

# Chronic Fatigue Syndrome / ME

## Condition:

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) or ME (myalgic encephalopathy or encephalomyelitis) is a complex multisystem condition with a wide range of disabling symptoms.

ME in most cases is believed to be triggered by a known event such as an acute infection, a problem with the immune system, or a hormonal imbalance. People with ME often report that they don't feel as though they have recovered from the symptoms even after e.g. the infection has passed. In some cases, ME can develop following different triggers.

Most people with ME will make some degree of improvement over time, especially children and young people. However, a significant minority remain permanently and severely affected and many will see fluctuations in severity over a period, with some getting progressively worse.

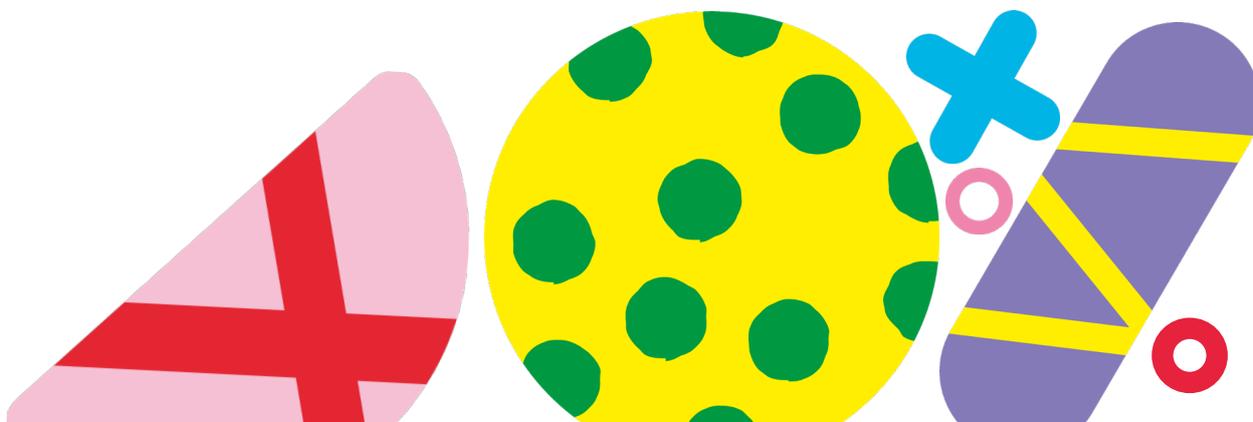
ME can also affect mental and emotional health and have a negative effect on self-esteem.

## Problem Areas:

- Periods of overwhelming tiredness or malaise, which can last for days or even weeks.
- Problems with cognitive functions such as short-term memory, concentration, word-finding.
- Sleeping too little or too much, vivid dreams, feeling unrefreshed by sleep.
- Ongoing flu-like symptoms including sore throat, feeling lethargic.
- Can have problems with pulse and blood pressure, leading to feeling faint or dizzy.
- May experience pain, especially in muscle joints and nerves.
- Can be sensitive to bright light or loud noise.

## Support strategies for your Group:

- Believe a young person when they say they have CFS/ME; this is important as recognising this condition as real has not always been the case for many with ME.
- Ensure the right balance between activities and rest. This is known as 'pacing' or 'energy management'.





- Find roles/ways to be involved in games or activities that are less physically demanding e.g. 'scorer', 'referee' etc.
- Let young people communicate when they need to stop and rest and give them space to do this.
- Some young people may take medication to help control their CFS/ME.

### **Further information:**

The ME Association      <https://meassociation.org.uk>

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*'Invited to Belong' has been developed in partnership between Urban Saints and Youthscape.*



*Youthscape*

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