



**YOU ARE NOT
ON YOUR OWN**

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Recognising the signs that your child or a child that you know may be struggling with their mental health can be really hard. As a school we are very aware that sometime parents find it really difficult to not only recognise this but then approach the subject fearing that they may add to the problem due to the lack of understanding. This is totally understandable.

Parents feel isolated and in some cases they feel that they are to blame and people are judging them as a parent. This is not the case.

We want parents to realise that they are not alone and there are others going through similar experiences and that there is support out there if needed.

Here are a few of our parents experiences which hopefully help you and reassure you that you are not alone:

“Our daughter suffers with anxiety on a daily basis and, along with the school, we have been working to make attending school easier for her. Some days it is heart breaking seeing her so distressed, crying at the gates and refusing to go it. The reports of feeling sick and unwell due to the thought of going out of her comfort zone. But, after months of crying, upset and panic every morning we are finally getting to a point where she is starting to see school as a safe place. I would say that to any parent who is experiencing this with their child that they are not alone, and it is not your fault. By seeking the support of the school my daughter is now attending counselling session arranged by the school. Be consistent and reassuring to your child and take advantage of any support offered. In our case keeping up with bringing our daughter to school, even on the hard days where she is handed over crying, has helped her to see that nothing is going to hurt her in this environment and nothing bad has happened”.

Jan, mother

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“Our son has a diagnosis of ADHD and emotional dysregulation, after years of going through the healthcare system to be diagnosed. Sometimes it's hard living with a child with this condition, and you often feel judged. It can sometimes feel that the world is against your child and you. By keeping in regular contact with the school regarding his condition they have been able to make his attendance to school that little bit easier for him. They have facilitated extra assistance for his exams, which was a big worry of mine. It is important to remember that the school day is challenging for a child with this condition, often at the end of the school day my son will come home angry and emotional. His behaviour will be awful for a while as he has suppressed himself throughout the day. Because he does not sleep he is also very difficult to get up for school, making this start of the day often chaotic. I get through the difficulties of parenting a child with ADHD by reminding myself he is not trying to be naughty, his behaviour is the way his brain is wired. Accepting support and advocating for my child is also a big part of this. You feel that by letting people know things are difficult that you are failing your child. But, accepting your child needs help to level the playing field with their peers, is the first step to lightening the mental load as a parent” Sam, mother

**WE CAN
ALWAYS
*begin again***

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“My daughter is in year 10 and from junior school has suffered from anxiety, suicidal thoughts, hearing voices and seeing things. This had led to her struggling each day with getting things down or focusing on her school work. My daughter hears voices and see images that are not there and because of this she struggles to focus on what is being said or communicated to her. From trying to get out of the house for school where the images are there as she open each door to trying to leave the house or entering the school these images are always around tell her murmuring or telling her things to do. This affects her everyday and prevents her from being able to concentrate especially during class. Having to deal with images and the voices she is not able to focus on the information being given in class which also have it own challenges of kids being noises teachers talking it can be very overwhelming and she will come home with headaches and go to sleep from exhaustion.

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MENTAL
HEALTH✿

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“As a parent it can be very hard to communicate with her most of the time she is angry at me for trying to get her to be faster in the mornings to getting out of her room when we have an appointment. Her routine can take forever and I have to keep repeating or waiting for her to get out the door. Trying to tell my daughter that what she is seeing is not real or that the voices are not there and she will not believe me because in her head she can see it. I struggled because there is no medication or anything I can do to make it all go away. I can speak to her about self confidence but can't remove these images or voices that she struggles with.”



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“I question all the time is there something I missed as she was baby or did I not do something during my pregnancy that caused this to happen - there is no answer. There are times when she is having a good day and I can see that part of her that reminds me that she is growing and learning and with the right help and support she will understand that she is different but she is not alone and she will be okay with time.”

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“My daughter received a lot of support from her school. With all the challenges I have with getting her out the house in the morning I do it because I know that there will be some help at school. They have provided ear muff, dangles and colour card all of which help her to focus in class. She is also with the SEN team in her school. She has weekly meetings with CAMHs and WPH. She has signed up to a few of the apps too.” Sharlene, mother.

You Are Not
Your Negative
Thoughts 

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“ My daughter is in the sixth form and she started to spend a lot of time in her bedroom rather than share dinner with us a family. She stopped helping with her siblings and became really withdrawn. I spoke to my husband about it and we both thought that she was just working hard. I also noticed that she was picking at her food when she returned her dishes and she looked tired and dark under her eyes. I then had a call from the school to say that a member of staff had been told that she had been self harming. They said that she had marks on her arms and when spoken to she broke down. I didn't know how to handle this and felt so ashamed. I didn't know what to think and what to do. The school advised that I check for any sharp objects, medication or anything that may be used as a form of harm- I was so embarrassed. I went into school to see a member the staff and they reassured me that they had people in school she could talk to. I was glad that they were doing this in school as I didn't want anyone else knowing.” Afsa , mother

These are just some experiences from some of the parents who have struggled with some acceptance, understanding and coping with their child's mental health. They appreciate that the journey has not been easy and that they have had to adapt their own thinking in order to keep their child safe.

Please remember you are not alone! If you need some help or guidance on mental health please contact us and we can arrange for support to be put in place or signpost you to someone who can help. Our website has numerous resources to help.

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