Healthy lifestyles

LOOKING AFTER YOUR BODY

- Balance is the key to a healthy lifestyle: too much of anything tends to do damage.
- If you eat more calories than your body burns, you will put on weight.
- Smoking has more than 50 ways of making life a misery through illness and more than 20 ways of killing you.
- Life is too short to waste time being unhealthy.
- Healthy teeth give you something to smile about.
**What you eat**

These days it can be confusing to know how to plan healthy meals for you and your family. Obesity and heart disease are major problems in the UK today, because we eat too much saturated fat, salt and sugar in fast food and snacks, and not enough fresh fruit and vegetables. Balance is the key. It’s important to make sure you eat a good variety of foods in sensible amounts. Variety is particularly important for children as they are learning to enjoy different tastes. Keep trying with those healthier foods they don’t seem to like as much, eventually they will learn to enjoy them. But what you put into your body is only half the story.

**Exercise**

You can get plenty of exercise just by walking to the shops or to school and so can your child. Playing sport is another great way to keep fit and there are often after school clubs where your child can take part in activities such as football or dance class. Perhaps you could go swimming or cycling with your child so that you are both having fun and keeping fit together.

**Smoking**

Unfortunately some of us are still deliberately choosing to damage our bodies by smoking. Moreover, smoking also puts the health of those around us at risk. You have to decide whether to smoke or to stop. If you choose to smoke you should protect your child from second hand smoke and reduce the risk of them becoming ill. The health problems associated with cigarettes are well known, which is why more and more smokers are giving up each day. If you smoke, your doctor will be happy to offer you a range of services and products that could help you kick this damaging habit for good.

**Teeth**

If you keep a healthy lifestyle, most parts of your body will take care of themselves. But special care is needed for teeth. No one likes going to the dentist, but it’s much less unpleasant if you take your child for regular check-ups and help them look after their teeth in between times. Children are especially at risk from tooth decay because of the sugary things they eat. Whenever possible, avoid sugary snacks and drinks, or find non-sugar alternatives and always make sure they brush regularly (twice a day) with a family fluoride toothpaste.

**Overall care**

A healthy balanced lifestyle should help your child enjoy life to the full. If you have any questions or concerns about your family’s health, use the contacts supplied to get the information you need.
• Child exploitation has devastating effects on children, both physical and mental
• Exploitative adults have been quick to use the Internet as a tool; they are very sophisticated and well practised in how they approach children
• Children are fascinated by the ‘adult’ world, but there are measures you can take to protect your child from online risks and help them make the most of the Internet safely
• Be sensitive to changes in your child’s behaviour. It is up to attentive adults to recognise the signs of sexual exploitation.
• Recent research from the NSPCC revealed that one in five 9 to 16 year-olds use Internet chat rooms.

Check website for the latest telephone details > safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk
The Internet is a wonderful and quick way for young people to find information, help them study and keep in contact with friends or meet new ones.

Unfortunately, the Internet is also an easy tool for child abuse. People who sexually abuse children - often referred to as paedophiles - use chat rooms to become friendly with children or young people, often by pretending to be another child. Other risks include people who want to get personal information like names, addresses or telephone numbers for fraud. Using the Internet too much can lead to an unhealthy lifestyle and can be addictive.

Keep it safe

Keep an eye on what’s going on by keeping the computer in a family room, rather than in a bedroom. Try to discourage your children from minimising screens. Learn how to use a computer, access Internet sites and try out a chat room for yourself so you understand what can happen. Check out which sites your children are visiting to see if they are acceptable.

Ask other parents to tell you about good chat rooms or websites. Look for sites that check messages in chat rooms and those which include clear guidelines for use, teen friendly advice, warnings and how to report concerns.

You can buy software filters which block access to websites with a sexual content. These don’t make Internet use totally safe so it is still much better for you to take an active interest in the sites your child is browsing.

Set ground rules:

• Limit the amount of time your teenager spends on the Internet - and stick to it.
• Discuss the kind of websites they can visit which are right for their age.
• Make it clear that they must never give out their real name, address, home or mobile phone numbers or any other personal details, or post photos of themselves on the Internet.
• They should always let you know if someone is asking questions or wanting details they don’t feel happy about giving.

It’s important that your child understands why there need to be rules. Explain that because they can’t see or hear the people they chat to on the Internet, they may not be who they seem. Paedophiles gain the trust of young people on the Internet. Remind your teenager that strangers on the Internet can be just as dangerous as strangers on the street.

If your teenager is secretive when using the computer, if you notice changes in how they act, problems sleeping or changes in routine or they are suddenly asking about sexual matters, you should look into whether their Internet use has anything to do with it.
Children of all ages learn through play.
Play is an important part of your child's development.
Early childhood experiences affect children's views on learning.
Children need a safe and supportive place where they can play, learn and develop.
There are all sorts of groups and programmes in your area to help your child to play and learn.
As a parent you have an on-going role in your child's play and learning.
Young children do not see a difference between work and play.
Playing is a natural way for your child to learn about the world around them. Children learn through play at home, at nurseries and playgroups, with their friends, at school and beyond. Play is a vital part of your child’s development and you have an important role in this.

Early learning through everyday experiences
Children who are encouraged to express themselves freely through play tend to be more able to adapt, learn skills and perform better at school. As a parent it’s important to spend time playing with your child, providing stimulation and interaction. Involve children in daily activities such as shopping, laying the table or cooking will provide ‘real life’ opportunities for children to learn. From birth your child begins to learn through play about using their senses, social interaction, language and mobility.

A helping hand
The government set up an initiative called SureStart to improve the range and quality of services for young children and their families. There are all sorts of programmes, covering a wide range of services and support, particularly when it comes to play and learning.

The foundation stage
All government-funded playgroups, nurseries, reception classes and other childcare settings carry out the foundation stage of education.

This is a distinctive phase for children from age three to the end of their year in a school reception class. All their learning will be rooted in play-based activities as this is the best way for children to learn.

School years
Primary schools recognise the value of play and employ it as a crucial learning tool throughout the school day. At home your child will begin to play more on their own or with friends, but it is still vital to be involved in your child’s play activities, as well as any hobbies, artistic or sporting interests that they may develop as they grow. Giving your child time and encouragement is of even greater value than new toys or games, and being involved in their play means that you are part of their personal, social and emotional development.

As they grow older you will need to establish ground rules about playing out and visiting friends. Try to find a way of encouraging your child to get out and interact with others, whilst ensuring that you know where they are and that they are fully aware of dangers and threats to their safety.

As children, we all enjoyed playing once – perhaps we still do. Learning to play again with your child can be great fun. It will bring you closer to your child and play a vital role in preparing them for a full and active life.
Post-natal illness

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS

• Not every mum copes straight away with motherhood.
• Around 15% of women suffer post-natal depression.
• Most women suffer 'baby blues' in the first 10 days.
• The sooner you get help, the sooner you’ll feel better.
• Talk to your GP about your worries.
• Make the most of help from family and friends.

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Caring for your baby should be a wonderful experience, but for many mums at some time in the first few days, weeks or months, it is not.

Around 50-80% of new mums get the ‘baby-blues’ when they feel, not surprisingly, very tired, worried and weepy during the first few days after the birth. This usually disappears without the need for treatment about ten days after the birth.

Post-natal depression (PND)

Around 10-15% of women will have worse depression, sometimes weeks or months after the birth of their baby. About half of cases happen in the first three months, and 75% of cases by six months. These mums have more powerful and longer lasting symptoms such as:

- Constant weepiness.
- Worry, tension.
- Difficulty in bonding with the baby.
- Loss of interest in sex.
- Trouble sleeping, restlessness.
- Feeling very tired.
- Feeling completely alone or living in a ‘bubble.’
- Feelings of guilt and resentment.

Many women do not see that they have post-natal depression and carry on without getting the help they need. It is often women who expect a lot of themselves and of motherhood that find caring for a new baby hard to cope with.

If you feel depressed, it is very important to let family and friends know how you feel so that you can get help. Your GP can talk about treatment options with you such as counselling and anti-depressants and send you to local mother’s groups, which can be a great help to new mums.

Puerperal Psychosis

A very small percentage of women (between one and three in every 1,000) suffer from puerperal psychosis, which causes severe mental breakdown and may include symptoms such as manic behaviour and hallucinations. Treatment options include hospitalisation, drugs and counselling.

Getting support

Being at home with a new baby that seems to always need feeding and changing who takes all your attention and leaves you feeling really tired, can be a lonely experience. Take up any offers of help and support from friends and family. If you feel you are not coping, always talk to your GP or health visitor.

It’s normal to feel emotional and very tired after having a baby, but symptoms of PND include constant crying, feeling cut off from everyone else, not being able to sleep, feeling worried and tense and not handling with the baby.

If you feel tearful or depressed, don’t try to cope on your own and don’t be afraid to ask for help – all new mums need help from family and friends. Don’t worry about keeping the house clean or making big meals – not when your baby sleeps.

Although many people now know about PND, only about half of mothers who need help see getting it. So don’t keep your feelings to yourself – the sooner you talk about it, the quicker you can get help and treatment if you need it.

- Association for Post-natal Illness
  020 7899 0068
  www.apni.org
- Mind in Man Association (MIMA)
  0845 1203746
- National Childbirth Trust (NCT)
  0800 410 707
- Havenparent UK
  0800 088 6368
- Havenparent (Scoil)
  01304 462076
- Action on Puerperal Psychosis
  0202 742414
Self-harming

UNDERSTANDING & SUPPORT

- One in ten young people hurt themselves.
- Self-harm is a sign of deeper problems.
- Understand the reasons why your teenager self-harms.
- Find out how to help your teenager.

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Self-harming or hurting yourself can take many forms.

This may include: cutting, burning or scalding; hitting, picking or biting skin; head banging against a wall or other object or taking an overdose.

According to the charity Samaritans, one in ten young people self-harm and girls are more likely to self-harm than boys. While the aim is to hurt, it is not usually to kill themselves and it may carry on for years without getting any worse.

People who self-harm often use it as a way of dealing with problems, such as depression, bullying, abuse or feeling unloved. Young people who self-harm say it is a way of being in control and use it to help them cope, as the physical pain takes their mind off their problems.

Self-harm is not just about getting attention, as it is most often carried out in private and kept secret from family and friends. What they are doing is a sign that they need help. Those who self-harm usually think badly of themselves and need even more attention and support. Young people who self-harm often do not get help for themselves because they may be worried about what you will think of them and their self-harm. Hurting yourself is a serious problem even if the person only lightly cuts themselves. A person who self-harms can’t just decide to stop - they need help to get over their problem. Most causes of harming do not lead to death, but can be a sign that your teenager may be thinking about more serious harm or even suicide.

How you can help

If you know that your child hurts themselves on purpose it is normal to feel very upset, angry and powerless. Your teenager needs your understanding and support. Listen to what they are telling you without judging them and try not to show you are angry or upset or try to force them to stop. If this is then way of handling problems, then other ways of dealing with them need to be found and tried before they can stop harming themselves. Helping them learn to deal with stress and stopping the things that cause them to self-harm in the first place will be more useful.

If your teenager finds it difficult to tell you about their feelings try to get them to talk to another family member, friend, teacher, youth worker or social worker.

Make sure your child can get first aid supplies to treat injuries and stop infection. If a wound looks serious or your child has taken an overdose however small call 999. You should also try to get your child to call you or the emergency services if they ever self-harm and hurt themselves seriously.

Try to get your child to talk to their Doctor, who can tell them about other ways of dealing with stress and who can tell them where to get more help. One-to-one counselling, support groups and practical support can all help.

Look out for injuries such as cuts, burns, scalds or bruises. Your child may try to hide them from you.

Try to find out if your child is self-harming. Think of reasons why they might be doing this so that you can talk through problem and find other ways of dealing with them.

You should be aware your child may want to try to hide what they are doing from you. If they try to force them to stop, use this as a chance to really listen to them and try to get them to talk about their problems. Suggest they see their doctor who can get them the help they need, you could ask your teenager if they would like you to go with them or maybe try talking about things as a family.

People who self-harm can feel lonely and isolated. Giving your teenager time to talk to you, discussing difficulties they have and letting them know you are there for them will help. Your support will make them feel better about themselves.

• Childline 0800 1111
  www.childline.org.uk
• The Samaritans 0845 90 90 99
  (24-hour helpline)
  www.samaritans.org/youngpeople
• NCH (The Children’s Charity)
  www.nch.org.uk
• National Self Harm Network
  www.nshn.co.uk
• www.cue2talk.org
• Separation can be as upsetting for your children as it is for you.
• Talking helps them understand what will be happening in their lives.
• Let them know you will both still be there for them.
• Try not to talk your child into taking sides.

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When a relationship breaks down it is hard for the whole family. While you may think it is kinder to try and protect your children from the details, the truth is that the more your child understands what is going on, the easier they will find it to cope.

If possible, have both parents there when you explain what’s going to happen and why. Try not to fight in front of them and make clear that even though you will be living apart you will both be there for them whenever they need you. They may have mixed feelings during this time including feeling hurt, confused and unloved. You both need to be patient and understanding of their needs as well as your own.

Children often think that their parents’ breaking up is somehow their fault and that they’ve done something wrong. They may also feel that if they do things differently in the future you may get back together. They need to understand that what’s happened is not their fault.

While most children want contact with both their parents, a young person can view what’s happened differently and may blame one of you for the break-up. You may find your child taking the side of one parent. Hopefully, this will pass and by explaining the facts, a good relationship can be kept with both parents.

Learning to listen
Talk to your children and listen to what they have to say. How you handle the break-up is important for their well-being. Try to get them to talk about their feelings and involve them in making choices about the future. As well as feeling like they are losing a parent in some way, they may also be worried that they will have to move house or change schools, so tell them about what may need to happen. Talk to your children about who they will live with, where and what other changes may happen. Even though you are going through a difficult time yourself, your child will also be feeling a sense of loss and hurt, so let them know what is happening to help them deal with their own feelings.

Making arrangements
If you and your partner are finding it hard to talk and agree, you can get help from your local mediation service.
Young people with all the facts often wait longer before trying sex.
You won’t always know if you have a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI).
Some STIs can stop you from being able to have children if not treated.
Condoms help protect against STIs and pregnancy.

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The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Western Europe and high levels of sexually transmitted infections amongst young people. It is important that young people learn about sex and relationships before they have sex.

As a nation we are not very good at talking about sex and relationships yet young people who get information from PSE (Personal, Social, Health Education) lessons in school, from TV, magazines or friends, tell us that they want their parents and carers to talk to them about sex.

Research has shown that:
- Young people are more likely to delay sexual activity and protect themselves if they have had honest open discussions with parents or carers from an early age.
- They are more likely to use contraception when they start having sex which reduces the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Young people having sex at an early age experience high levels of regret.

The facts
The legal age for consenting sex (both male and female) is 16. However, around a third of young people under 16 are having sex and can get advice and contraception, including abortion without their parents consent. In the case of under 16's the GP or health professional will encourage and support the young person to tell a parent, but if they refuse are able to continue with treatment following strict guidelines. If it is felt that a young person does not fulfil the criteria in the guidelines treatment may be refused.

Young people want to know about relationships not just the biology of sex. They want to consider how to ask someone out, how to cope with rejection and how to deal with the break-up of a relationship.

There is strong link between alcohol and sexual activity in young people. They need to be aware of the consequences of drinking alcohol, which may lead them to have sex they may later regret.

Some Tips on Talking to Children
- Start early. The younger your child is when you start to talk about sex, sexual health and relationships the more natural it will become as they grow up.
- Answer questions with simple, clear answers and make sure you get all the facts right.
- Make children feel responsible for their actions and know that sexual relationships are something to be enjoyed at the right time with the right person.
- Use TV programmes or someone in the press so you’ll both feel less embarrassed.
- Talk about how their bodies work and inform them about their options and addresses of the local services.

Make sure that your child can get to information about local services and that they can make choices about their health.
Smacking is the only thing that works.
I get so frustrated with him sometimes.
Besides, I was smacked when I was a
child and it never did me any harm.

• Smacking does not teach children self-discipline.
• Smacking gives attention to a child’s bad behaviour.
• Children learn best by attention to things they do well.
• There are many better things to do than to smack.
• Smacking teaches children to hurt others.
• When self-discipline is taught, smacking is not needed.
It is important that children learn how to behave and control their behaviour as they get older. Parents have a very important job as a role model for their children in helping them to learn how to do this.

Teaching children from a young age by setting limits and explaining reasons for these limits helps them develop self-discipline. Smacking, which controls your child from the outside, has no long-lasting good effects. In fact, smacking usually has to become harder in order to have the same impact on your growing child. This is where the thin line between smacking and hitting can be crossed.

Have you ever smacked your child? The answer from many parents reading this will be “yes”. Every parent experiences frustration with his or her child at some time. It is at these times that a parent may smack in the heat of the moment, but this is an outlet for the parent’s feelings, rather than a helpful way of teaching a child.

However, simply because lots of people may have smacked their children does not mean it is the best way to punish your child or make sure they are good. Those who say smacking is okay have argued that it is not harmful in the long term and is the most immediate form of discipline. It is much more helpful and safer to notice and reward your child’s good behaviour, in order to encourage the behaviour you want.

Fewer parents are smacking their children. Lots of those who keep doing so do it because they are not sure what else will work or maybe because the pressures of being a parent can sometimes overwhelm.

In this society parents are not allowed to hurt their children whatever their individual, cultural or religious reasons. As a result, child protection professionals will look at cases of abuse of children, so that they can understand, stop it and explain the result of it happening again.

Smacking is against the law if it causes bruises, reddening of the skin or mental harm. It is not always easy to see the harmful effects of smacking and all children are different therefore impact, particularly emotional and psychological, may be significantly more damaging for some children than for others.

If you would like support or advice regarding smacking you may find information through your GP or Health Centre about Positive Parenting courses.
• One in five two-year-olds has a tantrum at least twice a day.
• The ‘Terrible Two’s’ are a normal part of growing up.
• Getting angry is natural but it just makes things worse.
• Try to find a good way to deal with problems.
• Plan to avoid the causes of tantrums.
• Remember they won’t last forever!
Tantrums may start around 18 months, are common at two years old and are much less common at four. Very young children are often not able to tell you things as much as they want to and their frustration may come out as a tantrum.

Tantrums are more likely to happen if a child is tired, hungry or uncomfortable. Tantrums also often happen in busy, public places, which can be embarrassing and add to the parents’ stress.

If you are worried about the way your child is acting talk to your health visitor or GP.

Dealing with temper tantrums

• Keep calm. Getting angry and shouting at your child will only make things worse.

• Your child might be tired or hungry so rest or food might help. Or they might just need a cuddle.

• Try to find something else interesting to do or look at. If you’re in a busy or noisy place try to go somewhere quieter.

• If none of these work, try to see things from your child’s point of view and understand what they actually want. Try giving them a choice, as this gives your child a sense of control and can be better than simply saying “no”. Always try to offer a positive way out.

• If you do say “no” don’t give in later to calm them down. If you give in your child will learn that tantrums work!

• If you’re at home you can try ignoring the tantrum, or maybe walking away into another room if it’s safe to do so. Get your child to cool down on their own and talk more calmly about what they want.

• After the tantrum, praise your child for settling down. Even though they may no longer be angry they may still be upset, so give them a cuddle and make it clear that you still love them no matter what.

Avoid temper tantrums

Tantrums are less likely if you plan ahead.

• Try to stop your child getting hungry or overtired.

• Make sure your child has enough attention and affection.

• Make sure your time together is quality time together especially if you work long hours.

• Keep shopping trips and outings as short as possible.

• Try to plan a method that you’ll use to deal with tantrums when they happen.

Remember temper tantrums are normal and do not usually lead to serious problems. As your child gets older they will learn to deal more calmly with the stresses of every day life.

It could happen anywhere, but watch out for a tired or hungry child at a time when he or she wants something that you have said “no”, like when out shopping or during a day out.

 Keeps calm. Think about whether your child needs food or rest. Give your child attention and try to find a quiet place or some way of getting his or her attention. Don’t give in, but try to understand your child’s feelings.

Try to give your child a choice or a way out. Be calm and understanding. Keep it simple and clear. Praise your child for calming down.

Avoid long shopping trips or tiring days out. It often helps to give your child extra cuddles or talk to them more. Try to save causes for tantrums in the day ahead and think of ways to avoid them.

• Health visitor
• Parentline Plus
  0800 096 8333
  www.parentlineplus.org.uk
You young people not going to school is a big problem.
Try to understand why they are not going to school.
Missing school affects their chances of a good job.
It is your responsibility to make sure your child gets an education.

Truancy & exclusion
ARE THEY AT SCHOOL?

Check website for the latest telephone details: safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk
Truancy is a national problem. Every day 50,000 children miss school. If your child regularly misses school it can have a big effect not only on your child but on you, the school and even the community.

The results of missing school are serious for your child. The more schoolwork they miss, the harder it is to catch up and the more likely they are to skip days or even want to drop out. They are missing out on building and keeping friends who are often a real support during teenage years.

Truancy also reaches into the community, as there is a knock-on effect of higher levels of anti-social behaviour and crime. If your teen misses school they are more likely to come across situations of risk.

Allowing children to miss school is also a problem. Some parents need their child’s support at home more than others, perhaps because they have an illness or other younger children at home. Contact the school or education social work service to talk about this. Any time away from school, even for a short family holiday can affect their education.

How to stop truancy
If truancy is a problem, you need to find out why your child wants to miss school. They may find school frightening, lack self-confidence, feel they are failing or maybe they are being bullied. The school will help you get your child back into school with the help of Local Education Authority (LEA) professionals, such as education social workers.

Once you understand the causes, it may be easier to get your child to return to school.

What you should be doing
It is the law for parents to make sure that their child receives an education and you are breaking the law if you fail to do so. Parents could get a fine of up to £2,500 or even a prison sentence of up to three months or a community sentence if their children do not go to school. Courts can also give a Parenting Order of up to twelve months. If ignored this order could result in a criminal record or fine. You may be offered a Parenting Contract (an agreement between you and the school or LEA) in which you meet certain rules and the school or LEA helps you with any support.
• Listen to your child and take seriously the information that they share with you.
• Involve your child in any decision making process.
• Allow them to make informed choices.
• Talk to them about how they would like the situation to be resolved.
• Support your child in reporting the crime to the police.
Despite impressions from the Media, it is far more likely that teenagers will be the victims of crime than being responsible for it.

Victims can often feel angry, ignored, rejected or even abused by the justice process. An important element in healing the experience of crime is an opportunity to ‘tell their story’ of what happened. Receiving acknowledgement about what has happened to them often helps victims put their own feelings into perspective.

Often it is important to tell their story to those who caused the harm, this may be arranged by the local Youth offending team and have the offenders understand the impact of their actions. This can result in the victim feeling empowered again, once the offence left them with a feeling of loss of control over their person, their body, their emotions and their dreams. Also, if a young offender makes the effort to right the harm if only partially, it is a way of saying to the victim “I’m taking responsibility and you are not to blame”. Sometimes the offender is not caught and your child will have to come to terms with the process.

When faced with a traumatic event like becoming a victim of crime, your child may experience a range of emotions such as: anxiety, worry, fear, tension; depression; anger or irritation. There are physical symptoms too. Your child may feel nauseous, shaky or dizzy. They may find it difficult to sleep, eat, relax, or lose interest in what is going on around them. These are all very normal reactions.

Different people may move quickly or slowly through the recovery process. They may come to terms very quickly with what has happened and then another unrelated incident may trigger the emotions felt at the time of the incident. These emotions can often be intense and again this is very normal. Tell your child it is normal to experience physical and emotional symptoms whilst moving through the recovery process and offer your help and support.

If your child is arrested for a small crime and has never been in trouble before it is likely that a reprimand or warning will be given. The Youth Offending Service (YOS) will look into the reasons why they acted this way to help them put an end to taking part in crime.

If the young person is charged they will have to go to court. If they say they are guilty or are found guilty by the court they will have to meet with the YOS to talk about their actions. They will have to think about how what they did hurt the victims of the crime and they may have to say sorry for the harm caused. Young people who are given Court Orders have strict rules about the number of times they must meet with the YOS, which depends on the type of Order given by the Court.

If your child appears withdrawn; anxious; angry; depressed; tearful or worried, Ask they feeling it difficult to sleep, eat, relax or losing interest in what is going on around them.

Talk to your child about their feelings. Reassure and support them with the decisions/choices they make. Remember they may not react in the same way as you.

Explain that what they are experiencing is a normal way to feel. Tell them that everyone reacts differently and that you and also victim support organisations are there to support them.

Make your child aware of how to keep themselves and their belongings safe. However, it is important to remember that it is only possible to take steps to reduce the risks of being a victim of crime and that overall prevention is about addressing the offender’s behaviour not the victim.

• 0800 8547100
• National Victim Support 020 7735 9716
• Parentline Plus 0800 003 2222
• www.parentlineplus.org.uk
• Young Victims Project 0800 448 8379
• Victim Supportline 0800 30 30 900
• Eagle Chariot - Young People’s Service and Youth Offending Service 020 8557 0030
• Commonline 0800 801 3339 or 01384 232414
• Victim Support 01384 247111
Everyday I hear the child next door crying her parents are always shouting at her. In the street, I saw her mother hit her hard across the face of the head. This is probably none of my business but I am worried and I am unsure what to do.

Worried about a child?

SHOULD YOU MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

• Protecting children is everybody's business.
• Adults have a responsibility to report abuse.
• Consider offering some support if you are worried.
• If in doubt share your concerns about children.
• Reporting concerns rarely leads to a child being removed.
• Act now - long-term abuse is damaging for children.

Check website for the latest telephone details > safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk
All parents experience difficulties at times but can be helped by other family members or close friends.

If someone you know is having difficulties, you could:
• Listen to their problems.
• Help them cope.
• Encourage them to get more help.
• Support them by babysitting or doing shopping.

However, there may be times when a child is at risk of harm and professional support needs to be provided.

How would you want other people to act if your child was being harmed?
• Would you want them to mind their own business?
• To report their worry to a professional who could help?

When we suspect, see or are told about a child that is being hurt we can react in many different ways. We may feel guilt, anger, shock, disbelief or denial. Some people’s reactions can stop help getting to a family who need it.

Many people do not tell because they fear that:
• Children will get hurt more.
• They believe that nothing will be done.
• They believe that the child would be taken away.
• They worry that the family may find out who reported them.
• Telling may ruin family relationships.

In truth, it is best that action is taken early to stop things getting worse. Long-term abuse is much more likely to cause problems for a child as they get older. Even if you think something is just a one off, other agencies may already have concerns about the child. Your information could be very important.

If you report your concerns to Dudley Children’s Services, you will be asked for your details and details of the worry you have. It may help to write down what you want to say before you speak to them so that you can remember everything. If you are worried but anxious about giving your own details Dudley Children’s Services will still listen to concerns that are given anonymously. It may be crucial for the child or young person that someone is informed.

Dudley Children’s Services will give advice and (only if deemed appropriate to do so) will arrange for an investigation to be undertaken.

Remember that you could be the difference that makes a difference!
3% of carers are young carers.

One in five of young carers miss school because of their caring responsibilities.

The government and education and health services are there to help and become involved, once concern is raised.

There are many forms of support to help you both cope with their caring responsibilities.

You care about your young carer! So make contact with the support groups and organisations that are out there to help.

Check website for the latest telephone details: safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk
Many people need special care provided in their homes. They may be ill, disabled or elderly, or they may be experiencing drug or alcohol problems.

Receiving care from a member of the family can be one solution. However, when the carer is a young adult, it is especially important to make sure that their needs are properly cared for too.

If your child carries out any caring role, either for yourself or another member of their immediate family, it is essential that their well-being does not suffer as a result of their responsibilities. Most importantly, tell children's services, education or health services about your situation. You don't have to cope alone; they can help you both get the support and advice you need.

Education
Naturally you will want your child to do well at school. While many young carers achieve good results, national research has shown that caring can have a negative effect on education. To prevent this, it is normally helpful if your child's school or college are informed of their caring role. That way they can allow for the needs and pressures that your child may be under and offer sensitive advice and support.

Health
Sometimes young carers can be so busy looking after others, that they forget to look after themselves, and can become ill, stressed or depressed. The best way to avoid this is get help from your GP and local health centre. Let them know all about your individual situation so that they can provide the help and advice that you both need.

Extra support
This can include special breaks for carers and additional support services for particular needs. There are local and national organisations specially set up to help young carers and their parents.
Nationally, motoring theft and handling are the most common offences committed by young people.

Robbery accounts for less than 2% of all offences committed by young people.

The main reasons young people give for offending are boredom and peer group pressure.

Young people from a stable and supportive family home are less likely to offend.

If you suspect something is wrong, talk to your child sooner rather than later.
Youth crime

Reported levels of youth crime have remained stable for the past three years, with 26% of young people in school and 60% of excluded pupils reporting that they committed an offence in the previous year.

Research shows that the most common profile of a young offender is a white boy, aged between 14 and 16, who is likely to be excluded from school and who gets into offending through boredom, peer pressure or being drunk. This profile has not changed year on year.

Nationally, stealing, theft and handling are the most common offences committed by young people. Robbery accounts for less than 2% of all offences committed by young people.

Preventing young people offending

The main reasons young people give for offending is boredom and peer group pressure. Young people also say that the two key deterrents to offending are:

- The fear of being caught.
- Their parents’ reaction.

Research into the lifestyles and experiences of young offenders tells us that the following factors matter most in keeping young people out of trouble:

- A stable and supportive family home.
- Consistent parenting.
- Attending and making good progress at school, in training or at work.

The Youth Justice System

The Youth Justice System in England and Wales is made up of all the institutions and public services that work with young people who offend; this includes courts, police, probation and prison services and local councils. The government completely reformed this system in 2000.

Everyone working in the system now has one overall aim, which is to prevent young people offending. The new system now delivers justice faster and ensures young people are both held to account for their behaviour and supported to take the opportunities that will help them lead law abiding lives.

Youth Offending Teams

Youth Offending Teams (YOT) are a one-stop-shop for all young offenders. Each young person who has offended will be assessed by the YOT and decisions will be made by the team of specialists as to what steps should be taken to ensure the young offender keeps out of further trouble.

There is a YOT in every Local Authority in England and Wales, made up of police officers, victim liaison officers, probation officers, social workers, health and drugs advisors and housing support officers. Because the YOT is made up of all these professionals, it can respond to the needs of young offenders in a comprehensive way.

YOTs work directly with young people and families:

- If they have offended and are subject to a Court Order or Police Final Warning.
- To ensure that young people who have been sent to custody stand the best chance of a positive future on release.

To support this work the YOT works closely with members of the community who volunteer and are trained to work with young people to help them stay out of trouble. YOT will also work with other partners e.g. Children’s Fund and Connexions to prevent the onset of offending behaviour.
Helpful national organisations

- Barnardos
  020 8511 0011
  www.barnardos.org.uk

- Child Accident Prevention Trust
  020 7608 6068
  www.catch.org.uk

- Childcare Link
  0800 390 0396

- Childline
  0800 1111
  www.childline.org.uk

- CRY-SIS Helpline
  0345 228 6859
  www.cry-sis.org.uk

- Dyspraxia Foundation
  01462 454986

- Eating Disorders Association
  0845 363 4343
  www.edauk.com

- Family Planning Association
  0845 310 1334
  www.fpa.org.uk

- Family Rights Group
  0800 731 1666

- Gingerbread
  0800 316 4016
  www.gingerbread.org.uk

- Kidscape
  0800 316 4016
  www.kidscape.org.uk

- Lone Parents Helpline
  0800 318 0000
  www.loneparentfamilies.org.uk

- Message Home
  0800 707 070

- Missing Persons Helpline
  0800 700 700

- National Domestic Violence Helpline
  0808 2000 247
  www.womensaid.com

- National Drinkline
  0800 917 196

- National Drugs Helpline (FRANK)
  0800 77 66 00
  www.frank.co.uk

- NHS Direct
  0845 46 47
  www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

- NSPCC
  0800 900 5000
  www.nspcc.org.uk

- Parentline Plus
  0808 800 2222
  www.parentlineplus.org.uk

- Police (emergency)
  999

- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
  0123 48 4100
  www.roupa.org.uk

- Sexwise Helpline
  0800 282 930
  www.sexwise.com

- Stop Smoking Helpline
  0800 066 4848

- Vishvas Support for Asian Women
  020 7586 9499

- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
  020 7271 3933
Helpful local organisations

Aquarius Alcohol Helpline
01384 207207

Autism Support
0121 460 7373

Brook Advisory Centre
01384 235627

Children’s Centres:
- Brierley Hill 01384 813322
  Kates Hill & Sledmere 01384 234321
- Lye, Rufford & Wollescote 01384 811617
- Netherton 01384 816255
- Priory 01384 813016
- Wrens Nest 01384 818915

Children’s Disability Team
01384 815613

Children’s Information Service
01384 814396

Citizen’s Advice Bureau
01384 816622

Connexions Dudley
01384 242414

Connexions Stourbridge
01384 241741

Continence Advisory Service
01384 3664627/22

Coseley Family Centre
01902 357566

Directorate of Children’s Services:
- Brierley Hill area 01384 813000
- Dudley, Coseley and Sedgley areas 01384 813230
- Halesowen and Stourbridge areas 01384 813393
- Emergency Duty Team 01384 818683 (out-of-hours)

Domestic Abuse Unit (Dudley/Brierley Hill/Sedgley/Coseley)
0121 436 8078

Domestic Abuse Unit (Halesowen/Stourbridge)
0121 436 3529

Dudley Children’s Fund
01384 813437

Dudley Racial Equality Council
01384 465816

Dudley Victim Support
01384 241511

Dyspraxia Support Group
01384 626218

Education Welfare Service
01384 816470

Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
01384 813803

Family Planning Clinic
01384 364466

Gifted Children Information Service
0121 705 4547

Homestart
01384 452761/7225

Hundard
(Domestic Violence - Support for Asian Women)
24 hour helpline
0121 559 9830

MeZ Project
01384 74681

Orchard Partnership
01384 451449

Pre-School Learning Alliance 0121 643 0063

Pre-School SEN Service
01384 813564

Samaritans
01384 74111

Sport and Recreation
01384 813594

Stourbridge Family Centre
01384 302585

Teenage Pregnancy Team
01384 235676 / 234856

The 16 Plus Team
01384 813625

The Warehouse
01384 436 130

The What? Centre
01384 379892

The Zone
01384 241 443

West Midlands Police
0845 113 9000

Youth Offending Service
01384 813650