

My family and other problems: teenagers talking to ChildLine

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The ChildLine service

- 24 hour free and confidential service for any child or young person with any problem
- Phone, online service, information, advice & peer support on the web site www.childline.org.uk
- Ongoing Case Managed contact
- Volunteer service

- **ChildLine Schools Service**

www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/the-work-we-do/childline-services/childline-schools-service/childline-schools-service_wda90513.html



ChildLine's counselling model

- respectful, valuing and non-judgmental, giving the child or young person a safe space to explore and express his/her thoughts, feelings and actions
- to enable the child or young person to better understand their situation and the choices available to them
- to provide a child or young person with relevant information and advice, where appropriate
- to assess the risks a child may face and try to ensure their safety and protection



Methods and Types of Contacts, 2012/ 13

- Almost 290,000 children and young people
- More girls than boys (3: 1 ratio girls to boys)
- 87% young people contacting ChildLine aged 12 – 18 years
- More online contacts
- 94% of direct referrals young people aged 12 - 18



main issues teenagers contacting ChildLine about

main issues young people aged 12– 15	main issues young people aged 16- 18
family relationships	depression and unhappiness
bullying/ online bullying	family relationships
depression and unhappiness	suicidal issues
self-harm	self harm
physical abuse	problems with friends
sexual abuse and on-line sexual abuse	sexual abuse and on-line sexual abuse
problems with friends	mental health issues
puberty and sexual health	puberty and sexual health
suicidal issues	pregnancy and parenting
school or education problems	bullying/ on-line bullying



I'm getting bullied at school. They are saying really nasty things and telling me it would be better if I wasn't here. I feel so scared and I've been self harming because i need a release. I'm a pathetic failure and a nobody. Every time I look in the mirror I feel disgusted. I don't know what to do anymore. I don't want scars but I need to cut and I need to suffer.



So my mum and dad have started arguing ALL the time. Over everything. Every time one of them says something the other one yells or criticizes them. They've now started arguing about me as well, blaming each other my self harm ever since the school found out and rang them. Also its my birthday on sunday and i really don't want it to happen anymore because all my parents will do is argue. Have nowhere to go to escape the arguing because i can hear with my door shut. Stress is getting to much for me and sometimes it feels like i can't breathe.



I'm scared they're going to split up. They argue all the time over the smallest thing.

Basically, my mum and dad has split up and my dad has a new girlfriend, who he's had for 3 weeks and already wants me to meet her. Ok, I don't know If I feel happy for him or angry at him. He said he wouldn't bring his girlfriend to his house yet but when I arrived her boots and coat were there...

I told my dad something I found out about my mum and I feel like I wrecked the family as they split up after that. Dad drinks a lot now and leaves me on my own. I feel like he's not coping and he never takes any interest in me anymore.



My mum wants to move back in with my dad. She is bipolar which makes her really depressed and that effects everyone in my family. She doesnt really take her meds. I feel like running away because my homelife is falling apart.

I'm 15, I want to run away, I hate living with my family, my sister's older and we share a room now she's pregnant and homeless and waiting for a house, my dad lost his job 5months ago, he managed to get a new job but it pays less and he is stressed. My mum works 6 days a week too and still doesn't make much over £100 a week, I'm so stressed living with all of this, im behind on school work because I get so stressed trying to do the work in such a small room. I'm at the end of the line now I need to get away from it all! I need some help



My mum is acting strange around me for a really long time.... She ignores me when I try speaking to her and when she does reply she has her back turned to me and gives one word answers, sounding really annoyed with me. When I try asking her if i have done something wrong she just says 'no', but I can't help feeling that i have; as soon as her boyfriend comes home, she is really bubbly and she laughs a lot to him. With me, it's like I don't exist.

One minute she will give me a hug and ask me how school was, and the next time I see her, she doesn't want to talk to me. I come home from school everyday, not sure what to expect frpm her. I don't know what to do!!



i can tell my dad isn't well, i think he's going through a midlife crisis or something but whatever it is [he] isn't acting the same. He argues with my mum constantly to the point where she's sleeping in my bed crying herself to sleep. I've tried talking to him about going to the doctors while we were alone and i explained all my emotions how he shouldn't be so over protective of my mum and how he really isn't well but he's convinced my mum is the ill one. About 3 times a week he tells me and my brother that she isn't well and that's why they're getting divorced then the next second he's obsessing over her and saying how much he loves her (like bi polar).

The brainwashing about my mum being ill works on my brother and i dont know why he believes it but i dont know what to do anymore. How do i convince my dad he HAS to see a doctor? I can't cope with this arguing anymore, whenever i step in to help he shouts at me saying i'm on my mums side and i don't love him as much and i end up crying and getting in a state. I've now got behind in my sixth form work, i cry all the time, and now my boyfriend has broken up with me, everything is getting worse and I just don't know what to do.



Teenagers (contacting ChildLine) often seem to protect their parents. These young people often go through difficult, traumatic or even just ‘new’ things, but go through them without adult support/guidance because their parents have ‘enough to worry about’ or ‘just won’t understand’. Young people miss out on so much just because parents/carers aren’t spotting the signs/clues to their realities and aren’t ‘there’ when strong bonds can be forged in the heat of adversity.

I’ve hardly ever heard a young person dismiss their parents’ feelings (other than when the parent is an abuser), but every day I hear young people expressing concern for their parents and their feelings- often to the detriment of the young person’s own well-being.



(ChildLine Counselling Supervisor)



Thank you

Disclaimer

All quotes are derived from real counselling sessions or message board posts with ChildLine service users but are not necessarily exact or direct quotes. To protect the identity of the young person, all potentially identifying details have been changed.