



Helping people with learning disabilities who have a mental health problem

Our advice about good care



EasyRead version of NICE guideline NG54
September 2016

About NICE



NICE wrote this information. **NICE** is the short name for the **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**.

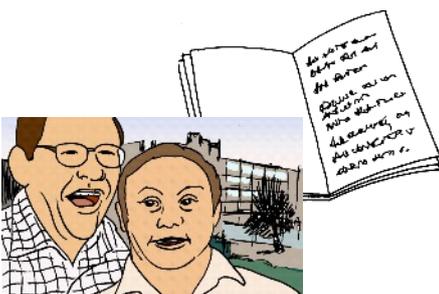


We write advice that helps doctors, nurses, care workers and support workers give good care and support.



People who use services and their families, carers and **advocates** should know what NICE says too. It can help them get the right care and support.

Advocates are people who can help you speak up and who do not work for the service that supports you.



This is our advice about looking out for mental health problems and what can help people who have them.



What is a mental health problem?



Your mental health is how you think and feel about things in your life. If your mental health is good you feel well and happy. If your mental health is bad you might:



- Feel very sad all the time.



- Get angry a lot.



- Feel very worried and scared.



- Act in a way you would not normally do.

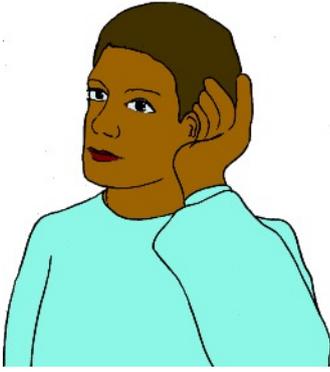
There are lots of mental health problems.
Some of them are:



- Depression – when you feel sad and tired all the time.



- Anxiety – when you are very worried about lots of things all the time.

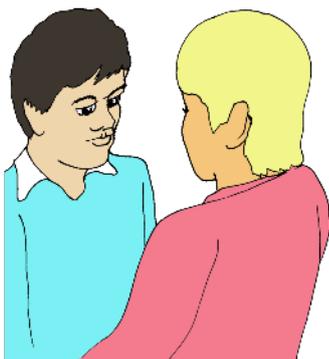


- Psychosis - when you hear or see things that other people can't, or get new ideas that seem strange or hard to understand.

Other things can make it harder for some people to get help for mental health problems, such as:



- ADHD – when you are very restless and find it hard to concentrate on things all the time.



- Autism – when you find it hard to tell people how you feel, or to tell what other people are thinking or feeling.



Stopping mental health problems from starting



Some things can help stop people getting mental health problems. These things can help:

- Getting the right support in your school or college.



- Being able to live where you want and with the people you want.



- Seeing family or friends.



- Having support to do the things you enjoy, like hobbies or sport.



- Help to be as independent as possible.



Looking out for mental health problems



Everyone should look out for changes in you that could be a mental health problem. These are things like:

- Needing more help with everyday activities.



- Wanting to be on your own a lot more.



- Not wanting to talk, or finding it harder to talk.



- Getting annoyed or upset a lot more.



- Not enjoying the things you usually like, such as your hobbies.



- Worrying about things more.



- Having big changes in your life, such as moving to a new home or a new family if you are in care.



Your doctor should also offer you a health check each year. This is to make sure you get treatment for any medical problems you have. Your doctor will also check for mental health problems.



Someone who knows you well should go to the health check with you.



You should have an **assessment** if you might have a mental health problem.



Assessments



Assessments find out more about how you are feeling.

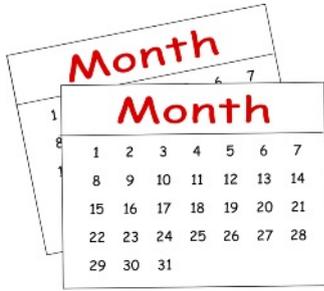


The people who will do the assessment should tell you all about it before it starts.



Assessments find out:

- How the problem is affecting you.



- How long you have had it.



- What might be causing the problems.



- Whether you drink a lot of alcohol, or take drugs.



- What illnesses you have had in the past.



- What medicines you take.



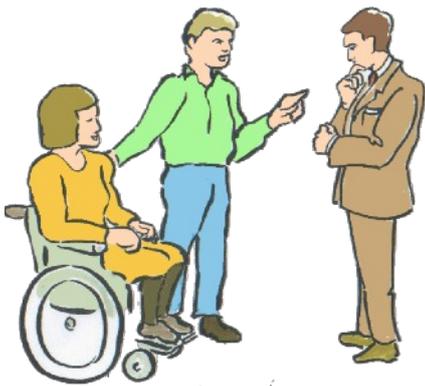
- If the problem means you could hurt yourself, or hurt others.



You should be able to choose who goes to the assessment with you. They will be asked questions too.

During the assessments

Everyone should make sure:



- You have help to understand what is happening.



- You can talk to the people doing the assessment on your own if you want to.



- They find out what is important to you and what would make things better for you.

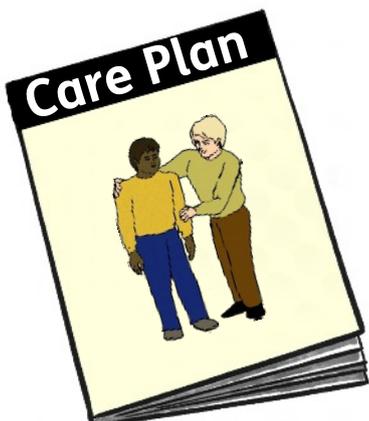


- They think about your feelings.



After the assessment

The people who did the assessment should explain what they found out. They should help you and your family and carers to understand what it means.



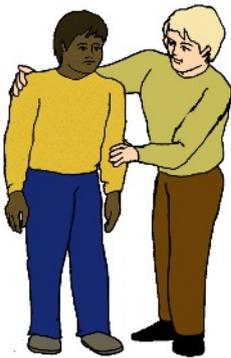
They should write what they found out in a care plan. The care plan should also say:



- What treatments you have said you will try.



- What to do to help stop your mental health problem getting worse.



- Who will be looking after you.

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- When you will all look at the care plan again to check it is working.



You can ask for another meeting to talk about your assessment again if you want to.



Things that can help you



Your doctor or another member of the team looking after you should tell you about treatments that might help you. You should agree what treatments you want to have. Your family and carers should be involved too.



Things that can help are:

- Treatments that show you ways to cope better with how you feel.



- Help to do the things you enjoy, such as getting out and about or doing your hobbies.



- Help with applying for a job, if you want to work.



- Medicines.



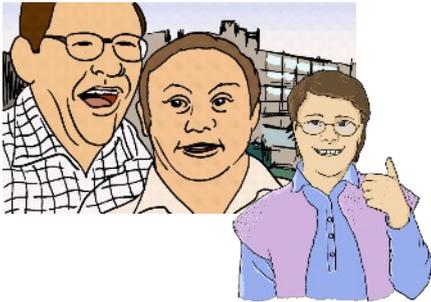
Medicines can help some people with mental health problems. You might need to see a specialist doctor if you are going to start taking medicines. You will have checks to see how well the medicine is working.



Having a **key worker** can also help some people with mental health problems. This is a person who knows about your needs. They make sure everyone works together and follows the care plan.



If you need special care



Sometimes mental health problems can be very bad. You might need extra care to help you cope and keep you safe.



You may need to stay in hospital. The hospital should be close to where you live if possible.



Working with you



Services or staff looking after you should involve you in making decisions. To help this they need to:



- Explain about assessments and treatments in a way you can understand.



- Give you clear information.



- Check that you have understood any information.



- Involve your family or carers.



Finding out more



These people can give you more information about mental health problems. Their information is not written by NICE.



- Mencap
0808 808 1111
www.mencap.org.uk



- MIND
0208 519 212
www.mind.org.uk



- Rethink Mental Illness
0300 5000 927
www.rethink.org

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