

EMPLOYEE GUIDE

# Being a parent isn't always child's play



**wtw**

# The parent trap

Parenting is a dichotomous rollercoaster of excitement and exhaustion, amazement and anguish, fun and frustration. The highs can make you soar, but the lows can sink you to the depths of despair.

The daily juggle of work, school run, homework, housework, being their friend, their nurse, their emotional punchbag and counsellor, not to mention their taxi and bank can take its toll on mental health.

Add dealing with social media pressures, drugs, bullying and keeping

up with the Joneses into the parental job description and suddenly the role seems emotionally, physically and financially overwhelming – even for the most emotionally resilient or mentally strongest among us.

---

**For parents already struggling with their mental health, this added pressure can be debilitating.**

---

Around  
**1 IN 3**

children live with at least one parent reporting emotional distress

// **The funny thing about kids is, they are the reason we lose it, and the reason we hold it all together.** //



# The daily juggle and struggle

Poor mental health can make the everyday challenges of parenting feel even more overwhelming. Anxiety may make you more easily worried about smaller issues and less able to cope with the big ones, or depression may mean that you have lower energy levels to deal with day-to-day parenting tasks.

All while managing the compounded feelings of fear of judgement and guilt about the potential impact your mental health could have on your own children.

Around

**68%**

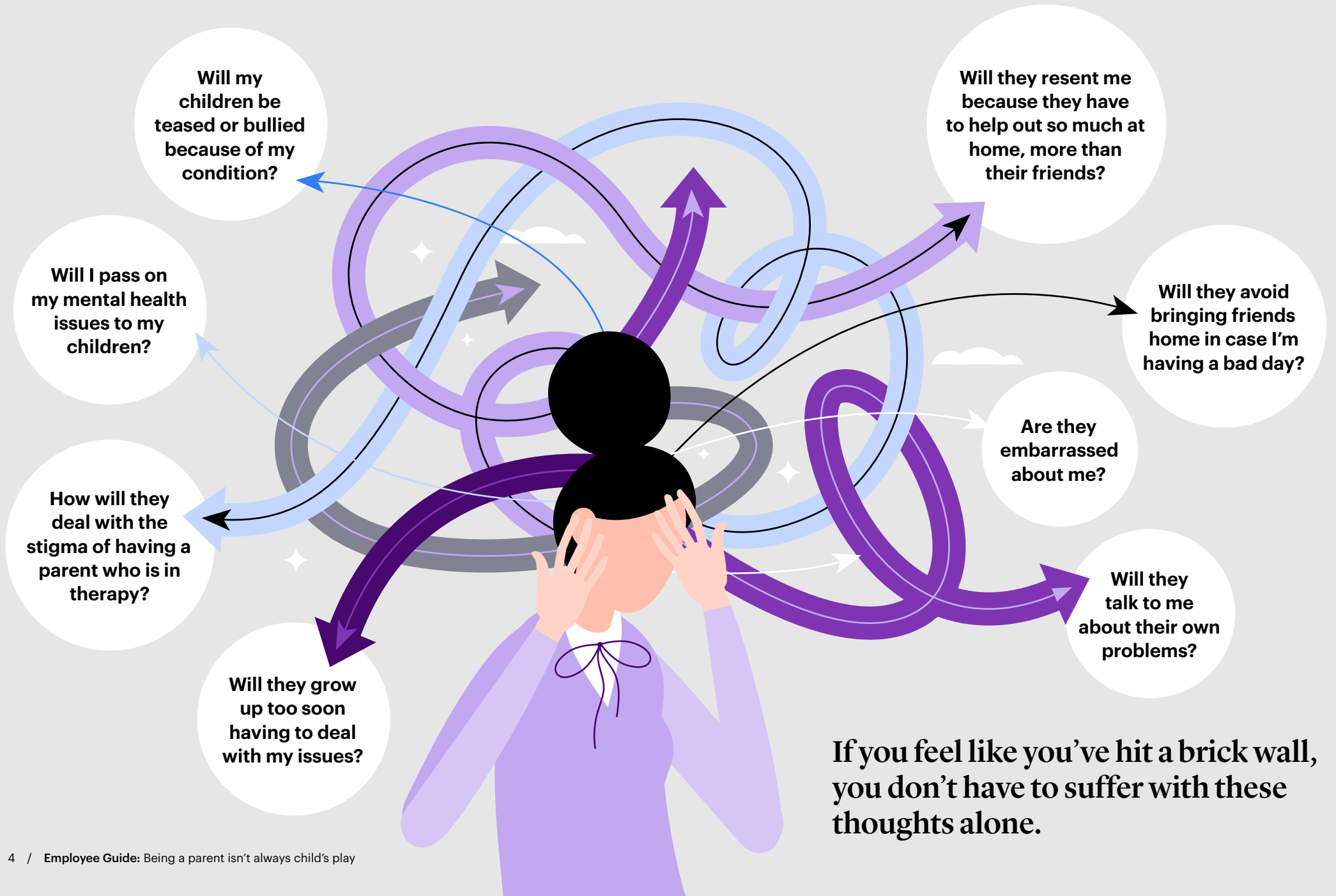
of women and

**57%**

of men with mental health problems are parents



# The mental health mindset of parental guilt





# Spinning plates and juggling balls

We are the generation who was told we could 'have it all' – career, family, an amazing social life and travel the world!

And if we don't excel in all areas by climbing the career ladder and Kilimanjaro, cooking nutritious, delicious meals from scratch and creating an architect-worthy tower made from a shoe box, society can make us feel like a failure.

When just one ball drops, many fear judgement from others and suffer in silence.

## But you don't have to.

As well as confiding in friends and family about your mental health, there are so many sources of support available. It's just about knowing where to look and who to ask.

## So, we've done the research for you.

Take 10 and read our top 10 tips to help manage your mental wellbeing and sources of additional support.

Up to **1 IN 5** women and **1 IN 10** men suffer from mental health problems during the perinatal period. Only 50% of these are diagnosed.



# 10 sources of parental support

Too many parents feel burdened by the fear of being judged as a less capable parent if they cry for help.

But with the right emotional support and practical resources, caring for your children while managing your own mental health is possible – and can have a positive outcome for all concerned.



**1. Look after YOU** – eat well and find an exercise or a hobby that helps you unwind, de-stress and boost your mood. It may be a cliché, but in order to love others you have to love yourself first. When you're a carer, finding time for self-care needs to be a priority so you're mentally up to deal with the downs of parenting.

Be honest with your trusted 'school' network about how your mental health can impact your daily life and don't be afraid to ask for help. Other parents may be able to offer practical support – from helping with daily school pick-ups to sharing holiday childcare or just to offer a simple, sympathetic 'I know how you feel'.

**2. Talk to your GP** if you feel like you need extra professional help. Doctors will be able to offer medical interventions or refer you to counselling services, psychotherapy or alternative therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). In more severe, long-term cases, your GP can refer you to community mental health teams.

**3. Psychological and talking therapies** are available through NHS trusts via their Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme. Ask your GP to refer you or you can often self-refer.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Alternatively, you can find your own private therapist but ensure that they are accredited. You could also see if

you can get support at work through private healthcare plans. Many Employee Assistance Programmes also offer counselling helplines while some health cash plans include face-to-face therapy sessions.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

**4. Local support services** such as the Hub of Hope direct you to the right support services in your area based on what you need help with – from panic attacks and depression to self-harm or eating disorders.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

**5. Parent support groups** can be a great way to share stories, advice, support, arrange parent-child activities and get reassurance that you are not alone with your concerns. Find out what's available nearby.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Or if there isn't anything suitable in your local community, why not set up your own? Follow this Young Minds guide to get up and running.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

**6. Peer support** brings together people with shared experiences to support each other in a confidential space where you feel accepted and understood. Mind's Peer Support Directory lists over 300 support peer groups. Find your nearest group here.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

**7. Online support** is available through Mind, the UK's leading mental health charity. If you cannot get to a face-to-face meeting, their online community Side by Side offers a safe place to share, listen and be heard and understood.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

JAAQ is a unique site which gets answers from leading experts from around the world and first-hand advice from those who have lived with mental illness. Get answers to over 50,000 questions on around 60 topics.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

**8. Self-help guides** from leading charities, such as Campaign Against Living Miserably, provide invaluable advice covering many aspects of mental health - from eating disorders to relationship breakdowns, OCD and even suicidal thoughts.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

**9. Helplines and listening services** offer support at the end of a phone – day or night – so you never need suffer on your own.

### SAMARITANS

To talk about anything that is upsetting or worrying you, call free, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on **116 123**.



If you're experiencing a mental health problem and are struggling to cope, call

**0300 304 7000**  
(4.30pm–10.30pm every day).



If you are struggling and need to talk, call **0800 58 58 58** (5pm–midnight every day).

### shout

If you would prefer not to talk but want some mental health support, text SHOUT to **85258**.

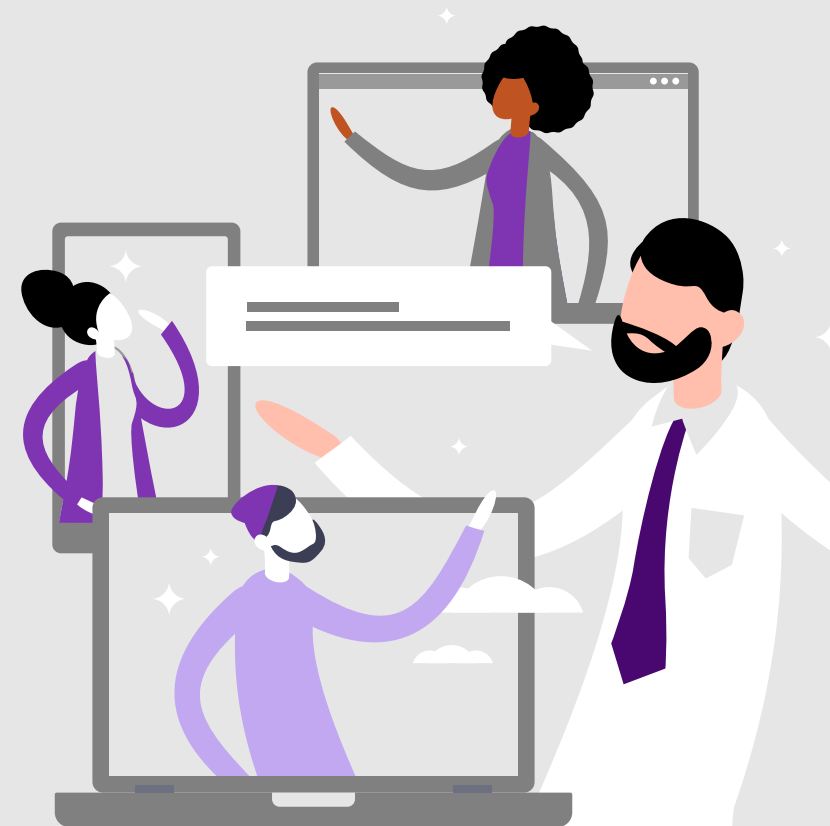
Shout offers a confidential 24/7 text service providing support if you are in crisis and need immediate help.

**10. Don't compare yourself** to other parents, or your children to other kids. Everyone has their own unique struggles to contend with, however perfect things may look to the outside world.

//

**Always remember, you don't have to be a perfect parent. You just have to be a parent.**

//





## WTW

Some of the information in this publication may be compiled from third party sources we consider to be reliable, however we do not guarantee and are not responsible for the accuracy of such. The views expressed are not necessarily those of WTW. Copyright WTW 2023. All rights reserved.



[wtwco.com/social-media](https://www.wtwco.com/social-media)

0800 4880 989

[enquirieshealthbenefits@willistowerswatson.com](mailto:enquirieshealthbenefits@willistowerswatson.com)  
[wtw-healthandbenefits.co.uk](https://www.wtw-healthandbenefits.co.uk)

WTW, The Courtyard, Hall Lane,  
Wincham, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 6DG

[wtwco.com](https://www.wtwco.com)

