

MATT'S STORY

Matt called Childline when he was 11. Childline is always there for children and young people, whether their issue is big or small.

When I was around 11 years old, I was crying a lot, often over what seemed like small things.

I didn't understand why I was crying or what upset me. Still, I remember feeling very alone at the time. I wasn't one of the cool kids. I didn't have close friends and was often picked on.

My mum was helpful but I was embarrassed about the crying and felt I needed more help so I contacted Childline. It felt like a really big step but I was really worried.

The counsellor at Childline listened to me and told me it's OK to cry sometimes.

It was very comforting. It was like they were saying – 'it's OK, you're normal', which was a big relief to me. I felt like they took me seriously, like I had a real problem and wasn't 'just being a kid'. I felt they listened. They didn't judge me or try to tell me what to do.

I knew that Childline was there for me if I needed them again and they made me feel a lot better about myself.

Many children who call Childline are like I was, upset but don't really know why. It's amazing how much of a difference a few kind words can make. It doesn't matter how big or small you think your problem is – Childline can help.



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ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

Childline is available for all young people under the age of 19 on the phone, online, any time.

Visit [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk) or call 0800 1111

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HOLLIE'S STORY*

From a young age Hollie had always suffered with anxiety. Yet to the outside world she was happy, confident and talkative.

I was confident as a child but also very anxious and worried about everything.

I had a good circle of friends and a few of them were having some difficulties in their personal lives. I was trying to support them, but inside I was feeling really low. I didn't tell anyone. Instead I would go in to school smiling, laughing and joking then go home, collapse and cry.

Things changed when I had a bad panic attack.

I stopped seeing my friends and quit Girl Guides. In the August my doctor diagnosed me with depression and anxiety and referred me to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Within a matter of months my mental health had deteriorated so much I had dropped out of school, isolated myself from my friends and been admitted to hospital.

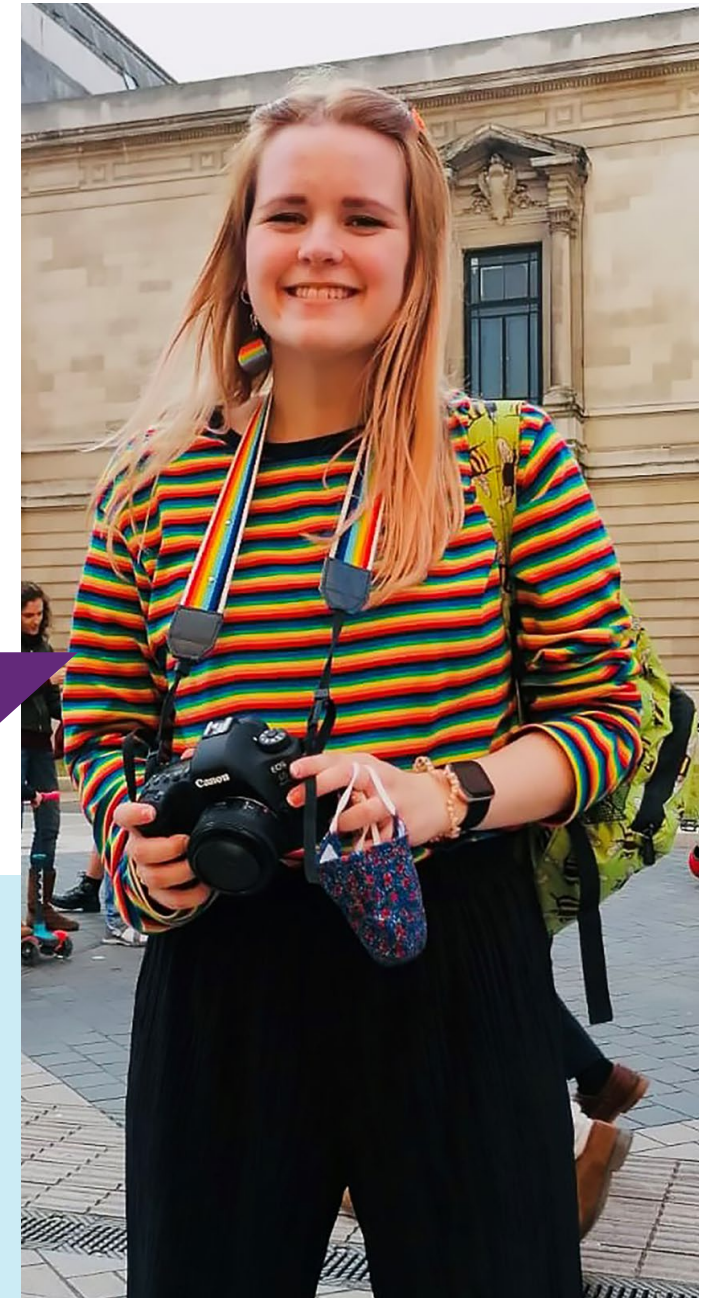
I contacted Childline while in hospital and spoke to a counsellor about my feelings, it was that first chat that kept me safe and meant I was able to go home.

Over the next couple of years I stopped talking, walking, eating and taking care of myself. There were times I felt suicidal and there were also more stays in hospital.

Despite not talking to anyone else, I would call Childline and chat to a counsellor when I was feeling low. Childline was a lifeline during my darkest hours. Childline gave me the confidence to speak to my mum and help to get things back on track with my mental health. After a diagnosis, I made a full recovery and returned to college. I achieved a university place for a subject I love and I'm now studying Graphic Design.

If I hadn't called Childline there's a chance I wouldn't be here today. Talking to someone saved my life.

**This story deals with sensitive subjects and may bring up difficult feelings.*



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TAMSIN'S STORY*

Tamsin was a teenager when her mental health began to deteriorate. Throughout all of this, she used Childline. Tamsin mostly used the 1-2-1 chat but when things were really bad, she'd call to talk. The counsellors encouraged her to seek help and support. She eventually felt able to reach out to a friend and seek treatment.

I grew up in south-east England with my Mum and Dad. It was a happy and normal childhood.

I was quite poorly for the first part of my childhood so I missed some school.

I was very shy as a child and wouldn't really speak in front of new people but I always had friends because Mum always pushed me to see friends even though I wasn't in school a lot. I did love school and I was always keen to learn.

I was never part of a big group (of friends), I always had a couple of close friends. That's all I needed at the time.

Around the age of 14 my mental health started deteriorating. I was struggling with low self-

esteem and body image and relationships were difficult with people I cared about.

I began to dislike school, eventually moving to a new school. I was really happy in my new school where I made a really good group of friends. That was the happiest I'd been.

I started to struggle again with my mental health during my exams, through putting a lot of pressure on myself to achieve. Things became worse and my relationship with food became problematic.

I think everyone around me was aware that I was going downhill quickly but no one wanted to say anything. I was aware but I felt I couldn't tell anyone as I didn't want to burden my family.

That's when I started to reach out to Childline on the online chat. I connected with a counsellor pretty much every night to voice what was going on. I rang when things got really bad.

Childline was good because it was anonymous and I could let how I was feeling out. There was good advice.

****This is a true story, but the name has been changed to protect identity.***

Around that time I was also having issues with boys, bad relationships and feeling pressured into things, Childline also helped me with that.

Childline encouraged me to tell a friend about what was going on and when I reached out to that friend, she encouraged me to get help.



If I hadn't spoken to Childline, I wouldn't have told my friend, and wouldn't have received any support or help. Things would have got a lot worse.

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