you can talk to someone about how you feel.

### It's important that you are not alone.

it happens to lots of families so there are many children in many countries who have a family member with a mental illness



### What can be done to help people with a mental illness?

People with a mental illness can get better. Sometimes it can take a while to work out what is wrong and how to help.

People who have a mental illness need to try and look after themselves by getting enough rest, taking the right medication, having fun & also having 'time out'.

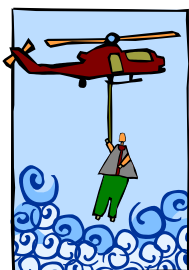
People with a mental illness can go to the doctor to get tablets, or injections to treat the illness.

Sometimes they talk about their problems and work out ways that might help them feel better.

Sometimes they need to go to hospital to have a rest, take some medication, and see the doctor every day until they feel well enough to go home.

### How to Be Prepared

Everyone feels better if they know what to do if there is a crisis. It is a good idea to work out what needs to happen if your Mum or Dad has to go to hospital if they get sick. Your Mum or Dad's case manager or worker can help with this & everyone can have a copy.



Get someone to help you read and fill in the Crisis Action Plan (CAP). This will help you be prepared and plan ahead. Get your CAP on!