



## talking about it

Everyone always says it is good to talk. We know it is not always that easy.

It can be hard to put your emotions into words, especially if they do not always make sense to you. You might feel that you do not want to give your parents or carers any more to worry about. Or you might think your friends just will not understand what you are going through.

But not talking about how you feel can make things even worse. It can make you behave in ways you might not want to. If you are angry after your brother or sister's diagnosis, for example, you might take it out on them. Or if you are worried about your family's future, you might lose interest in the things you love doing.

Of course, your sibling's IBD isn't the only thing you have got going on. There's your own school or college work, friends, hobbies, boyfriends and girlfriends to think about, too.

**Remember, you are not the only one who feels like this. All young people – even those who do not have IBD in their family – have stuff to deal with.**

There are things you can do to make things easier for yourself. And we are here to help.

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## hints and tips

- **You are not alone.** Yes, your family has a lot going on right now. But that does not mean they are too busy for you. They love you and want to know you are OK.
- **All feelings are normal.** Young people whose siblings have IBD experience all kinds of emotions. They can feel scared, worried, angry, jealous, guilty – or all of these at once. Remember, there is nothing wrong with how you feel.
- **Build your squad.** You might not talk to your friends because you think they will not understand what you are going through. Maybe they won't, but they still want to be there for you. Why not try speaking to just one person who you really trust? It could be anyone – a friend, aunt, uncle, grandparent, teacher or even a friend's parent.
- **Give your parents a chance.** Some young people don't feel comfortable speaking to their parents or carers about what is going on in their lives. But remember they were your age once too. Tell them what is bothering you and they might understand more than you thought.
- **Start a journal.** Lots of people say they find it hard to talk about their feelings because they do not really understand them. One way to start making sense of your emotions is to start a journal. It might help you to figure out how you feel so you can talk about it.
- **Do you like music?** You could try putting your feelings into lyrics. You could write your own song, or make up new words for a favourite rap or song. It might make it easier for you to understand and express how you are feeling.
- **How does it feel when other people open up to you?** Are you happy that you are able to help them? Does it help you to feel like you are a good friend who can be trusted? Does it help you to feel closer to them? Remember it can work the other way round too!



*“Sometimes all we talk about is my brother’s condition and how we are going to get through things. Sometimes I would like to talk about something positive as when we talk about his condition it makes him upset and down. On the other hand, our family has become closer and we are able to support him together.”*

Hannah, 14

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## activity one

### Written communications

Sometimes, it can be easier to write about what's happening in your life than it is to talk about it.

Why not try sending your parents or carers an email?

Do you know what you would say?

You could try answering the questions below if you think that would help.

**Did something happen? What was it and when did it happen?**

**How did it make you feel at the time?**

**Why do you think it made you feel that way?**

**How do you feel about it now?**

**Is there anything anyone could do to help?**

Another idea is to ask your family to talk to you via an instant messaging app. Remember, they love you and want to support you. They will be happy to communicate in whatever way you feel most comfortable with.

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## activity two

### A postcard from the heart

If you are having trouble opening up, you could try sending a postcard to someone you trust, to let them know how you are feeling. Or you could even write the postcard to IBD.

Why not draw a picture on the front that shows how you feel about things – however that might be. On the back, you can write just a few sentences about what made you feel that way.

You might want to send to your parents, sibling, or a friend, or you might not want to send it to anyone. All of these are OK. It's just about giving you a way to open up about how you feel.

  

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## more ways to get help or support

- Read [more about IBD](#) on CICRA's website
- Speak to other siblings in your situation at a CICRA [Family Day](#)
- Speak to Laura, CICRA's [Family Support Worker](#)
- [Watch](#) Dr Kate Blakeley talk about living and coping with IBD
- [MIND](#) has lots of tips for young people who want to open up to friends and family
- If you like mindfulness, check out [Calm](#), [Cosmic Kids](#), [Headspace](#) or [Smiling Mind](#).
- See the emotional wellbeing kit [resources library](#) for lots more ideas and support

## do you need a little more help?

We designed this kit to help you and your family cope with some of the common ways IBD can make you all feel. But sometimes, you might need a little more help – and that is OK.



### Lots of people feel that way.

If you spot any of the following signs, it might be a good idea to ask your brother or sister's healthcare team if they can offer any extra psychological support, or at least point you in the right direction of services in your area:

- Feeling like you cannot cope
- Struggling to use the tools in this kit
- The tools in this kit do not seem to be working for you
- A lack of interest in the things you usually enjoy
- A feeling of sadness that does not go away
- Thoughts of harming yourself or others