

CHECKLIST FOR WORKERS

This is a one page quick reference checklist with some key issues to address when supporting children of parents with a mental illness / dual diagnosis.

Information sharing

- What has the parent told the young person about their mental illness / dual diagnosis?
- Has the parent given consent for you to talk with the young person?
- Have you sought the young person's consent to share information?

Confidentiality

- Is the young person aware that in some circumstances confidentiality can't be upheld? (e.g. child protection issues)

Safety issues

- Is the young person safe? If not, has appropriate action been taken to ensure their safety?

About the mental health problem

- What does the young person understand about the parent's mental illness / dual diagnosis?
- Who is there to answer the young person's questions or concerns regarding the mental illness / dual diagnosis?

The young person's feelings

- The young person may be experiencing a range of emotions. Is there someone for the young person to talk with about their feelings, their response to their parent's mental illness / dual diagnosis and its impact on them?

What about when the parent is hospitalised

- Is there an existing Care Plan in place for the young person?
- Does the young person know what's happening with their parent?
- Have ways of having regular contact been established?

Young people's needs

- What is the level of support that the young person is providing?
- What about emotional support?
- What impact is this having on the young person?
- Who is supporting them?

What help is out there?

- Support networks: Does the young person have access to a trusted adult other than their parent with a mental illness / dual diagnosis? Is the young person involved in peer activities?
- Does the young person know that there are other young people out there with parents with a mental illness / dual diagnosis? Have you connected or referred them to that service?

Care Plan

- Do they know what to do in a crisis?
- Has the plan been created, distributed, signed off?
- Does the family, the young person, the key worker and other key people have copies?
- Where is it? Who will activate it?

Coordination of care

- Are you aware of and connected with other workers who support the family?

Acute and long term considerations

- It is important to pay attention to the short term, immediate issues as well as longer-term issues for young people. Consider those times when family situations change such as Christmas, school holidays, re-admissions, and leaving school.

[Adapted from Partners in Care: Working Together to Make a Real Difference. *Professionals coming into contact with the children of parents with mental health problems*. Royal College of Psychiatrists: UK 2004.]