



TROUBLES WITH

FAMILY

Explains what self-esteem is, how it can affect us as well as some causes. Including some helpful tips for improving self-esteem and some exercises. Also includes some other useful links and info.

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When you're not getting on with your family

Life at home can be hard for lots of reasons. Relationships can be complicated and not always work out the way we want them too. When things aren't good at home, it can affect your life massively.

Things you might be struggling with:

- Arguments at home: this might be being shouted at, fights with siblings, disagreements over opinions and/or beliefs or dealing with parents fighting amongst themselves.
- Having to move
- Divorce or parents separating
- Having parents with drug or alcohol dependencies
- Abuse
- Pressure to succeed

Dealing with arguments

Arguments with parents:

Sometimes things can get heated, and you might be getting angry at each other. It can be especially hard if your parents have different beliefs to you and you feel like you aren't being heard.

Some things you can try if you are arguing with parents:

- **Letting things calm down.** After an argument things can be tough, and tensions can still be high. It might help to take some space and wait until things have calmed down before trying to communicate again with parents.
- **Turn to someone else.** It can be hard dealing with fights with your parents, it might help to talk to someone else for some support. This could be a friend or another trusted adult.
- **Trying to stay calm.** If you are struggling with parents that get angry, you can't control when they get angry but trying to keep yourself calm may stop things from escalating.
- **Knowing when you're in the wrong.** Sometimes we all make mistakes and in the heat of the moment can say things we don't mean.
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Arguing with siblings:

Arguing with siblings can be hard, there are several reasons why you might be fighting with your sibling. As well as taking all the tips from arguing with parents to try and get along more peacefully **you could try:**

- **Giving each other space.** If you feel like you are constantly arguing, it's important to give each other space and walk away so you can calm down and might stop an argument from getting worse.
- **Trying to do more things you both enjoy.** Arguments can sometimes start because of doing things that only one sibling likes. Spend some time trying to find activities that you both enjoy and spend time together that way.
- **Stop comparing yourself to your sibling.** You will always be a little different from your siblings and that's a good thing. Sometimes focusing too much on your siblings' successes can make you feel jealous, and this can lead to arguments. By not comparing yourself to your siblings and trying to focus and recognise your own achievements might make you feel better in yourself.

Dealing with arguments

Dealing with parents arguing with each other:

It can be very hard to listen to your parents fighting with each other. You may not always know why your parents are fighting.

Things you can do when your parents are fighting:

- **Find a safe space.** Listening to parents fighting can make you feel upset, anxious, stressed or down. That's why its important you to have your own space to go to, 4 offtherecord-banes.co.uk somewhere you feel safe and secure. You could listen to music, play games, or call a friend.
- **Do something that makes you feel good.** If your parents are fighting a lot of the time it can be difficult to be at home, finding things to do at home that make you feel good. Have a plan for things to do at home that can distract you from your parents fighting e.g., playing a game, reading, meeting a friend, listening to music etc...
- **Get out.** If you have a trusted friend nearby or a relative that you can drop by. The journey getting there may also be a nice way to clear your head and calm you down.
- **Talk to someone.** Being able to get support from someone you trust can help you feel like you aren't going through this alone. This may be a friend, relative, sibling. Or if you feel you don't have anyone to talk to or if you would prefer to talk to someone you don't know, you could try calling ChildLine or the Samaritans.
- **Always remember** that you are not responsible for your parents arguments/conflicts and its not your job to try and fix everything. You also don't have to take sides.

Dealing with parents divorcing/separating

Finding out your parents are getting a divorce/separating can be upsetting. You may feel like is difficult to cope or that there are a lot of unanswered questions/things you feel uneasy about.

Ask questions:

It's okay and important to ask questions about what is going on. Especially if the thought of this change is making you feel unsettled, it is not unusual for you to be unsure about certain things or worrying what's going to happen next. If you feel you can't talk to your parents about this then maybe try writing some of these worries down and give them to your parent.

Letting your feelings out:

There are a number of feelings you might be experiencing with dealing with your parents separating, anger, sadness, anxious, overwhelmed. It's important that you set aside some time where you can let your feelings out. There are a number of ways you could do this for example: keeping a mood journal, writing an anonymous letter, drawing/making something to represent your feelings etc...

Allowing yourself some time to process:

Dealing with change is a process and can take time. It might not feel great at the moment and it may feel like things aren't ever going to get better, but how you feel changes over time and once you have allowed yourself time to process you might feel differently.

Reach out to someone you trust:

There is a lot for you to deal with when coping with divorce/separation so if you have someone you can talk to about this then that can help you feel less alone. This might be a friend, sometimes we can reach out to friends who have been through similar situations, you may have a friend whose parents have separated. Being able to talk to someone you can relate to might help, they may also have some tips of how to make it better. You don't have to talk to a friend, it might be a teacher or neighbour or another family member. Or you might feel like speaking to someone anonymously that doesn't know your situation.

Taking time to take care of yourself:

Taking time out to look after yourself, by just doing something you enjoy/makes you feel good can help improve your mood and take your mind of everything that is going on. Self-care is really personal but some ideas of things you could do when feeling low are: Get creative, make something, take a long shower/bath, meditate , spend some time in nature/go for a walk, cook/bake something as a treat.



Dealing with abuse

Abuse is never okay, and you should always tell someone if this is happening to you. If you are unsure whether you are being abused, it's always good to share. Abuse isn't just being hit and can cover an array of things. It is helpful to know the different types of abuse.

Types of abuse

Physical abuse: when someone does anything to physically injure you. This may include: hitting, kicking, biting.

Emotional abuse: When someone is putting you down. This can be shouting at you, ignoring you, making you feel bad about yourself.

Sexual abuse: If someone is forcing you, pressuring or tricking you into sexual acts.

Neglect: This is more about what you aren't getting. When you don't get what you need to survive/feel safe at home. This may include you not having food, someone taking care of you or anywhere to sleep.

Common feelings of abuse

Living with abuse can affect the way you think about yourself, your family and your future. Abuse can affect the way you feel, too. The emotions can be complicated – and sometimes you might not be sure what you're feeling.

Some examples of how you might be feelings are:

Guilty: You may believe that some of this is your fault or that its because of something you did. You might feel like you should be able to stop it. If you are watching abuse done to someone else in your family you might feel guilty that they are being hurt instead of you.

Ashamed: You may feel humiliated that you are being abused or that people will judge you if anyone finds out. You might feel worried about what other people will think about your family.

Angry: Dealing with abuse can make you feel angry. This might be angry at yourself, your abuser or just the world.

Scared: Being abused can you make you feel very alone, and this can be scary. You also might be afraid of telling someone because of being hurt more or being taken away from your family.

Helpless: You might feel like your feelings and situation are going to go on forever and just get worse. You might feel like there is nothing you can do.

Who can you talk to?

Talk to someone you trust: This might be a friend, other relative, teacher. Dealing with abuse can be a lot, if you have someone in your life that you can talk to it might help you feel less helpless and less alone.

Professionals you can go to for help:

Childline: Get help and advice about a wide range of issues, call us on 0800 1111, talk to a counsellor online, send Childline an email or post on the message boards.

The Samaritans: The Samaritans have a help line which you can call to talk about anything that is worrying you. You don't have to be suicidal to contact them. Their number is: 08457 909090. Their website is www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you/contact-us

The Police: In an emergency, you can call the police on 999. If you want to contact the police when it's not an emergency, you can call 101 and ask to be put through to the specialist child protection investigation team.

School: You can also get support via the school; you will have a designated safeguarding lead who will be able to help support you and get you help.

Struggling with communication

Writing a letter

If you struggle with being able to talk face to face with family members about things or how you've been feeling it can be helpful to write them a letter. Especially if there is still a lot of anger present, it can also reduce the amount of anxiety over having a confrontation. Or if you feel like you might get tongue-tied or interrupted if you try and speak face to face, writing a letter is a good way to ensure you get your feelings across.

Some tips for writing a letter:

- **Use "I feel" statements:** This is important because you are trying to put across your perspective and emotional needs. When you phrase the letter from your perspective it will make the recipient less likely to feel attacked or like they are being blamed. This will hopefully mean they won't respond defensively and may be more inclined to understand your feelings.
- **Try and explain succinctly:** The aim of this letter is to try and get your point across and show how you are feeling so it's important to only include the main issues and not include unnecessary details. Writing more than you need may come across as off-putting or may result in the recipient not finishing the letter or stopping partway through.
- **Be honest:** The letter does need to be succinct, but it also needs to be honest. You may find this to be the hardest part of writing the letter, it involves writing about your feelings and possibly make you more vulnerable, but this is the way to get your recipient to understand how you've been affected. You may even feel that sharing your feelings makes you feel like a weight has been lifted.

Even if you don't get the response you want, writing a letter can be a therapeutic activity for yourself in acknowledging and accepting your own feelings.

Other useful information

Websites

CAMHS BATH: <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/refer/> self-referral for 16-17 years old. 01865 902515

Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>. Get help and advice about a wide range of issues. 0800 1111

Samaritans: <https://www.samaritans.org/>. The Samaritans have a help line which you can call to talk about anything that is worrying you. You don't have to be suicidal to contact them. 116 123

SARSAS: <https://www.sarsas.org.uk/>. Our helpline provides emotional support and information for people aged 13 and up who have experienced any sexual violence or abuse at any point in their lives. Bristol Office - 0117 929 9556

Southside Family Project: <https://www.impactpathways.org.uk/Pathways-Provider-Map/> support families in Bath and North East Somerset dealing with issues like physical disability, domestic abuse, sexual violence, substance abuse or long-term mental health problems. 01225 331243

The Survivors Trust: <https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/> Support, Advice and Info for survivors of sexual assault. 0808 801 0818 TRC

The Trauma Recovery Centre: www.trc-uk.org. We facilitate the creative and purposeful recovery of children, young people, young adults and parents/ carers who have experienced trauma. 01225 482200

Youth Connect: <https://www.youthconnectsouthwest.org.uk/>. Provide information advice and guidance to young people who are not in education, employment or training (Bath, Radstock & Keynsham). 01225 396980

Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk. Help to improve the emotional well-being and mental health of young people.