

Internet Safety

Internet safety is a large concern for many parents, particularly because social media and internet connectivity are often a vital aspect of children's lives and especially the lives of teenagers allowing them to maintain friendships and share interests. The internet has many positives but it is also open to misuse or overuse.

Parents worry about the risks associated with internet usage and social media. Parents fear that their children are being exposed to inappropriate content, the possibility of contact from strangers, cyber and social media bullying and their children oversharing personal information.

There is a responsibility on parents to be aware of possible online dangers and to teach their children to manage and navigate these risks and to teach their children to be responsible, respectful and safe online.

This may mean:

checking the platforms their children use and ensuring they meet the appropriate minimum age requirement

- using internet filters
- having rules in place in relation to time limits, usage and settings
- being consistent and sticking to the rules

Ultimately it comes down to the three key words.

- Talk
- Guide
- Teach



Postnatal Depression

Parentline is the only national helpline, that offers support to new parents suffering with the baby blues or postnatal depression, in confidence and over the phone. This means that a new parent does not have to get organised to leave the comfort of their own home if they needs support. Very often a depressed parent finds it very difficult to get dressed not to mind to leave their own house. Parentline offers a support service in their own home.

Becoming a new parent is wonderful. But it can also be a very emotional and difficult time. Parents may experience feelings of loneliness, anxiety, guilt, inadequacy, exhaustion, hopelessness and a loss of control.

The most important thing to remember for any new parent is that they will get better and this is a temporary illness but one for which you have to seek help and as early as possible. Like everything early detection and speedy treatment are key.

Parentline

Parentline has given support, information and guidance to over 150,000 parents and carers over the past 40 years. These continue to be challenging times for parents. Parentline is there and continues to provide support, information and guidance to parents.

You are not alone.

Call us on (01) 873 3500

Or go to www.parentline.ie

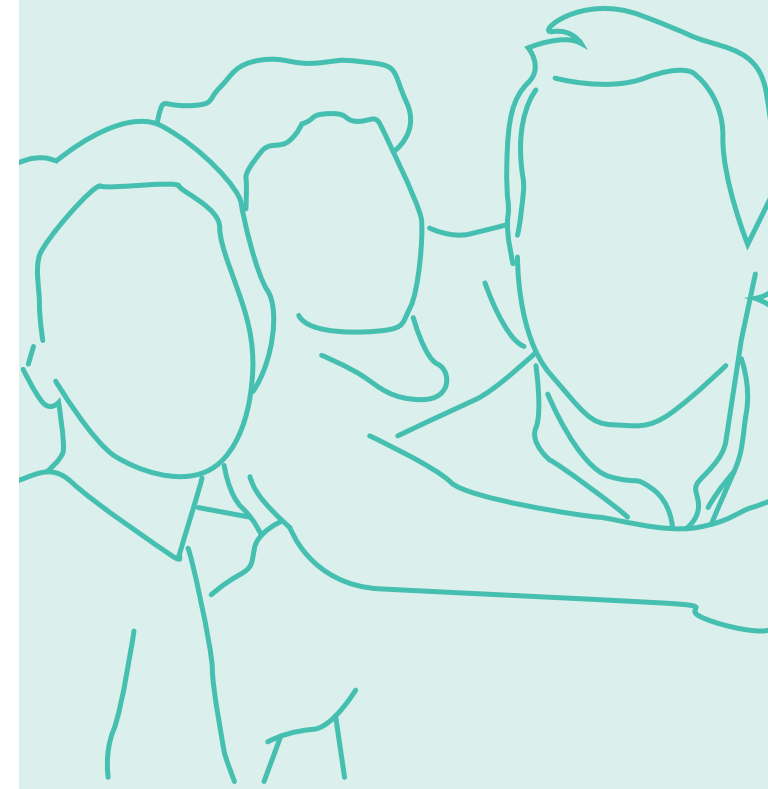
Instagram @parentline_ireland

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Charity Registration Number: 20025410



It's OK to ask for help



Parentline is a national helpline offering support, information and guidance to parents on all aspects of being a parent in a confidential and non-judgemental way. The calls are taken and made by approximately fifty experienced volunteers, all of whom have been extensively trained in listening and counselling skills. Their role is to connect with callers and allow them feel heard and understood.

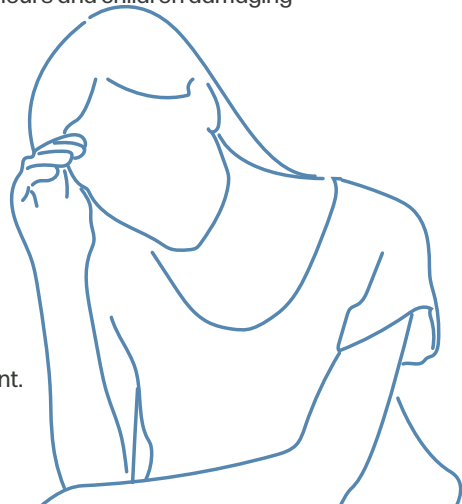
There is no typical call

The main reasons for parents accessing the helpline service are anxiety, school refusal, anger and aggression along with teenage issues. Other key issues are access and custody, loneliness and isolation, sexuality, learning difficulties, self-harm and eating disorders. The calls can relate to children of any age from infants to adult children. There is no typical call because as parents you will know that all ages offer different challenges.

Child to Parent Violence

Many parents are in fear of their own children in their own home because of the abusive and violent behaviour that is being directed at them. The more general label for this is Child to Parent Violence (CPV).

Many parents experience physical violence and abuse. But there can also be emotional abuse, verbal abuse, manipulation, controlling behaviours and children damaging property. Parents can feel helpless and as though they have failed. They don't understand how this has happened in their homes and families. It can also lead to secrecy and shame as it is such a difficult issue to discuss amongst friends or other family members. They can ring Parentline in confidence and without judgement.



Non Violent Resistance Programme

The Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) programme has been offered by Parentline since 2013. It helps and supports parents to deal with child to parent violence and to take positive action to end it.

Parents are supported in developing skills to de-escalate the abusive behaviour. They learn to increase their positive presence in their child's life. The NVR programme helps parents to understand that it is the behaviour that is the problem and not the child. The programme takes approximately eight weeks and requires the commitment of taking a one hour a week phone call from a highly trained, experienced Parentline NVR facilitator.

School Refusal

On any given day in Ireland approximately 60,000 children do not show up for school. Many children are sick or absent with good reason. Thousands of others have simply refused to attend, despite the pleadings of their parents. This can make parents feel powerless as it is difficult to simply force a child to school.

A child may have an undiagnosed condition, they might be victims of bullying or they might have an issue with a teacher or someone in authority. They may be rebelling against authority or questioning the value of school and rules. Or they may be anxious about friendships or a particular class. The more anxious a child feels, the more they panic and want to avoid going. It's a matter of trying to get to the root of their unhappiness and then discuss what can be done to alleviate it.

School refusal can make parents feel as though they have somehow failed, even though it is generally not their fault. It can require collaborative interaction between the child, the parents and the school, to resolve it. The key is to get the child to overcome their fears and get back into the school system. The longer a child avoids school, the more difficult the habit is to overcome.

Anxiety

All adults and children feel anxious and worried at times. Anxiety is a normal and natural occurrence. It's part of life. It can't be allowed to become overwhelming or defining. Children can experience anxiety about different issues at different stages of their lives. For the most part, this is just one more element of growing up.

However, for many children, anxiety can be overwhelming and for many more it can be even more worrying and interfere with a child's daily life. Severe anxiety can harm children's mental and emotional wellbeing and affect their self-esteem and confidence. They may become withdrawn and avoid situations that could possibly make them feel anxious.

Not everyone recognises the signs of childhood anxiety. These can be many and varied. Children may not be sleeping well or sleeping for too long. They find it hard to concentrate. They might be angry and irritable. Most have a lack of confidence. They are unable to face and complete simple everyday challenges. They avoid normal everyday activities such as seeing friends, going out in public or going to school.

Teenagers particularly can be anxious, making them avoid social gatherings. There are trigger points for anxiety. It is rarely just one thing. These can include transitions to returning to school, starting secondary school, moving from the junior to the senior cycle or moving onto college or the beginning of their working life. There can be conflict with parents or teachers or friends. They might feel concerned before a test or exam. Some are shy in social situations.

It can be even more difficult if they're coping with bereavement, addiction, mental ill health, divorce or separation. The children might be homeless or in direct provision but they might also be in what seems to others to be the most normal and happy homes.

Many children compare themselves unfavourably to their colleagues and school friends. The sooner help and support is provided the better the chances of a successful intervention.