

Reach out and do not suffer in silence says Home-Start

Being a new parent can be tough and even more so when there are mental health needs. In Greater Manchester we support many mums who are experiencing many challenges, from anxiety and depression through to clinical disorders such as Bi Polar.

Poor mental health is one of the most common reasons why parents ask for Home-Start support.

Still in 2017, many people struggle with admitting to needing support with their mental health, there's a perceived stigma attached, so rather than reaching out for help they suffer in silence. The impact of which is not only felt by themselves, but by their children too.

So why do parents who are struggling with their mental health feel able to turn to Home-Start? Families are also told right from the start, that Home-Start's approach is to provide support inside the family's own home, in a confidential and non-judgemental way. This is one of the most effective approaches in supporting a family. Walking alongside that family and empowering them to become stronger and more confident in their parenting.

One mum supported by Home-Start said: "I had struggled with anxious thoughts since I was a teenager. At 26, pregnant with my first child, I was crippled with bad thoughts, I wouldn't be good enough, I wouldn't be the mum my baby deserved. I'd sit in ante natal classes staring out of the window, feeling miles away from the other expectant mums in the group. When my baby was three months old, I felt I was on the brink of a nervous breakdown, one day I looked into her cot and thought, she's be better off without me. My friend marched me to the doctors, and I just broke down. My own parents were living abroad, I felt that I had no one. My doctor referred me to Home-Start, and several weeks later I opened the door to the lady who changed my life. My Home-Start volunteer has been with me for almost a year now, she too had been a new mum who struggled with anxiety, she knew exactly how I felt. She just comes week after week, she offers advice in the most calm, lovely way, never judging me or telling me I am doing things wrong. She's one of the most important people in my life- she's my safety net, it's a simple as that. I'd say to any mum or dad who is struggling with their mental health, please consider Home-Start for support. I do not know where I would be today without them. One day I too hope to train to become a volunteer, I want to give back to the charity that has given me so much, and I want all of my own experiences to be put to good use and to help someone in the same way that I have been helped."

To find out more about Home-Start and volunteering opportunities, please visit www.gmhomestarts.org.uk