

So how can physical activity help my child?

Physical activity has been used as an effective method in reducing feelings of depression and anxiety. With a period of 10-minute brisk walking being shown to increase mental alertness, energy levels and create a positive mood for the participant (Rimer, et al. 2012)



So what activity can I do with my child?

It is normally recommended for a child to do at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day.

Physical activity can include any kind of movement, whether that be something very energetic, like dance or running, to even just going for a nice walk with their parents.

You can find a list and more advice about physical activity here:
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-children-and-young-people/>

What else can I do?

[Speak with your GP](#)

Young Minds:

Providing support to children and young people who may have mental health problems, and supporting their parents

Parent support line: 0808 802 5544

Mind:

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems and offers support.

Mind Infoline: 0300 123 3393

MindEd for families:

E-support for parents and those caring for children and young people in their family if they are concerned about a young person's mental health or well-being

Website: <https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>

Rethink Mental Illness:

Aim to improve the lives of people severely affected by mental illness through their network of local groups and services.

Contact: 0300 5000 927

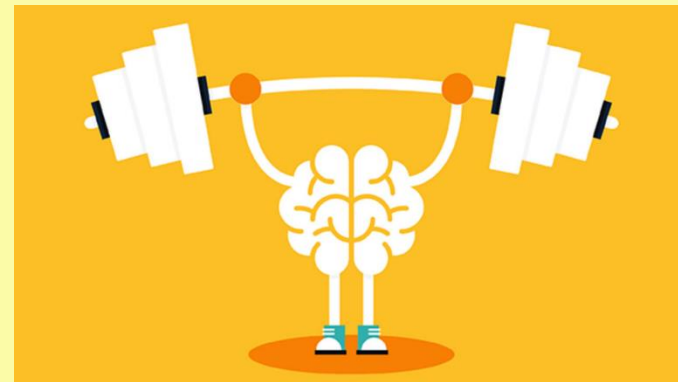
SANE:

Provide Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families, and carers.

Textcare: comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it most: www.sane.org.uk/textcare.

Peer support forum: www.sane.org.uk/supportforum.

Website: www.sane.org.uk/support



Healthy Body - Healthy Mind: Physical activity and your child's mental health

WHAT IS ANXIETY AND WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR

Anxiety is also a mental health disorder, and Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is usually a prolonged period of anxiety.

Anxiety - a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild or severe.

What to look out for if you feel that your child is feeling anxious:

- Has become more irritable, tearful, or clingy
- Having difficulty sleeping
- Waking in the night
- Starts wetting the bed
- Having bad dreams

In older children, anxiety may manifest itself through:

- Lacking confidence to try new things or seem unable to face simple, everyday challenges
- Finding it hard to concentrate
- Having problems with sleeping or eating
- Having angry outbursts
- Having a lot of negative thoughts, or keep thinking that bad things are going to happen
- Avoiding everyday activities, such as seeing friends, going out in public or going to school

(NHS, 2019)



My child's mood has changed

What can I do?

Depression and anxiety do not just affect adults, but they can also affect children and young adults. If the signs are spotted early, it means you can get help for your child sooner.



WHAT IS DEPRESSION AND WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

Depression is a mental health disorder that affects a person's mood.

Depression - overwhelming thoughts of worthlessness, low mood, lethargy.

What to look out for if you feel that your child may be depressed:

- Sadness, or a low mood that does not go away
- Being irritable or grumpy all the time
- Not being interested in things they used to enjoy
- Feeling tired and exhausted a lot of the time

With children especially, you may also notice that your child is:

- Having trouble sleeping or even sleeping more than usual
- Unable to concentrate
- Less interactive with their friends
- Less decisive
- Lacking in confidence
- Weight changes
- Seem unable to relax or be more lethargic than usual
- Talk about feeling guilty or worthless
- Feel empty or unable to feel emotions (numb)
- Have thoughts about suicide or self-harming
- Self-harming, for example, cutting their skin or taking an overdose

(NHS, 2020)