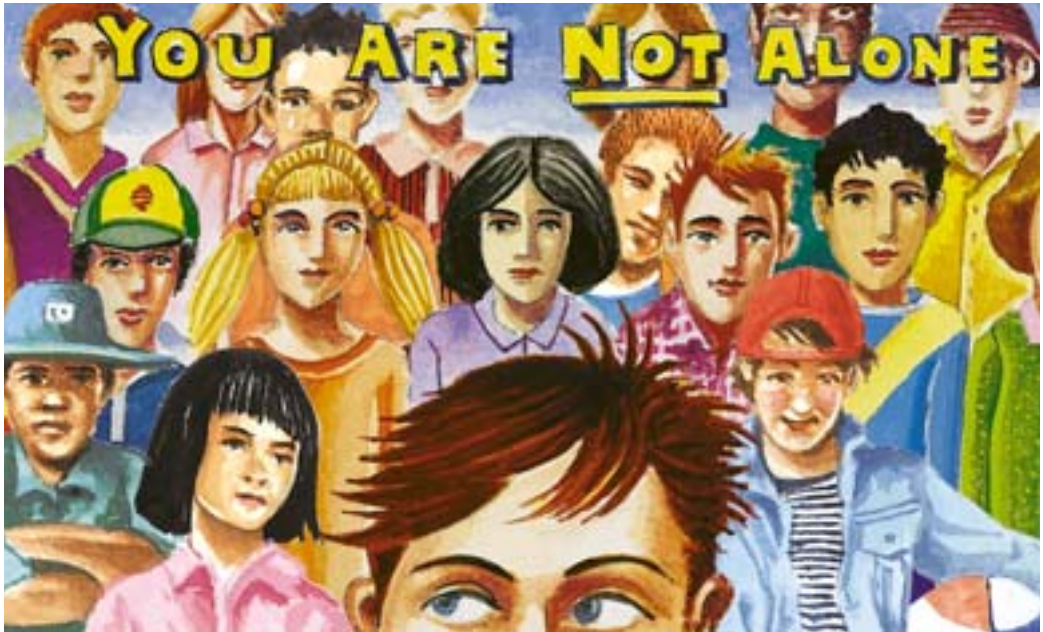


Information for children and young people



“I used to think that maybe it was my fault.”

You did not cause your parent’s mental health problem

– Mental illness is no-one’s fault.

You have a right to feel safe

– If you have felt scared or unsafe in the past, make a plan for what you could do if you felt like that again. Some kids like to talk through and write their plan out with their parents or some other adult they can trust.

“Did you know that 1 in every 5 people will have a mental health problem at some time in their life? – I thought it was just in our family.”

You are not alone

– Lots of children and young people live in families where a parent has a mental illness or mental health problem. Sometimes it’s great to meet other kids who’ve gone through some of the things you have too. (Ring Kids Help Line on 1800 551 800 or visit the websites listed on the back cover to find out more.)

Tips for you from other children and young people

“Find out about your Mum or Dad’s illness.”

– ask your parents about it or ask them if it’s OK for you to talk to a doctor or other health worker about the illness or health problem. Check the SANE website <http://www.sane.org> for more information.

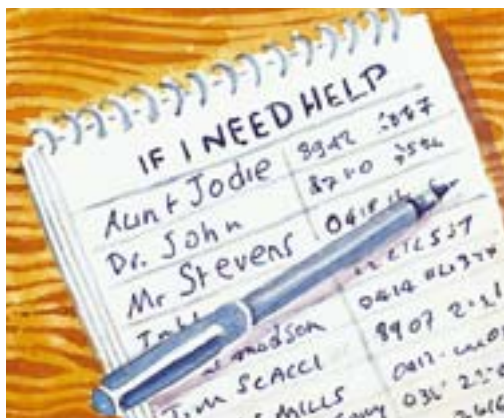
“Ask as many questions as you like – if you’re like me you’ll find that the ‘real’ story about the illness isn’t half as bad as some of the things you were worrying about.”

“It was great when I found someone I could talk to about things.”

It often helps to talk to someone you trust about how you’re feeling – maybe a family member, your best friend at school, a school counsellor or a doctor. Or you could ring and talk to someone at Kids Help Line (Freecall 1800 551 800). You may have to wait on the line for a few minutes if they’re busy but they will answer your call.

“Make sure you have some fun.”

It’s great when family members can help each other out. If you’re having to take on more than your fair share though, try to make sure you get regular breaks. There are people who can help, so talk to someone at the Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre (Freecall 1800 242 636). In some states Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres run special groups and camps for young people who provide support to their parent because their parent is unwell.



“Write out a list of the names and ‘phone numbers of people who you can ring if you need to.”