



Maynooth University
National University
of Ireland Maynooth




**Centre for Mental Health
& Community Research**



Resources for Talking to children about mental illness

1. YouTube Dr Alan Cooklin - The Impact of Parental Mental Health on Children
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnlzyimUcr0>
2. Being seen and heard AFT 40th Anniversary Conference 2015 (E.g. Choosing to use the work mental illness when talking with children)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=od_pQgkJ4xM
3. How to help children understand parental mental illness
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uk9nHrlyF5U>

Common questions children might want to ask¹:

Potential questions children commonly ask

- Why is my [family member] acting this way?
- Is it my fault?
- Can I catch it?
- Will they always be this way?
- Do they still love me?
- Why is this happening to our family?
- Who will take care of me if my mom/dad gets sick?

List of helpful websites with resources you may find helpful when discussing the impact of PMI on children:

- **Child aware eLearning Course**
<https://emergingminds.com.au/training/child-aware-practice/> (online course)
This course aims to enhance understanding about the impact that adult problems may have on children and to support practitioners to think about children early in any contact with a parent. It ensures that families are supported to make and sustain changes so that they can better meet the needs of their children.
- **NSPCC UK – Parental Mental Illness** (written material)
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/parental-mental-health/>
Information on the impact of parental mental illness on children
- **Helping parents to start the conversation**
<http://www.copmi.net.au/parents/helping-my-child-and-family/talking-about-mental-illness/starting-the-conversation>
- **Communicating with babies** (written material) Toddler and pre-school, primary school age children, teenagers)
<http://www.copmi.net.au/parents/helping-my-child-and-family/talking-about-mental-illness/babies>

¹ <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/parenting-vol2/talking-to-children-and-youth>

- **Child aware supervision training (online course)**

<https://emergingminds.com.au/training/child-aware-supervision/>

Training course for supervisors in helping to develop child aware practices

- **Excellent Flipbook COPMI/Emerging Minds resources**

<https://www.flipsnack.com/copmi/encouraging-your-teenager-to-get-help-a-guide-for-parents-who-h.html>

<https://www.flipsnack.com/copmi/when-your-parent-has-a-mental-illness-fdnqd000c.html>

<https://www.flipsnack.com/copmi/my-parent-has-a-mental-illness-how-can-i-get-help.html>

<https://www.flipsnack.com/copmi/helping-teenagers-find-the-help-they-need-when-their-parent-has-fz90vgw2.html>

Recommended books by NSPCC²²

Communication skills for working with children and young people: introducing social pedagogy.

By Pat Petrie

Cover of Listening to children: a practitioner's guide. Listening to children: a practitioner's guide.

By Alison McLeod

Listening to children: talking with children about difficult issues.

By Nancy Close

Working with children and teenagers using solution focused approaches: enabling children to overcome challenges and achieve their potential.

By Judith Milner and Jackie Bateman

Dual Diagnosis: The Blue Polar Bear

By Samantha Tidy

²² <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/talking-about-difficult-topics/>