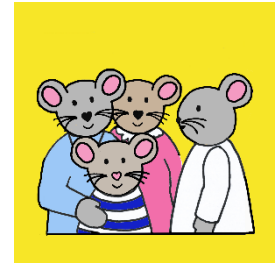


Parental Mental Health

Use This:

For parents who themselves are anxious and/or depressed and whose mental health problems may be contributing to the maintenance of the young person's difficulties.



If parental mental health difficulties have been identified in session 1, then this module should be used. However, it is unlikely that parental health difficulties will be the main focus of many sessions of treatment. Rather, it will be an agenda item added to other MATCH modules throughout treatment. The amount of time allocated to this module will vary according to parental need but the therapist should ensure it is not taking up so much time that it is interfering with implementing the other modules. Only do one strategy at a time.

Goals

- To identify mental health difficulties in the parent
- To discuss the impact of parental mental health difficulties on the parent and young person
- Use strategies to improve the mental health of the parent

Materials

- GAD-7 and PHQ-9 (p. 417-418)
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** handout (p. 416)
- Link to NHS Choices for local services: [https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-\(IAPT\)/LocationSearch/10008](https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008)
- Epilepsy Support Groups [see **Roadmap of Resources**, p. 287]
- See pdf from Young Epilepsy 'Support and help for parents and carers': <https://www.youngepilepsy.org.uk/for-parents-and-carers/help-and-support-for-parents-and-carers/>
- **Weekly Questionnaires** and **Monitoring Sheet** (see pages 268 – 285)
- **Therapist Note Taking Sheet** (p. 267)

If time is tight: Give the parent one strategy to practise to help to handle their own stress.

Main steps

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set an Agenda | Remember to start by setting an agenda together and by reviewing any practice assignments. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain Ratings | Obtain the ratings of anxiety and depression from the parent/adult using the GAD-7/PHQ-9. If there is any indication of risk from item 9 of the PHQ-9, leave the module and assess risk using the risk assessment protocol. |

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- Impact of Parental Mental Health on Young Person** Many parents are so busy caring for their child that they neglect themselves; they are exhausted and often feel guilty for doing anything for themselves. They are also often very pressured for time. It is necessary to have a discussion about the benefits of taking care of your own mental health to the young person and family more generally. The Oxygen Mask analogy may be helpful.

Example script

Have you been on an aeroplane when the stewards/stewardess tell you that if the oxygen masks come down, the parent should put their own on before they put the child's mask on? What do you think that is about? Do you think that is a good principle here – that looking after yourself might have benefits for your child? What kind of benefits would it bring?

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- Choosing a Strategy** Based on the scores of the GAD-7 and PHQ-9 and what the parent is saying to you about how they are coping with their child's epilepsy, choose one or more strategy from those below to help address parental mental health needs. Only choose one strategy at a time.

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- Strategy 1: Progressive Muscle Relaxation** When people are stressed or anxious, they may feel so tense throughout the day that they don't even recognise what being relaxed feels like.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation teaches you to relax through tensing or tightening a muscle group and then relaxing it with release of the tension.

Through practice you can learn to distinguish between the tense muscle feeling and a completely relaxed muscle. Then, you can begin to cue this relaxed state at the first sign of the muscle tension when you feel stressed or anxious. By tensing and releasing, you learn not only what relaxation feels like, but also to recognise when you are starting to get tense during the day.

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- ACTIVITY**
Practise Progressive Muscle Relaxation Practise the progressive muscle relaxation exercise with the parent by reading through the **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** handout.
Tell the parent you will send the **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** handout after the session. Suggest to the parent that they find a YouTube video/recording of Progressive Muscle Relaxation to play at home.
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- Strategy 2:**
Pleasurable activity/exercise
- One of the best ways to improve mood is to do something pleasurable such as having a cup of tea and reading the paper for a few minutes, or doing something that is beneficial, such as exercise. Discuss with the parent whether there is something that they used to do but no longer do and would enjoy doing and that is practical. Emphasise it does not need to be time-consuming.

Example script

*It seems as though you are hugely busy doing things that need to be done all the time so it is no wonder you feel stressed. I wonder if we can think of some practical things you feel able to do for yourself – not big things – that might help. They can be simple things – like painting your nails, having a shower for longer than 5 minutes – or maybe just going for a walk around the block. What do you think?
Would you record what you do and let me know next time?*

Rather than sending a record sheet, just ask the parent to make a note about what they did on the back or bottom of the existing monitoring sheet they are using and report its impact.

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- Strategy 3:**
Positive Data Log
- Sometimes parents focus on the negative and feel like a failure as a parent and person for not being able to do more to help. Sometimes they know what the right thing might be to do with their child but are simply too tired to do it and so 'give in'. Helping the parents notice what they are doing well can be very helpful.

Example script

It sounds as though it was very stressful and demoralising when [x] happened (e.g., your child said they hated you, wouldn't listen, became withdrawn) and you feel as though you 'gave in'. But I am wondering if we think together if there are other examples, perhaps from this week and perhaps from other times, when you were really tempted to give in but you stood your ground? Can you tell me some of those? [Ensure positive praise and encouragement for identifying the positive occasions]. When we are stressed and low, we tend to only remember the negative so I wonder if you think it would be worthwhile to make a note this week of all the positive things that you do in relation to [your child/family/other things]?

Rather than sending a record sheet/positive data log, just ask the parent to make a note about what they did on the back or bottom of the existing monitoring sheet they are using and report its impact.

Strategy 4: Self-criticism

Discuss how some parents are highly self-critical and more self-critical of themselves than they would be of other people. Introduce the idea that they might have a 'double standard' of different rules for themselves and others. Discuss what they think about the idea that next time they catch themselves being self-critical, they ask themselves 'what would you say to someone else in the position you're in now'? Then try to adjust their own standard so it is in line with what is reasonable and what they would expect from others.

Example script

It sounds as though you are quite self-critical but that you set yourself higher standards than you expect from others. Is that the case? Let's take a recent example of when you might have been self-critical [elicit example]. What did you say to yourself after the incident? What would you say to someone else in that position? I wonder what you think about trying this week to catch yourself when you are being self-critical and instead say 'what would I say to someone else in my position?' and see if you can perhaps have the same rules for yourself as for others?

Rather than sending a record sheet, just ask the parent to make a note about when they were able to catch themselves being self-critical and ask themselves about double standards. You may wish to introduce the parent to problem-solving to help them in situations where they are self-critical. Potential helpful solutions include getting support from others in the same situation, focusing on their child's positive characteristics elicited in the first session and organising childcare/respite to enable the parent to have a break. *Refer to Problem Solving [Depression module].*

Strategy 5: Local services and support groups

If the parent appears isolated and does not know about local resources, then explore the different local resources available. This is also helpful if the parent appears to be struggling to accept some aspects of their child's difficulties such as intellectual performance or if there is a difference between parental expectations of their child and their child's abilities.

Example script

At the start of treatment we should have sent you the roadmap of resources. That roadmap had links to support groups such as Epilepsy Action and Young Epilepsy. Are you part of that network? Some people find it very helpful. There are also other support groups for mental health problems and also you are able to get some treatment for yourself. It might be given over the phone or in a group. It's worth finding out more. After this session, I will send you a link to where you can find out more about mental health services that could support you more fully.

<input type="checkbox"/> ASSIGNMENT Practising Strategy	Ask the parent to implement the strategy you have discussed and to send back a completed sheet prior to the next session so you can evaluate its impact.
<input type="checkbox"/> Send the materials for the next session	Tell the parent/s you will send a written summary and the materials for the next session. Remind them that they <u>do not</u> need to be completed for next session as you will go through them together in the session. Tell the parent/s you will also send the Weekly questionnaires, Monitoring sheet and Checklist of Strategies (if necessary) which need to be completed for the next session.
	Confirm date and time of the next call.
<input type="checkbox"/> Summarising	Ask if they would like you to summarise the session, if they want to summarise or if you should do it together. When you are summarising from the module you are implementing (e.g., One-on-One or 'Special' time) ensure you also add in the summary from this module.

Leave 'Em Laughing

End the session on a positive note.

How's Your Style?

- Did you praise often?
- Did you review often, by asking questions?
- Did you simplify the steps as needed?
- Did your pace match that of the child or family?
- Did you stay on track?