

YOU NEED TO KNOW

about CAMHS – a Q&A for children and young people with autism

What is CAMHS?

CAMHS stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. CAMHS staff help children and young people when they are feeling worried or sad.

Why do I need to go to CAMHS?

If you are finding things difficult or are feeling worried or sad, CAMHS can help you to feel better.

Who will I talk to at CAMHS?

There are lots of different staff there, including doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and other therapists. You, or your parent or carer, can ask a member of CAMHS staff who you will be seeing and what their job is and what they will do to help you.

What will the CAMHS building be like?

All CAMHS buildings are different. The building you go to might look a bit like the building where you go to see the doctor. When you get there you will go to a quiet, private room to talk to the staff.

Can someone I know come with me?

Sometimes staff at CAMHS might see you on your own, but if you want a parent or carer to be there with you, that is fine. You can talk to someone at CAMHS about who can come with you.

What will CAMHS do to help me?

The person or people you see on your first visit will talk to you about how they can help you. There are lots of different ways they can help you. For example, they might talk to you about why you are feeling sad or worried, or they might give you medicine.

Will anyone else find out what I say to the people at CAMHS?

CAMHS won't tell anyone who doesn't need to know what you tell them. This is called confidentiality. Each CAMHS has a written rule about this called a 'confidentiality policy'. The person who sees you should explain to you what they will do with what you tell them. You can ask them about this if you want to know more.



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What if I find talking difficult?

CAMHS staff are used to helping all sorts of children and young people, so don't worry if you find talking difficult. If you want to communicate in a different way, for example through writing, you can let the person you see know this.

How long will I have to go to CAMHS for?

This is different for everyone and depends on what kind of help you need. You can ask the person you see how many times you will need to go there.

How often will I have to go to CAMHS?

Again, this is different for everyone and depends on what kind of help you need from CAMHS. It is normal to go to CAMHS once a week but it might be more or less than this. You can ask the person you see how often you will need to go.

Will I always see the same person when I go to CAMHS?

There are lots of different kinds of staff at CAMHS who can all help you in different ways, so it is normal to see more than one person. But it depends what kind of help you need – you might see the same person every time.

Where else can I get information?

The organisation YoungMinds has a special website for young people:
www.youngminds.org.uk/youngpeople

The organisation The Royal College of Psychiatrists has produced a book (*CAMHS inside out: a young person's guide to child and adolescent mental health services*) and leaflet (*CAMHS in brief: a young person's quick guide to child and adolescent health services*). You can download these for free from their website: www.rcpsych.ac.uk



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