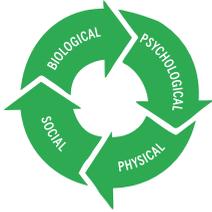


★ Early intervention services



A good early intervention service focuses on all aspects of your physical health and mental health.



Remember, more thumbs ups just means that more people have done research that shows that this approach works.

What is it?

Unusual and distressing experiences (e.g. paranoia, fear that people are out to get you, hearing or seeing things that other people don't) tend to start when you're in your teens or early 20s, although for some people it can be later... in your 30s or older.

Evidence suggests that what you do and the support you receive in the critical first months and years with these experiences is especially important.

The sooner you get support for unusual and distressing experiences the more likely you are to recover and get on with your life.

Early intervention services are made up of mental health workers from a range of different backgrounds, who work with you when you first have unusual and distressing experiences, to try to reduce the impact of these experiences, and help you get back to the things that are important to you.

What does it aim to do?

An early intervention service aims to do two main things. Firstly, it aims to work closely with schools, colleges, young people's services, GPs and other services to help you to get help and support as quickly as possible. Secondly, it aims to provide useful treatments and broad all-round support when you first develop unusual and distressing experiences, to help you to keep up with work, school, college, your social life and friends, and to help you get back to normal life as quickly as possible.

If unusual and distressing experiences are recognised early, then useful treatments and support can reduce the impact of them on your life, allowing you to recover as quickly as possible.

Do they work?

A number of studies have found that early intervention services are better able to reduce unusual and distressing experiences and are better at preventing these experiences from returning, compared to standard community services.

“ The key to early intervention is the way services can convey real hope for recovery, and help people to achieve their goals. It is providing intervention early at the time users and their families most need it, helping them through the crisis in the least stigmatising way and helping people see the light at the end of the tunnel. ”

Professor David Fowler,
Professor in Clinical Psychology

“ I had a really, really good consultant and care coordinator who were just so understanding and the way that they approached it was in a very caring manner... they made me feel as though I wasn't unwell, I was still normal. They made me feel like anything was possible and that if I wanted to achieve something, after this episode, that it was fine. It just felt like they were on my side the whole time. ”

Tembe, 18

“ For me and my daughter, accessing services, when everything was such a fog, and this thing just comes out of the blue, it was so important. I don't know what we'd have done without it. ”

Paula, service user's mum

People using these services also tend to be more engaged and satisfied and have a better quality of life than people using more traditional community services. EIP services lead to better outcomes as they offer a broad set of support including medicine, psychological and vocational support (see the next section for more information on all of these treatment options).

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

NICE backs this evidence and also shows that early intervention services offer more talking therapies than standard services.

A lot of evidence is based on the work of the Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centre (EPPIC) in Australia, but there is also growing evidence from the UK and other countries, such as Norway.

These have found fewer relapses, fewer associated problems, better wellbeing, work and education outcomes for people receiving early intervention services compared to standard care.

How can I get this treatment?

EIP services should be available in all local areas and if you have unusual and distressing experiences your GP should be able to refer you to your local service.

You could also look up your local service on the 'help and support' page of our website likemind.nhs.uk

In some areas, clinicians with lots of EIP experience are working in general mental health teams instead of EIP teams. If you don't have a local EIP service, you could ask instead to speak to someone in your local mental health service who has EIP experience!

✓ Main pro

Early intervention services help you to recover better than other mental health services.

✗ Main con

There is not yet enough evidence to show whether this better recovery carries on in the long term.