



Set up your own Parent's Support Group

We gathered lots of feedback from parent and carer focus groups across the country on what could help them support their children's mental health and wellbeing in the best possible way.

Parents told us they can often feel alone when trying to support their children's needs and would find it reassuring to meet other parents experiencing similar concerns or worries.

Using this feedback, we created a guide so you can set up your own local Parent Support Group. By setting up a group, you can meet like-minded parents in your local community and share your experiences with other parents who understand.

Some parents might also want to open up about their worries and concerns and explore possible ways forward. This can help you and other parents who may feel unsupported.



Follow these simple steps to set up your Parent Support Group:

1. Create your vision and mission for the group

- Start by describing the ultimate purpose of the group, for example: 'to help parents empower each other through education and support'.
- Using your purpose, write a vision and mission statement for your group. Your vision explains your end-goal and your mission outlines how you will achieve your vision.
- Create smaller goals to measure the effectiveness of the group. For example, one of these could be to reduce the stress levels of working parents. Your goals, vision and mission should be clear, concise, and easy to promote to members.
- Carry out self-assessments regularly to measure how you're doing against your goals. This doesn't need to be too official, but it might be useful to check whether you are all on the same page.

2. Sponsor and promote the group

Decide on any funding the group might need (e.g. to hire a venue or any operational costs). Start by coming up with a simple budget that will enable your group to achieve its goals.

Your budget might only be small to cover refreshments during meetings, but you can also allocate budget to buy your team resources, for example any books, or occasional events.

How to source small scale funding:

You can always seek sponsorship from local shops or organisations (especially those linked in some way to kids or parenting), or look at some of these opportunities and advice:

This site has lots of ideas for raising money for your group...(and many get the local community involved which might also help promote your parent's group): www.thegivingmachine.co.uk/fundraising-ideas/

Other useful information:

www.involve.community/wp-content/uploads/sites/108/2017/02/Community_Projects_May_2016.pdf

www.grantsonline.org.uk/

www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds

- Promote your group widely so everyone knows it exists. You could set up a Facebook group ([here's how](#)), put up posters in your local cafes and tell everyone you know.
- Enlist the help and support of local organisations, schools or services to help promote the group. Schools will often have a parents' email or newsletter you can include an advert in.
- Create some simple signage for your meeting venue too so people can clearly see where you are set up.

3. Create a schedule

- To accomplish the group's goals and get the most value out of the group, create a schedule that includes consistent meeting times and locations. You can meet in a café, a church hall, or community space.
- The meetings should aim to meet the needs of those attending. So you might like to include an open session or focus on a previously agreed topic or theme. This can help make the meetings useful and informative for everyone.
- Ask volunteers to help prepare or host the group (this responsibility can be rotated and shared) so that all agendas and voices are heard.
- Plan out a few weeks ahead so you can actively promote the upcoming topics. Following each meeting, share the top takeaways and tips with the group – maybe through a parent group brief, newsletter or group on social media.

4. Encourage feedback

- The sessions should leave space for open discussion. These groups are a helpful space for parents to identify and share their concerns around their children's wellbeing and to meet others sharing similar experiences.
- Groups may offer each other signposting to further information or resources. It might be useful to collate this information to create a handout of local support for the group.
- Create a simple survey or leave space in one of your sessions for group suggestions. The group should be as useful and inclusive as possible for all members.

Signposting

- For more resources on supporting your child's mental health and wellbeing visit our A Million & Me resources at www.youngminds.org.uk/parents
- For YoungMinds' Parent's A-Z guide on mental health visit www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help-for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/
- If you're worried about your child's mental health, call YoungMinds' Parents Helpline on – it's free Mon – Fri from 9.30am to 4pm (available in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) on 0808 802 5544.



This resource was created by YoungMinds as part of A Million & Me. A Million & Me is a national programme that aims to support the emerging mental health needs of 8 to 13 year olds. The programme does this by providing parents with practical, accessible mental health support and information to make sure they can respond to their children's mental health needs at an early stage.