Information for children about borderline personality disorder (BPD).

This information is designed to be used in conjunction with discussions with children and their families about their parent’s mental health issues. Having a diagnosis of BPD can be complex and often children are left out of any information loop or misinformed because of this complexity. It is important that the parent and where appropriate, family members and other carers, understand the diagnosis (if there is one) and purpose of the discussion and, where possible, are part of those discussions.

It may also be useful for workers and health professionals to assist them in working with children and families.
What is personality?

The way you think
The way you feel
The way you behave
The way you ARE!

What does it effect?

Your moods
Your relationships
At School, at home or anywhere!

What is personality disorder?

People cope with ‘big’ stress in different ways.
A personality disorder is when people have developed negative, or unhelpful, ways to cope that effects their work, their relationships and their whole life.

Many people have one (2% of the population).
It can effect people so badly that they have trouble coping with very simple problems.
Sometime people hurt themselves or people around them.
This is part of the illness and not the person.

There are many different types of personality disorder. The one that is most common is called Borderline Personality Disorder.
People who have BPD or an illness that has ‘bits’ of BPD, have often experienced these feelings for a long time. It can sometimes be hard to get the right kind of help.

They may have times when they feel insecure, scared and chaotic, like an out-of-control kind of feeling. This may mean they have ‘up and down’ kinds of relationships. Sometimes people say it is a bit like living your life on a ‘rollercoaster’.

People with BPD sometimes feel really bad about themselves or about something that has happened in their life, and can find it hard to find anything good about their lives. They may feel depressed and anxious too. They may have big mood swings.
People with BPD can feel very frightened about being alone and can find it hard to take criticism. They may believe they are a bad person.

Some people with BPD can feel so bad about themselves that they talk about feeling hopeless about their life, and sometimes do things that are harmful to themselves. Often they come to this way of thinking, or do these things because they can’t make decisions as they normally would. And because they feel SO bad.

These feelings, and others, can lead to a person actually hurting themselves to try and feel better. This can be by cutting themselves for example or by taking too many tablets. It seems that this causes some relief from the bad feelings for a while because of the pain from the cuts or by going to sleep for a time. But it is does not work for long and can be very scary for the family. When this happens it means the person needs some extra help.

But .....Remember, your mum is still your mum and your dad is still your dad. At times it may be hard not to think that they have been taken over by their disorder. And remember it is not your job to fix their problems.
AND REMEMBER: BPD is a type of disorder which can improve with the right treatment and support. It can take a long time and your parent may seem better for a while and then get sick again. This can be confusing.

Talk to your unwell parent or your other parent at a good time about how you feel, or another trusted adult who knows you and understands. If you are worried about your mum or dad, ask an adult to help.

Work out **who** the adults are you can talk to, and write down those important phone numbers. Keep going to school and finding time to have fun, relax, spending time with your friends and family! **YOU** are important.