

# INFORMATION PACK

FOR PARENTS



The  
Parent  
Rooms

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# WHO WE ARE

The Parent Rooms is a mental health charity that supports parents in Northern Ireland to move beyond crisis and distress and into a place of wellness, social connection, and fulfilment.

Established by parents with their own lived experience of mental health difficulties, The Parent Rooms aims to empower parents to take control of their own well-being through engagement with a supportive community, to evolve with new wellbeing skills, and to finally empower others to begin their wellbeing journey.

# OUR HISTORY

The Parent Rooms was founded by Michelle Bradley, a mum who was experiencing postnatal depression, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Michelle's mental health difficulties, though significant and life-altering, were not deemed severe enough to access specialist support.

After being unable to find appropriate help, she began to seek support groups in her community. At the time, no such groups existed so Michelle decided to set up an online forum that could provide a safe environment for herself and other parents to gather and support each other, share experiences, and ultimately feel less alone. This group grew rapidly and continues to thrive with people from all over Northern Ireland joining and caring for each other.

As the group grew and the needs of parents emerged, we decided to create a charity that could offer more in the way of support, tools, and social connection, a service dedicated to the wellbeing of parents. In 2019, The Parent Rooms was born.

Our organisation is led by parents who understand on a deep personal level what the people we support are experiencing. We take a parent-centred and parent-led approach to everything we do, ensuring that all parents who access our service are given the best opportunity to take control over their well-being and no one is left to struggle alone.



Community space to meet and socialise with other families



Access to mental health support e.g. peer support/counselling



Wellbeing programs such as meditation, art therapy, and coping skills



Family activities that promote bonding & family wellbeing



Baby bonding classes such as sensory and massage



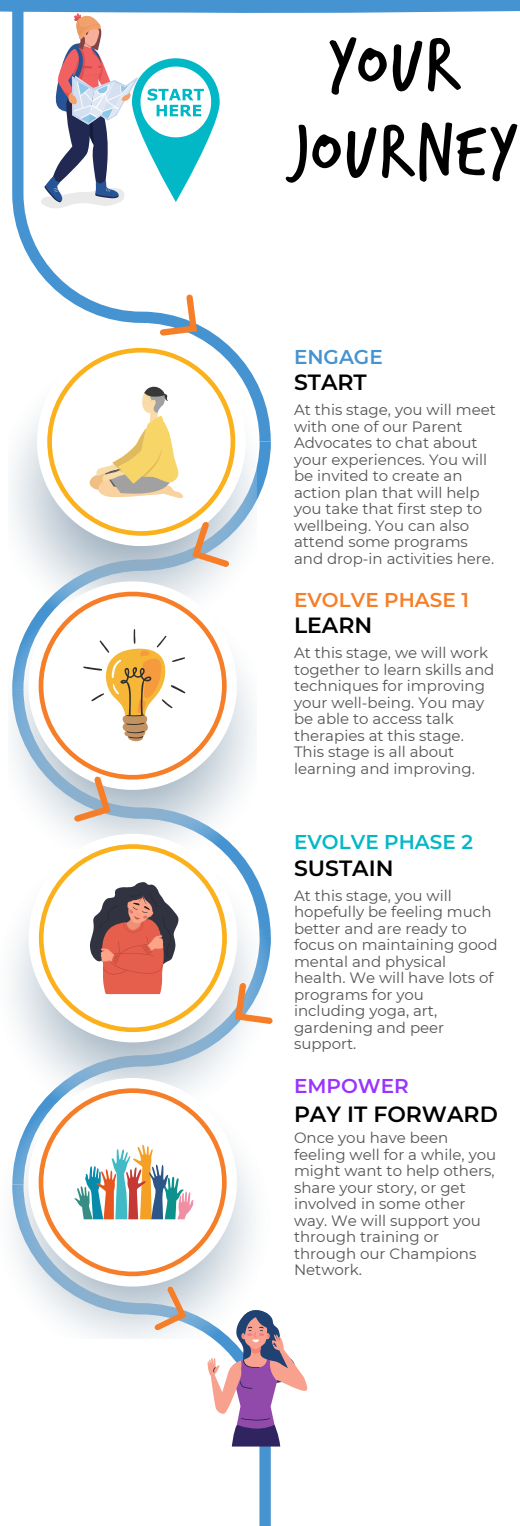
Couples activities to learn to support each other

# WHAT WE DO

The overall aim of The Parent Rooms is to create a circle of support around you, providing a safe space in which you can explore how you are feeling, make friends with others who understand your experiences, and learn tools to help you take control over your own recovery.

Our focus is to empower you to take control over your experiences and we do this through our three-step model: Engage.Evolve.Empower. which meets you where you are in your mental health journey and provides a clear pathway for wellness.

The Parent Rooms is first and foremost a community space in which you can come together with other parents, seek support for your mental health, learn tools to manage your wellbeing, and have opportunities for therapeutic support where appropriate.



# HOW DOES IT WORK



## STEP 1: ENGAGE

The first step is to register with us for support. You can self-refer or have a friend, doctor or other professional refer you through our secure online web form. This is the Engage stage and where your journey to well-being begins. Once you have signed up, you will be matched with a Parent Advocate, one of our team who has lived experience of mental health issues and who will be your guide throughout the entire process.

Together, you and your Parent Advocate will create a Wellbeing Plan that will help you identify the areas you need help with, and what supports will work best for you. You will be given a range of options to try out which can be anything from wellbeing programs, to therapeutic support, to social connection.



## STEP 2: EVOLVE PHASE 1

Once you have created your Wellbeing Plan, the next step is to begin learning how to improve your mental health. This is what we call Evolve Phase 1 and this is where you will learn to build a self-help toolkit for improving your mental health and where you will start in earnest to improve your wellbeing.

Your Parent Advocate can help you identify which programs you feel will be most helpful. Some of our programs will offer free on-site childcare so you will have time for yourself to learn new skills and enjoy time with other parents in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.



## STEP 3: EVOLVE PH. 2

Once you have built your well-being toolkit and have noticed an improvement in your mental health, the next step is to explore ways to maintain this feeling of wellness. We call this stage Evolve Phase 2.

In this stage, you will have access to a range of programs and activities aimed at promoting good mental health and building strong social connections with others. Activities can include coffee mornings, craft clubs, yoga, art therapy, music, movement classes...anything that provides a sense of wellbeing and connection. It will be during this stage that you will review your progress with your Parent Advocate and see how far you've come.



## STEP 4: EMPOWER

By the time you have reached this stage, you should be feeling happier, healthier, and more resilient. You might be feeling now that you would like to help others on their well-being journey to get to where you are now. We call this the Empower stage.

In this stage, you can choose a number of options. You might want to volunteer to host social groups or peer support. you might want to join a committee or our Champions Network, or you might want to raise funds for us.

We will provide all the training and support you need.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## HOW DO I REGISTER?

You can register with us using our secure web form which can be found here:

[www.theparentrooms.co.uk/register](http://www.theparentrooms.co.uk/register)

Once we've received your form, you will be matched with a Parent Advocate who will give you a call to discuss what has been happening for you, and to arrange creating your Wellbeing Plan.

## I'M A BIT NERVOUS

We know that reaching out for support can be daunting but rest assured you are in good company. All the staff and volunteers at The Parent Rooms have their own lived experience of mental health difficulties and are well-trained to support you in any way you need.

Meeting others for the first time can be especially difficult but we have found that once you take this first step, connection with others can have a profound impact on your well-being, even if its just joining a coffee morning or going for a walk with one of our groups.

## CAN I BRING MY CHILD?

We have lots of things you can do with your children including stay-and-plays, coffee mornings, and programs. However, we also understand that sometimes you might need some time for yourself and that's why we provide free on-site childcare for some of our programs. We can discuss this with you as part of your Wellbeing Plan.

# REFERRAL GUIDELINES

## DO YOU PROVIDE COUNSELLING?

As part of our Engage.Evolve.Empower. model we will have scope to provide therapeutic support such as counselling, VIG, and therapeutic play. However, the need for this will be identified at an individual level with you, your Parent Advocate and our therapeutic staff and isn't advertised as core service.

## DO YOU PROVIDE PEER SUPPORT?

Peer support is one of our core offerings and this is done through activity-based peer support, and one-to-one peer support depending on volunteer availability. All our peer support volunteers are trained to OCN Level 3 to deliver high quality peer support.

## I LIVE OUTSIDE BELFAST

While the majority of our work takes place at our Wellbeing Hub in Belfast, we do offer some support to parents outside of this area. This includes remote peer support, community activities and online counselling where it has been identified as a need.

We currently have plans to have face to face activities taking place in community settings in Castlewellan, Ballymena, Derry and Enniskillen.

Our long-term goal is to have Parent Rooms Wellbeing Hubs in every trust in Northern Ireland.

## IMPORTANT LINKS

PROFESSIONAL REFERRAL FORM:

<https://www.theparentrooms.co.uk/for-professionals/>

SELF-REFERRAL FORM:

<https://www.theparentrooms.co.uk/register/>

PARENT INFORMATION PACK:

<https://www.theparentrooms.co.uk/parent-info-pack>

PARENT JOURNEY INFORMATION:

<https://www.theparentrooms.co.uk/engage/>

CONTACT US:

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