

SALLY BEAR'S DADDY IS IN HOSPITAL



A story for children aged 3–6
to be read with an adult



Notes for adults

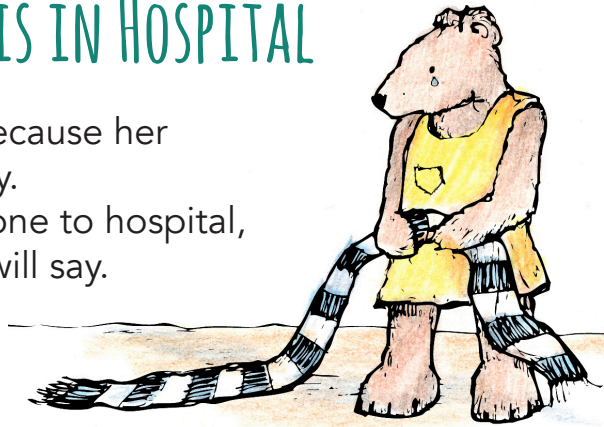
We hope this rhyming story will be useful for family, carers, social workers and teachers who are supporting young children whose fathers have been admitted to a mental health hospital ward. It is designed for a child to read with the help of a supporting adult.

The key messages for adults to share with children are:

- Sometimes illness can change people's thinking, feelings and/or behaviour;
- Sometimes, when people are ill, they need to be in hospital to get better;
- If daddy was behaving strangely before he went to hospital, it was because he is ill;
- It is never the child's fault that their daddy is ill;
- It's OK to feel scared or worried. Sometimes we all do. It's important they know to speak to an adult when they feel like this;
- Daddy is safe in hospital and he will get better. We don't know how long he will be in hospital. Sometimes getting better takes time;
- Daddy loves them, even when he can't be with them.

SALLY BEAR'S DADDY IS IN HOSPITAL

Sally bear is sad because her Daddy's gone away.
Sally knows he's gone to hospital,
but why? No one will say.

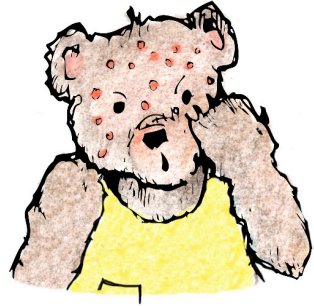


So Sally asks her Mummy
'When is Daddy coming home?
Why can't I go to see him or
talk with him on the phone?'



Mummy bear hugs Sally
when Sally starts to cry.
Then Mummy bear sits down
and starts to tell her why...

She says, 'You know everyone is
sick sometimes and needs help to
make them well,
And we can see the things that
hurt us if they...



itch...

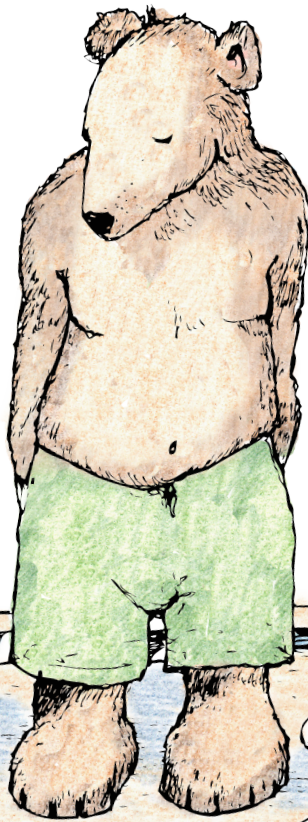


or bleed...

or smell!



But did you know that sometimes
our brilliant brains can get ill too?
And when our brains get ill
it can change what we think
or feel or do'.



Sally asks, 'Is that why Daddy said strange things and seemed to get so sad? And why he got so cross with us and said everything was bad?'.

'That's right,' said Mummy, 'It's not your fault, it's how the illness made him feel. Daddy's thinking got all mixed up so he didn't know what was real'.



'Is that why he's in hospital?' Sally asks, after thinking for a while. 'Yes,' says Mummy, 'That's why for now it's up to me to make you smile!'



Sally laughs at Mummy's tickles, then asks, 'Will Daddy get well again? Will he ever come out of hospital and will everything be the same?'

Mummy nods, 'Yes, he will get well
but it may take some time.
When he comes home some
things may change,
but we'll work it out just fine.



The doctors and nurses know
we can't wait to have Daddy home.
But first he needs to get some rest,
then you can talk to him
on the phone.

And when Daddy's feeling better,
we'll go and visit him together.
I know he'll want to see you,
because you're his little treasure!'

Sally says, 'I'll make a get well card
and you can write a letter!'

Mummy says, 'That's a great idea!
Let's send him lots of love to help
him feel much better'.



At bedtime Mummy reads Sally's favourite story and then wishes her good night. Then Mummy stops to tell Sally one more thing before she switches off the light:





'You know your Daddy always loves you,
whether or not you are together.
He loves you more than all the world –
and that love lasts forever'.

For adults seeking more information on mental health,
we recommend the following websites:

www.rethink.org
www.mind.org.uk
www.mentalhealth.org.uk
www.nhs.uk



This is one of four leaflets we have produced for children with a parent in a mental health hospital. Two leaflets are for 3 to 6 year olds: "Sammy Bear's Mummy is in Hospital", and "Sally Bear's Daddy is in Hospital". Two are called "My parent is in hospital" – one is for 7 to 11 year olds and the other is for those aged 11 and over.

Thanks to everyone who gave their time to write, design and comment on our leaflets including staff, patients and young people at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust; Southwark Council's children and families service and the young people and adults at Our Time. Illustrations by Alison Hainey. Words by Nicola Byrne.

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