

What children & young people want professionals to

ASK, SAY & DO

Ask:

- What do you know about your parent's mental health? **Minds, Myths and Me**
- How does your parent's mental illness affect you?
- Does school know about your situation? Is there anyone at school you can talk to when you need to?
- Does school or other professionals understand that you're a young carer?
- Are you being supported as a YC?
- Do you have a crisis plan if your parent is unwell? (do you have names, phone numbers etc of people you can call, stay with etc) **Safe, Sorted and Supported.**
- What can you do as a family to help make family life/relationships a bit better?

Say:

- It's not your fault that your parent has a mental illness, you didn't cause it.
- It's OK to talk about mental health.
- Unlike a cold you can't catch a mental illness.
- You know your family and how your parent's mental illness affects you and your family - you are the experts.

Do:

- Introduce yourself to the child. Explain who you are (your role), who you work for and why you are seeing them or their parent.
- Say exactly what you can offer the child.
- Explain what you are going to do with any information you have about the child – who you might talk to and why.
- Say what you've done before/if you've worked with families specifically around a particular mental health problem before.
- Check if the child wants help to get some more support or if they can do it themselves.
- Don't ask how the child is/about their situation unless you have time to listen & follow up any queries, worries, actions.
- Tell the child how long you will be working / supporting them (short or long term).
- Don't say "don't worry about it" because as a young carer they will worry.
- Check that any pets will be looked after if a parent is unwell.
- Find out what activities the child likes to do. Look at strengths and build on.
- Explore the child's coping strategies.

What parents want professionals to ASK, SAY & DO

Ask:

- Are you a parent/ do you have any dependent children?
- How do you cope as a parent when you are unwell? Who looks after the children?
- How do the children cope when you are unwell?
- Who do you get support from when you are unwell?
- Who can the children get support from when you're unwell?
- What can you do as a family to help make family life/ relationships a bit better

Say:

- I'm here to support (not judge, criticise)
- You know how your mental health affects you.
- It's OK to talk about mental health.
- I know you are a parent & being a parent is tough.

Do:

- Help the parent and child fill out **Safe Sorted and Supported**
- Help the parent talk to their child about their mental ill health (at an appropriate level).
Minds, Myths and ME.
- Support the parent to find strengths in the family and identify quality time for parent & child / family as a whole.
- Understand that the parent may not tell you everything as they don't know you/ trust you or are too nervous.
- Let the parent know what you will be talking to their child about & let them know what you will & won't tell them.
- Ask the parent how they are feeling – don't assume everything is OK, or not OK.

Information compiled by young carers (2016)

Useful Websites

http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk/what_we_do/professionals/impact-of-parental-mental-ill-health/what-can-you-do

www.scie.org.uk/children/parentalmentalhealthandchildwelfare

www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide30

<http://www.copmi.net.au> – This Australian website has lots of useful information.