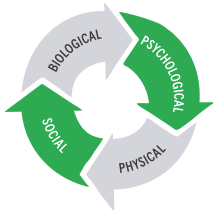




Family interventions



The main focus of this treatment is on psychological and social factors.



Remember, more thumbs up just means that more people have done research that shows that this approach does work.

What is it?

Being offered family intervention doesn't mean that you are a 'problem' family, nor that your family is to blame in any way! A family intervention is a talking therapy that focuses on difficulties that the family is facing, and that plans ways of solving them as a family.

It usually includes you, your family (or others who are close to you), and two therapists. It is normally offered to you if you're living with or in close contact with your family. You might expect to meet all together, about 10 times over 3–12 months or more. The therapy may focus on support, education, or treatment, and may include managing crises, solving problems and stopping problems from coming back.

What does it aim to do?

Experiencing unusual and distressing symptoms can be difficult not only for you, but also for the people close to you.

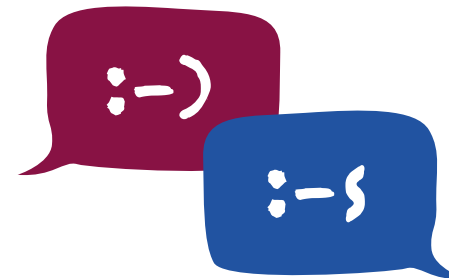
If you have close family or friends, they can play an important part in helping you to manage your experiences and stay well. Family interventions focus on encouraging understanding, communication and independence within the family, and working through problems and emotions.

These interventions aim to encourage everyone in the family to talk to one another about things that they are finding difficult and to think of more helpful ways of supporting each other.

Through this process, family interventions help you and your family to better manage the effect of stress and other unusual and distressing experiences on everyone's lives, leading to better health and wellbeing and reducing the chances that problems return.

Unusual upsetting experiences in one person, can affect the whole family, so family interventions are there to help the whole family to cope, to support each other as best they can through a difficult time, and to help you to stay well.

As understanding, communication and coping get easier, everyone should start to feel less emotional, less stressed, and better able to get on with the things that are important to them in their own lives. Less family stress also means you are less likely to have another episode of unusual experiences!





“ Family intervention for psychosis has a robust evidence base and is recommended by NICE, but only for those in contact with family. Available family members meet regularly to problem-solve current issues and improve understanding, using the service user as expert, and to process emotional upset such as grief, loss and anger. ”

Professor Elizabeth Kuipers,
Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Does it work?

There are a large number of good quality trials (involving over 2,500 people) that show that family intervention, when delivered by expert therapists, is helpful for families with a person who has unusual and distressing experiences.

They generally compare what happens when you have family intervention and usual care (including medicine) together, with what happens if you only have usual care (including medicine).

One big review (meta-analysis) that looked at results from lots of smaller studies found that including the family in therapy could reduce the chances of a relapse – that’s when the unusual distressing experiences come back – by 20%. The longer the family intervention went on for, the less likely the experiences were to come back.

Family intervention reduces the likelihood that you will need to go to hospital too. So family intervention is a useful part of helping you to stay well. It also helps you to make the most of the treatments on offer – maybe because your family are on board with and help you get what you need.

There’s very little research on family interventions in young people (under 18) but what’s there suggests that family therapy helps to stop experiences coming back in younger people too.

For young people under aged 18, family intervention isn’t necessarily better than really good early intervention services, but then good EIP services all offer psychological therapies (including family intervention), vocational services and medicine as part of the service.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

NICE recommends family interventions (alongside medicines) for both adults and young people, to help reduce unusual and distressing experiences, and stop them from coming back. They also recommend that young people receive family intervention with individual CBT, especially if the person doesn't want medicine. NICE found that more research is needed on family intervention with younger people.

How can I get this treatment?

Family intervention should be available through your EIP service or through local psychological therapies services within the NHS.

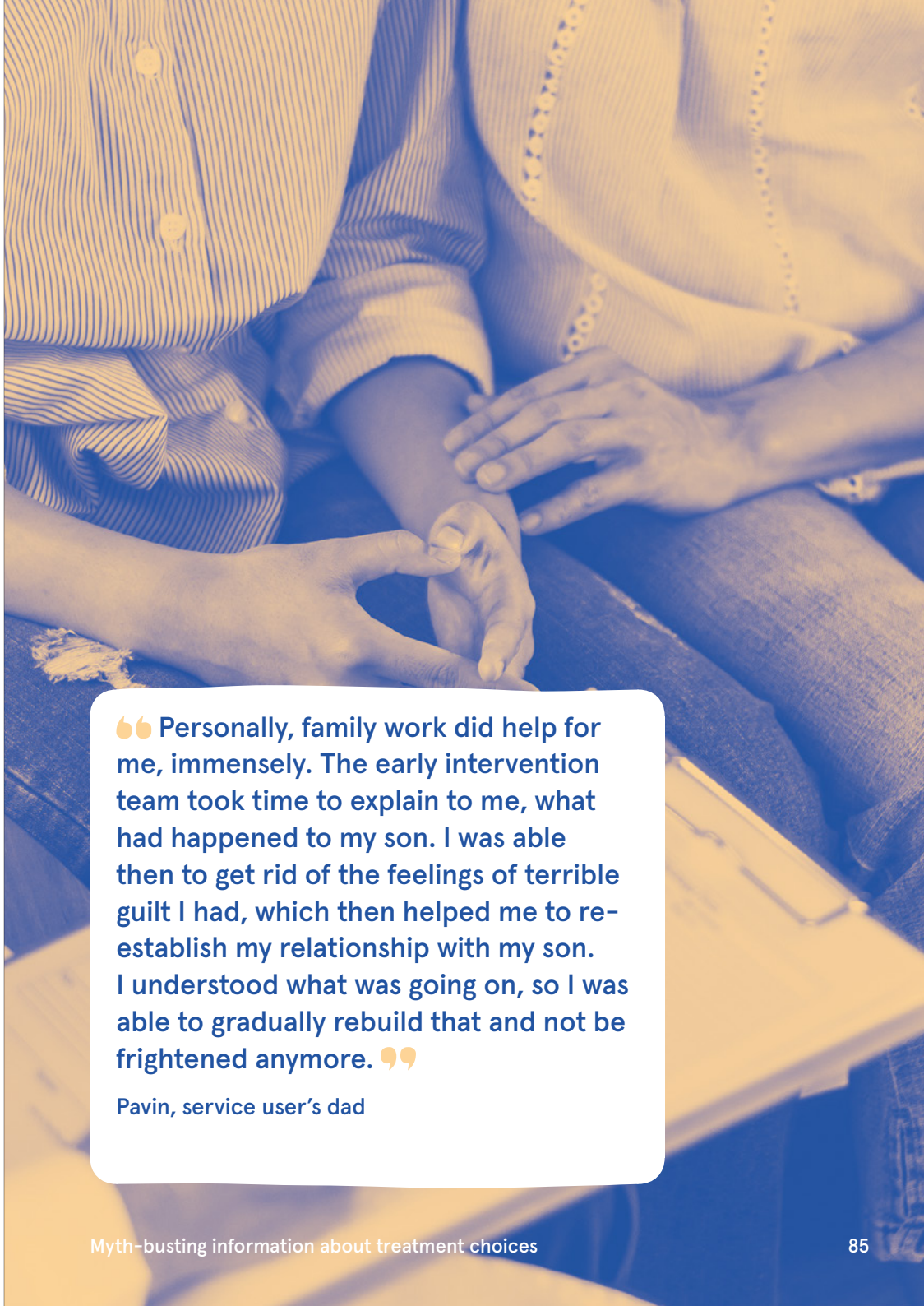
However, it isn't always readily available, especially because it needs two trained therapists. Ask your doctor, care coordinator or GP if you're interested and they will be able to tell you about local options. You may also be able to pay privately for family therapy in your local area.

✓ Main pro

Family intervention can result in a more supportive family environment, which can mean that your family feel less stressed and more positive and you find it easier to stay well.

✗ Main con

Family intervention is not always available because it depends on having enough trained staff to offer it. You need to be in contact with your family and happy to involve them. It can be practically difficult to get everyone in the family together at the same time.



“ Personally, family work did help for me, immensely. The early intervention team took time to explain to me, what had happened to my son. I was able then to get rid of the feelings of terrible guilt I had, which then helped me to re-establish my relationship with my son. I understood what was going on, so I was able to gradually rebuild that and not be frightened anymore. ”

Pavin, service user's dad