

Tips for parents struggling with their mental health

when an illness occurs in their family

All parents want to protect their children and keep them safe and so it is understandably devastating if a child is diagnosed with a serious illness. By taking care of their mental well-being, parents are better able to cope and better able to support their ill child and any siblings they may have.

Here are ten tips that may help parents who are struggling in the shadow of serious illness:

1. Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask for help, for yourself as well as for your children.

2. Talk! Share your worries and seek support. There are experienced professionals, such as Rainbow Trust Family Support Workers, who can help you to cope.

3. Allow yourself to accept offers of help from friends and family.

4. Sometimes, just being well-informed on what is happening can give you a feeling of control at time of uncertainty. Ask all the questions you need to of medical professionals.

5. Take care of yourself; try to eat well and get enough sleep. This will help you feel more able to cope.

6. You are not alone in what you are going through. It can be a great support to talk to others with a similar experience.

7. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Accept it when you are scared, powerless, angry or even happy. Whatever you are feeling in that moment - it is OK.

8. Allow yourself a break. Go for a walk, grab a coffee, make time for yourself.

9. There will come a time when things do get better, even if it doesn't feel as though there will.

10. Look for the light. Even if it's just a small thing, having something positive to focus on will help you feel there are things to be thankful for.

You can share these tips with someone you think could benefit from them, or visit rainbowtrust.org.uk to find out more about the eligibility criteria for our services.

#ParentsMatter

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