



Dublin North City & County (DNCC)
Child & Adolescent
Mental Health Services

CAMHS Made Simple



**Our Positive Tree – completed by young
people attending DNCC CAMHS**



About this booklet

CAMHS stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, pronounced “cams”. This booklet tells you what CAMHS is, how to access it, how it can help you and who you will meet when you work with us. We explain difficult words you might hear on pages 8 and 9. This booklet also gives you a list of other supports at the end.

Remember, CAMHS is your service, so if there’s something you don’t understand, please stop us and ask one of our staff. We keep your information private unless we are concerned about your safety.

What is CAMHS?

CAMHS is a free specialist service for children and young people up to 18 years of age who are experiencing significant mental health difficulties or illness and need treatment from mental health professionals (page 9).

Mental health difficulties or illness affect your thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and you might feel very sad and are not coping very well in your life.



The treatment available in CAMHS can help you to understand your difficulties better, deal with your feelings and cope with the challenges in your life such as school, family, friends. Part of your care plan (page 4) may involve taking medication.

How can I use CAMHS?

To use CAMHS, talk to your GP (doctor) and tell them about your problems that are making everyday life difficult. Your GP will be able to refer (send) you to CAMHS. They will do this by writing to your local CAMHS team. A member of our staff will contact you after this.

Your pathway through CAMHS – 3 steps



1. Arrange to use CAMHS

Your GP will send reports about you to your local CAMHS team, who will decide if CAMHS is the **right service** for you. You will have to wait for an appointment. For emergencies, we will contact you within three days (72 hours). At your first assessment appointment, you will meet two members of our team who will listen to your concerns.

It's important to say exactly what's been happening so you get the right help. Things to tell CAMHS are listed overleaf:



- When the problem started
- What you'd like to change
- If there's a pattern in the problem (keeping a diary or log book before your assessment will help)
- Any difficulties with school, friends or family
- Any general health problems either now or in the past
- Any big family issues like divorce or grief
- Any recent trauma
- Other services you have been involved with (please bring reports)

2. Work with CAMHS

We will give you a CAMHS person to contact called a **key worker**. They will talk through your **Individual Care Plan (ICP)** with you. This plan is based on an assessment of your needs. This plan shows you who you will be working with and lists the areas you want to work on – and how. You have a big part in developing this plan and making it work. Some people work with us for a few months – and some work with us longer.

3. Review progress and move on

Your key worker will check in with you to make sure you are reaching your care plan goals. When you are finished your work in CAMHS, you will be discharged (page 9) back to your GP.



Your key worker will put you in contact with further community supports if you need it at that time. If you need further support from adult mental health services when you reach 18 years, we will make that referral (page 9) for you.

How CAMHS can help you

We will work with you to see what help and treatment you need.

Who will I meet?

You will meet some of the following professionals, depending on your care plan.



An administrator – answers the main telephone line if you call CAMHS, and they will put you through to the right people to speak to. They greet you at reception and tell you where you need to wait for your appointment.

A child and adolescent psychiatrist – this is a specialist doctor who looks after young people with moderate to severe mental health difficulties or illness. They will meet with you and your family to assess what the particular difficulty is and the impact of it on your life. After this, they will work with you to make a treatment plan. This might include medication, counseling and



other therapies. As the leader of the team, they coordinate your overall treatment plan.

A registrar – this is a medically trained doctor. Most registrars are training to become psychiatrists.

A psychologist – finds ways you can better manage feelings of distress and negative thoughts. Working with a psychologist may involve changing how you think about your problems and developing healthier ways of coping.

A speech and language therapist – helps you to talk about yourself – your thoughts, feelings and needs. They can also help you get on better with other people by giving you advice on how to manage conversations and helping you if you have difficulty understanding the words people use. You will learn about problem solving, speaking up for yourself, reaching out to others when you need help and friendship skills.

A mental health nurse – a person who works with you, your family and school. They will support you to understand your mental health and assess your progress by checking how you are feeling and by making sure you are involved in your care. They will introduce you to healthier coping skills.



A social worker – will meet with you and your family to offer support and to explore any issues that may be causing difficulty in your family and help solve them. They will work with you and your family to find some solutions.

An occupational therapist – can help you create healthy routines, find new interests, get back to school, learn new coping skills and get ready for big life challenges. You will work toward feeling better by doing meaningful activities.

A dietician – assesses, diagnoses and treats diet and nutrition problems. For example, young people with eating disorders work with dieticians on specific goals.

What are day hospitals and inpatient units?

A day hospital is a where you go to get extra support and treatment for your mental health difficulties or illness. You will take part in a day programme of activities and therapies.

An adolescent inpatient unit is a hospital where you stay if you are very unwell and local CAMHS and day hospital cannot provide enough care and treatment for you at that time.



While you are in hospital, you will take part in a range of therapies, outlined in your care plan. A teacher will also help with specific areas of your school work.

Does CAMHS help parents and carers too?

CAMHS work with the whole family to support your mental health. This might include coming along to appointments, depending on your age and what level of involvement is needed.

What words do I need to know?

When you are working with CAMHS, it helps to know what the following words mean. There will be other words you hear too. Please ask us and we will explain them to you.

Appetite – we may ask you how hungry you have been feeling recently, and whether you have been able to enjoy your food.

Assessment – this is when you, your parents and your CAMHS team have discussions to work out your mental health needs.

Diagnosis – this is a medical word that describes your mental health difficulties or illness, for example depression.

Discharge – this means you've finished your work in CAMHS.



Goals – what you would like to work on to improve your health.

Insight – your own understanding of your difficulties or illness.

Moderate-severe mental health difficulties or illnesses – such as depression, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), eating disorders, self-harm, psychosis, thinking about and planning to end your life. We will explain these to you in detail as needed. (These difficulties cause a lot of distress or upset to you at home and at school. You may have tried other supports that have not worked.)

Recovery – an approach to support your personal development, build your confidence and talk about what matters to you.

Referral – when we ask another person on the team or a different service to see you.

Review – this is where we check your progress since your last appointment.

Treatment – medication, therapy or groups you are using, with the aim of helping you recover from mental health difficulties or illness.

Triggers – we may ask you about feelings or events that spark reactions in you (these are triggers.)



Service user comment

"I started in CAMHS when I was 15. I was a total wreck – melt downs every day. I was self-harming. In CAMHS, people asked me questions about home and school. It was hard to talk about things. I was ashamed I felt these things. Now I have a straight line in my daily routine. I'm trying to live the most normal life possible". – Alison, 17.



Our clinics: Mon-Fri, 9-am–5-pm

North east city 01 879 6800

North inner city 01 867 6315

Ballymun/ Finglas 01 846 7219

Darndale 01 877 1552

Swords 01 807 5392

Balbriggan 01 921 3355

Castleknock 01 795 6743

Blanchardstown 01 795 6744



Useful CAMHS links

1. CAMHS videos

This introduces CAMHS services.

www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health-child-and-adolescent-mental-healthservices/introduction-to-camhs.html

2. CAMHS Operational Guideline

This tells you what you can expect when you use CAMHS.

www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/camhs/publications/

3. Mental Health

www.yourmentalhealth.ie – This website has advice, information and support services for mental health and well-being.

www.headspaceireland.ie – This website has information about your rights when you are in hospital and a jargon buster to explain words.

Other supports

If you are in danger, contact the Emergency Department of your nearest general hospital.

Jigsaw – free and confidential mental health support for young people aged 12-25.

JigsawOnline.ie has information and tools that you might find helpful.





Pieta House – suicide and self-harm support service. www.pieta.ie/ Text HELP to 51444. Available 24 hours. Text line is not free.



Spunout.ie – video animations about depression, anxiety, feeling different, being bullied and loneliness. Also available on You Tube in the RCSI # YMH animate Project playlist



Thank you

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Twitter: @mentalhealthirl.
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- DNCC CAMHS Management Consultation Team and Leadership Committee





Development and design

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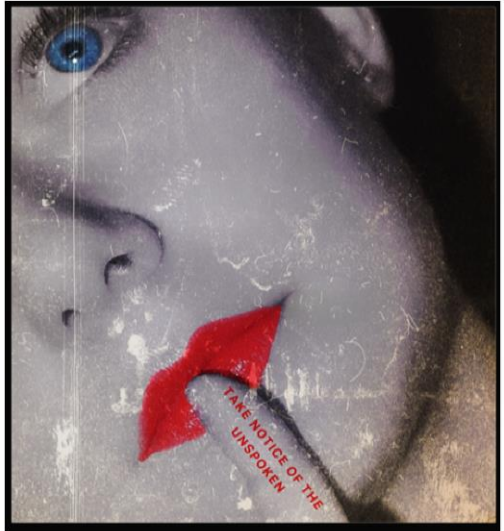
References

- CAMHS Operational Guideline (2019) Second Edition. Dublin: HSE
- YoungMinds.org.uk



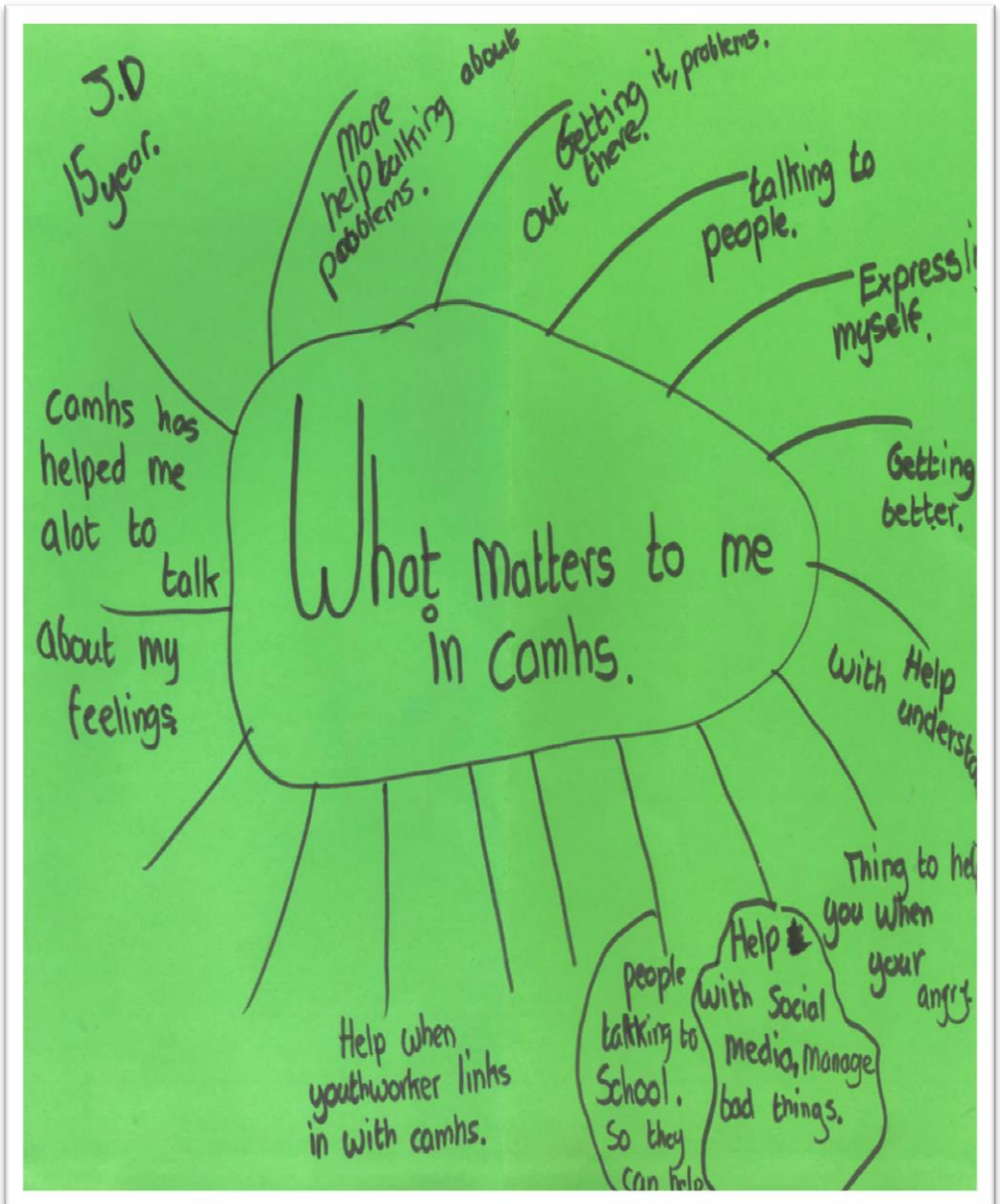


Artwork - Mental Health Ireland & DNCC CAMHS





What matters to me in CAMHS? A young person's mind map of ideas.





'From Dark into Light' – Jack, aged 17 years.

