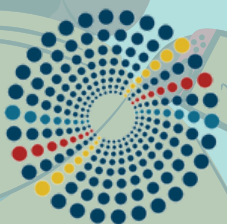


# Mental Wellbeing Matters

A toolkit to help you manage your mental wellbeing

Created by The Positive Movement Project CIC with support from the Hounslow IAPT Service



**REACH**  
CHILDREN'S  
**HUB**



**THE  
POSITIVE  
MOVEMENT  
PROJECT**

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# **Mental Wellbeing**

**The Positive Movement Project supports mental wellbeing through fitness and sport.**

**Mental wellbeing refers to our 'emotional health' – how we feel emotionally. Mental wellbeing relates to your thoughts and feelings and the way we cope and respond to the circumstances around us.**

**Having good mental wellbeing does not mean you will never experience negative or unpleasant thoughts and feelings. However, if we can learn to understand and manage those feelings, we can become better equipped to deal with day to day tasks, feel more confident in ourselves and maintain positive relationships with those around us.**

**Our mental wellbeing can be impacted by situations that are outside of our control whilst also being influenced by positive choices we make. This toolkit aims to support good mental wellbeing, helping you to understand and manage negative thoughts and feelings and to better cope when things don't quite go to plan.**



# **Anxiety and Low Mood**

**Everyone feels anxious now and then, in fact, it is a way of protecting ourselves from perceived danger. The body reacts to 'danger' and prepares itself for that 'fight or flight' response.**

**However, anxiety can become unhelpful and prevent us from doing the things we want to do or from having fun. It becomes a problem when you begin to feel anxious in situations that do not present any real danger- for example at a party with friends or at home alone.**

**You may find that anxiety has you worrying about your problems excessively. It can manifest itself physically too, with sweating, raised heart rate, feeling dizzy etc.**

**Like anxiety, most people experience fluctuations in mood depending on the situations they are in and how they are feeling on any given day.**

**Mood problems can present themselves in a number of different ways- from feeling low to not being able to enjoy things you usually like, to feeling tired or agitated.**

**It is important when experiencing continued bouts of anxiety or low mood to contact your GP or seek support.**

# Keeping Track

Keeping track of your moods can help you gain a better understanding of what triggers your mood to change, when you become more fearful and when your symptoms bother you less.

Try tracking this week and see if there are any triggers for low mood as well as times that you were able to improve your mood. Include details around the situation, what emotions you felt and how it affected you.

*monday*

*tuesday*

*wednesday*

*thursday*

*friday*

*saturday*

*sunday*



# Make Time for Self-Care

One common misconception around self-care is that it is all about self indulgence. Self-care is not selfish.

Self-care is ensuring you take care of yourself so that you can be healthy and well enough to do all the things you need and want to do each day- whether that's meeting your responsibilities at school or helping around the home or attending after school activities, sports clubs or events.

As the saying goes, 'you can't pour from an empty cup'.

Self-care involves taking steps to remain physically and emotionally well.

What feels like self-care can vary from person to person. So it's important to take time to find what works for you.

# Self-care Quiz



There are no right or wrong answers; simply respond as you see fit and see what you discover about yourself.

- Score 2 points for each 'Yes', 1 point for each 'S / Sometimes' and 0 point for 'No'.

	Yes	S	No
1. I am happy with my physical fitness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I eat well nutritionally most of the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I have plenty of sleep and feel well-rested	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I take regular breaks from my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I say "No" to others when I need to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I have forgiven my past mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I know what I am passionate about	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I have things to look forward to in my life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your total score \_\_\_\_\_

What did you learn about yourself?





# Self-care Bingo

Take time for self-care, try some of these and see how they make you feel. You can add more of your own!

<input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk at the park	<input type="checkbox"/> Drink more water	<input type="checkbox"/> Make an effort to appreciate nature	<input type="checkbox"/> Take a break	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed earlier
<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to a guided relaxation	<input type="checkbox"/> Eat 5 portions of fruit or vegetables in a day	<input type="checkbox"/> Take a nice bubble bath or a hot shower	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn a new skill	<input type="checkbox"/> Follow an online workout
<input type="checkbox"/> Unfollow toxic social media accounts	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to a podcast	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice gratitude	<input type="checkbox"/> Try a craft activity
<input type="checkbox"/> Watch the sunrise	<input type="checkbox"/> Read a book	<input type="checkbox"/> Go somewhere new	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch your favourite movie	<input type="checkbox"/> Pamper yourself
<input type="checkbox"/> Get some sunlight	<input type="checkbox"/> Start a new hobby	<input type="checkbox"/> Write out your goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Organise your wardrobe	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch the sunset

# Mindfulness

**Mindfulness is our ability to pay attention to the present moment.**

**Techniques to practice being mindful can help us to manage our thoughts and feel calmer, which in turn can help to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression.**

**Mindfulness is something that comes with practice and can be as simple as trying to pay more attention to your surroundings, turning off distractions such as the TV or your phone and listening to the sounds you can hear, taking time for art such as colouring or drawing or even just checking in with how your body is feeling at any given time.**

**Meditation and activities such as yoga are also practices that can help you become more mindful, helping participants to connect with their breathing and focus on the present moment.**



# The Five Senses

One mindfulness exercise involves using your five senses to focus on your environment instead of your thoughts, helping to calm your mind.



**5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE**



**4 THINGS YOU CAN FEEL**



**3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR**



**2 THINGS YOU CAN  
SMELL**



**1 THING YOU CAN TASTE**



# Testing Times

It is normal to feel stressed or anxious when you are preparing for exams. However these feelings may become overwhelming or escalate if we don't find a way to manage them.

## Remember...

Exam results do not define you nor do they determine the outcome of your life. Make a list of the qualities you have that have nothing to do with results. You are not simply a grade!

## Turn to others for support...

Your friends and family can support and ensure you don't feel alone. Staff at your school may be able to help with practical measures to help the work feel more manageable.

## Get Organised...

Sometimes it can feel safer to avoid our problems, for example avoiding revising. This may make the problem worse. Create a timetable for revision and be sure to set breaks. Chunk the work down rather than trying to tackle everything at once.

## Don't Play the Comparison Game...

There is only one you, unique and brilliant in your own way. Exam time may lead to comparing yourself to others. We all have different strengths- be proud of yours.

## Under Pressure...

You may feel external pressure to succeed, whether that be from family or friends or even your teachers. Be honest about your feelings, your caregivers may have no idea you feel this way unless you tell them.

## Do What Works For You...

We all learn in different ways; some of us are visual learners, some need to hear information to process it, some learn by doing. Find what works for you and embrace it!





# Make A Plan

When we are feeling low, the simplest of tasks can seem difficult to do. Negative thoughts can impact the things we enjoy doing. Completing activities can give us a sense of achievement and routine that may help to keep negative feelings at bay, or help us to manage them.

Have a think about some things you'd like to do or get done this week. Include activities that bring you joy such as meeting a friend or watching a film with a family member, and activities that give a feeling of satisfaction- like tackling coursework or organising your bedroom. Schedule it in and you're more likely to commit to it.

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY



# Breathe

**Our breathing can have an impact on our physical state.**

**When our breathing rate is elevated, a number of physiological changes occur. Whether we gasp because we are frightened, become a little breathless when we are shocked, light headed when we feel panicked or even experience tingling sensations when we are nervous– our breathing has had a part to play in this. The way we breathe is a massive factor in the physical sensations we experience when we are anxious.**

**We breathe in to obtain oxygen, breathing out carbon dioxide. Our body is able to naturally maintain optimal levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide– in part due to how fast and deeply we breathe. For example, when we exercise, we breathe faster and more deeply to replace the oxygen being used.**

**Being anxious causes an increase to our breathing rate. This is due to our physical fight or flight response to a perceived threat. However, when we increase our breathing rate without physical exertion we breathe out too much carbon dioxide. This is what leads to those symptoms of dizziness, light headedness, tingling and feeling weak.**

**Continually 'overbreathing' can leave you feeling 'on edge' and in turn you're likely to respond to stressful situations with anxiety and feelings of panic.**

**Being able to gain control of your breathing, by slowing down your breathing rate, can aid you in combatting these feelings.**



# **Develop a Better Breathing Habit**

**Find somewhere comfortable to either sit or lie down, such as a chair or bed.**

**Inhale for for 4 seconds**

**Hold this breath for 2 seconds**

**And then exhale, releasing the breath across 6 seconds**

**Pause slightly before inhaling again**

**While doing this, hold a hand on your stomach and feel it rise as you breathe in. You want to ensure you are breathing from the stomach rather than the chest.**

**Try to practice each day, at a time you can relax, free from distraction.**

**Practicing this will help to develop a more relaxed breathing habit.**

# Worry Time

Our worries can seem overwhelming and like they consume our time. Rather than try to ignore our worries or process them all at once, it may help to postpone your worries to a designated time. This allows you to focus on other things rather than allowing worries to take over.

Designate a 15–20 minute slot for your 'worry time'. As worries pop up in the day, write them down and then in your worry time, if they are no longer a concern, cross them out. Otherwise, take the time to write and process your thoughts around the worry, identifying whether the worry is something you can take action about or if you are worrying about something that may not happen in the future.

*Worry-Time Thoughts*



# The Stress Bucket

Imagine you have a bucket and every time you feel anxious or experience stress, the bucket slowly fills up. As it fills up, it gets heavier to carry, it may even spill over!

Finding activities that can help lighten the load, can make the bucket easier to carry and manage the stress you experience. Use the stress bucket below to jot down the stresses you have that fill the bucket and the things you can do to release some of that stress.



# Negative Coping Strategies

Sometimes when we experience stress or anxiety and things feel overwhelming, we may take actions that seem to alleviate these feelings for a short while. It can feel like you are able to forget about your troubles. However these 'quick fixes' can often have quite negative outcomes and can even put us into danger. They may lead to more stress and anxiety in the long term and as that stress builds it can feel like we are 'drowning'.

When we are looking for a 'quick fix' we do not always anticipate the consequences of our actions in the moment. Take some time here to consider negative ways to deal with stress and possible consequences.

## Negative Ways to 'Cope'

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## Consequences

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# Influencers & Peer Pressure

The people you surround yourself with have the power to influence your actions, in much the same way that you have the power to influence the people around you.

This can be beneficial to us, if our influencers motivate us to do good things, encourage our positive attributes and lead us to new experiences that shape and build us in a way that helps us grow.

However, peer pressure can bring us stress when we feel under pressure to do things we are not comfortable with, actions that go against our morals, or lead us to take dangerous risks.

The pressure to conform, to 'fit in' is one that we all feel. It makes us feel accepted, safe, validated.

However, once we start compromising our own values, we must act with courage to figure out what is right for you—even if that may be an unpopular choice.

By speaking up you may be helping others in the group who feel the same as you, you have the power to influence too— it can take one person to take a different action to make a change. You have the potential to be a leader rather than a follower and to make a difference.

Listen to your gut— If it doesn't feel right then the situation may not be right for you.

# No No No

You have a voice and the right to say 'no' in any situation that you are not comfortable with. This may prevent something that puts us at risk from happening, or stop us from taking on more than we can handle when we constantly say 'yes' to everything.

*A Time I said 'Yes' when I wanted to say 'No'...*

*How could saying 'No' benefit me?*

*Practice Your 'No'. Use the space below to plan your response*

*Suggestions- No with a reason. A raincheck no (not right now)- A reflective no (that shows you've considered their feelings)- The broken record no (repeating no and staying firm)*



# Social Media

**Social Media is the collective term for platforms that focus on content sharing, community based input, communication and interaction– allowing users to communicate with others both locally and worldwide!**

**From your Aunt sharing her dinner on Facebook, your best mate uploading a dance to TikTok, or following your favourite artist on Instagram; it feels like everyone sharing online and it can feel like you're missing out if you're not.**

**Most smart phones record your active screen time. Check your settings to see what your daily average screen time is– log the figure below. Does it surprise you?**



**My Daily  
Screen Time Is**

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# Social Media



## The Good

Social Media allows you to stay connected to others. We are able to access news and share events as they unfold. Social Media can be a tool for change, galvanising people to act for the greater good and social causes.



## The Bad

Using social media can lead to difficulties with feeling connected when we are face to face. It can be hard to live up to the 'perfect' image we want to project. It can be hard to concentrate as we feel the need to check our phones.. We might start to compare ourselves to others. We can feel like we 'waste' time scrolling



## The Ugly

Social media is addictive- receiving a 'like' or positive comment gives you a boost of dopamine- a feel good hormone. It can affect body image and self-esteem. Cyberbullying has elevated bullying to another level- it can feel like an ever-present threat. Increased usage can lead to social anxiety, depression and exposure to content that can be distressing

## Social Media Tips

Try to reduce your time online  
Cut down on the social media apps you do use.  
Unfollow, block or mute accounts that don't make you feel good- report ones that post abusive content.  
Follow accounts that make you feel good.  
Remember that you are viewing the highlights of people's lives- don't play the comparison game.  
Check your privacy settings to protect yourself online.  
Use platforms for good, sharing content that supports others and show kindness.  
Stay connected in real life.



# Social Media

## Social Media Apps I use



## Social Media Makes Me Feel



## Accounts I Follow That Make Me Feel Good

## Accounts I Follow That Make Me Feel Bad



# Social Media Sorted

Social Media can be a positive thing in our lives, as long as it doesn't control our lives and the way we feel. Make a plan of action for happier social media use.

## Social Media Plan of Action

I will...





# Thoughts are Not Facts

The negative thoughts and feelings that we have and hold about ourselves can impact the choices we make and affect our daily lives- one negative thought can spiral into catastrophising.

As much as we may believe something to be true, our thoughts are not facts.

Get into the habit of challenging your negative thoughts, put them on trial! Have a go here- enter your negative thought, rationalise with the evidence for and against and reach your verdict.

Negative Thought

Evidence For

Evidence Against

Verdict





# Move Your Mood

Being physically active can have a positive effect on our mental wellbeing. Exercise can contribute to better sleep, improve your mood and help manage feelings of stress and anxiety. You may find an improvement to your self-esteem as you achieve new goals and feel better physically.

Physical activity can also help you connect with other people if you partake in group classes or clubs.

There are lots of different things you can do to get active. From taking a walk with friends or family to riding a bike, going for a swim or run or even dancing around your bedroom- moving can help you feel good!

Try to fit some more physical activity in your week and see what it does for your mood. We've listed some ideas to get you started, circle them as you give each one a try.





# Acts of Kindness

Doing things for others can actually make you feel good. Performing an act of kindness stimulates the production of serotonin, (a 'feel good' chemical that helps us feel happy) endorphins (increases the feeling of pleasure and is the brain's natural pain killer) and oxytocin (the 'love drug' that aids social connection, lowers blood pressure and increases self-esteem)

An act of kindness doesn't have to be a massively grand gesture, it can be smiling at a stranger, holding a door open for someone, sending a friend an uplifting message or volunteering to help someone with a difficult task.

For each act of kindness you perform, colour in a petal on the flower below and see your kindness bloom.



*Colour in and see your kindness in full bloom*



# Spend Time in Nature

Spending time out in nature can benefit both physical and mental wellbeing. The positive impacts can include improved mood, reduced feelings of stress, increase in physical activity and feeling more relaxed and calm.

Go for a walk and take time to appreciate your surroundings.

What can you find on our nature hunt?





# Social Connection

Feeling socially connected to others and forming good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing. We may spend a lot of time on social media but that does not mean we are being 'social' and enjoying real connections. A good relationship can help you feel a sense of belonging and improve your self-worth, provide support and allow you to share positive experiences as well as enabling you to support others too.



**Phone a friend**

**Meet a friend and catch up over a drink or lunch**



**Play sports with others**

**Sit together with family at mealtimes**



**Volunteer for a local community or school project**

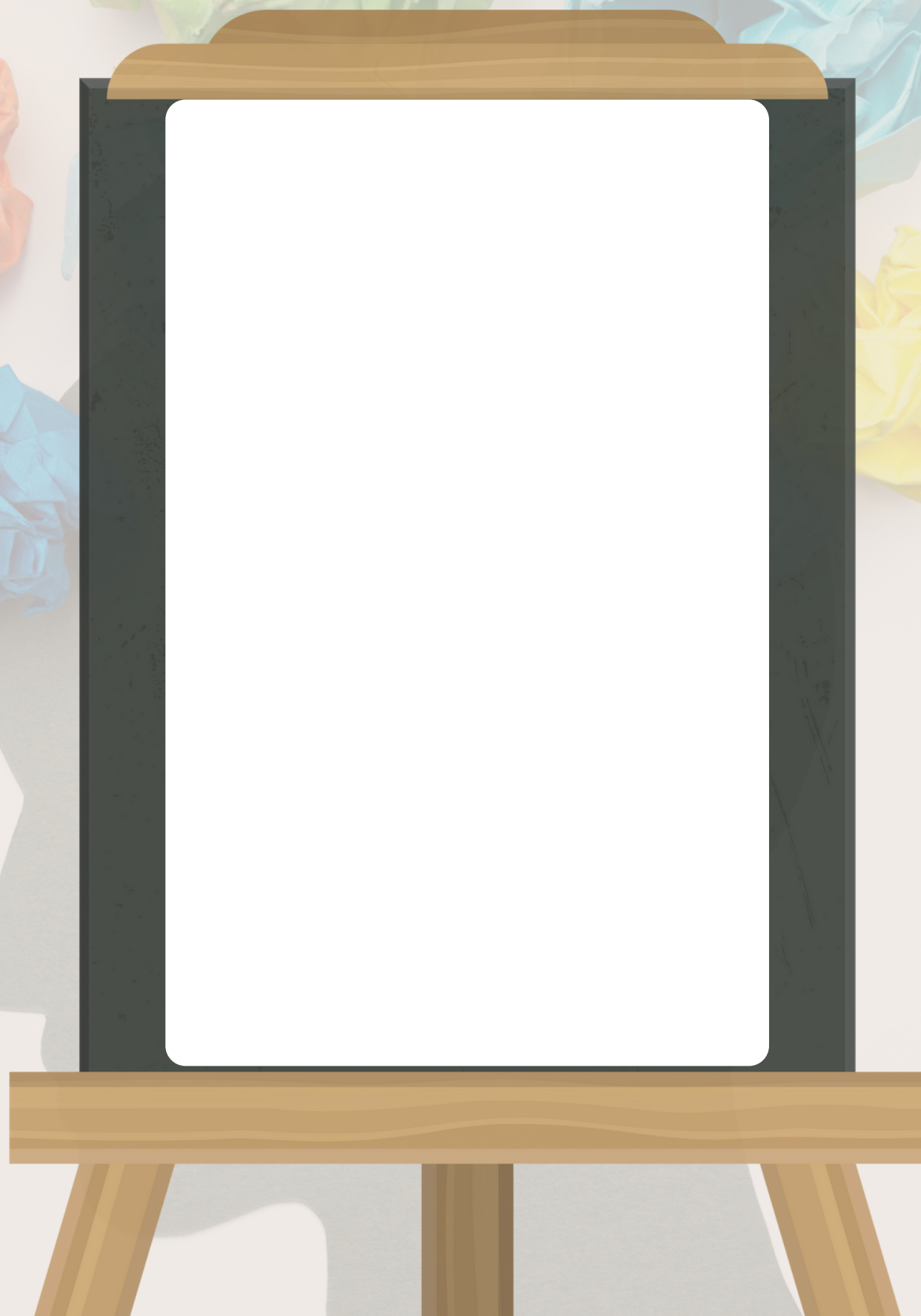
**Use apps such as 'FaceTime' or 'Skype' to stay connected**



# Get Creative

Getting creative can reduce stress and anxiety. By focusing on a creative activity we can achieve a meditative-like state that helps us to manage our thoughts and feelings.

Have a go at getting creative, there are no rules! Use the easel as you see fit.





# Learn a New Skill

When we learn a new skill we may feel a sense of achievement and in turn feel an improvement to our self-esteem. It provides an opportunity to connect with others and provides focus and a sense of purpose.

You could sign up for classes or attend a youth club in your local area, use YouTube to learn something new, attempt to cook from a new recipe, use video tutorials to complete a project etc. Try to find an activity that brings you joy.

## CHALLENGE JOURNAL

EACH TIME YOU TRY SOMETHING NEW, POP IT IN THE JOURNAL BELOW. HOW DID THE ACTIVITY MAKE YOU FEEL?



# In Our Own Words...

Your voice is important, your thoughts and feelings matter. Here are some thoughts around mental wellbeing from young people. Do any resonate with you? It may be useful to share this with the adults in your life and can help to begin a conversation around your feelings.

You may even want to share your own!

I don't know how to feel emotions to be honest.

If I'm stressed, I try to find the root of the problem

Adults need to put themselves in our shoes

The more I think, the worse it gets!

If I'm stressed it messes with my sleep, I just can't sleep then it messes me up the next day

'A cup of tea' doesn't solve everything!

Speak to someone you trust, it can be anyone!

Giving us statistics or saying everyone goes through this, invalidates my feelings- I'm not a number.

I like to have a long bath. It's just you and your thoughts

I try to give my friends advice that doesn't sound like I'm some sort of therapist



# In Our Own Words...

If I'm sad I'll watch the saddest episode of my favourite programme. It makes me cry but then it's like I've released all of it.

If I need to calm down I'll listen to music or practice hairstyles

If I'm stressed about school then I avoid the problem. I know this makes it worse because I get even more behind and then it's on top of me!

It helps me to use my fidget toy when I feel stressed

I try to help my friends if they're stressed but I'm not always sure how to

Adults shouldn't compare their problems to ours and make us feel invalid

Give us time and space to process our own emotions

I overthink... And when I'm anxious I pick at my nails and sometimes bite the inside of my mouth

So many thoughts surround my mind and it leads me to make bad choices

I wish adults would give us time and not yell at us. Give us a chance to explain. Don't force us



# Further Support

If you are struggling with your mental health, then it is good to let your GP know. If experiencing thoughts you cannot control or suicidal thoughts then please visit your local A&E department where trained professionals can support you.

There are many charities who can offer support, advice and information.

YOU CAN CONTACT SAMARITANS ABOUT ANYTHING THAT IS UPSETTING YOU- THEY ARE AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY, 365 DAYS PER YEAR. YOU CAN CALL 116 123 (FREE) OR EMAIL [JO@SAMARITANS.ORG](mailto:JO@SAMARITANS.ORG)

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE IS A SUPPORTIVE LISTENING SERVICE FOR ANYONE WITH THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE. OPEN 24/7 ON 0800 689 5652

YOU CAN CONTACT SANELINE IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM OR SUPPORTING SOMEONE THROUGH THEIRS. CALL 0300 304 7000 (OPEN 4:30PM-10:30PM EVERYDAY)

IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING YOU CAN CALL THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY (CALM). ON 0800 58 58 58 (5PM-MIDNIGHT EVERY DAY)

UNDER 35 & STRUGGLING WITH SUICIDAL FEELINGS OR SUPPORTING A YOUNG PERSON WHO MAY BE STRUGGLING, CONTACT PAPYRUS HOPELINEUK ON 0800 068 4141 (WEEKDAYS 10AM-10PM, WEEKENDS 2PM-10PM)

IF YOU'RE UNDER 25 AND STRUGGLING, YOU CAN CALL THE MIX ON 0808 808 4994 (3PM-MIDNIGHT EVERY DAY)

YOU CAN CONTACT SWITCHBOARD IF YOU IDENTIFY AS GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL OR TRANSGENDER. CALL 0300 330 0630 (10AM-10PM) ALL PHONE OPERATORS IDENTIFY AS LGBT+

IF YOU LIVE IN WALES, YOU CAN CALL THE COMMUNITY ADVICE AND LISTENING LINE (C.A.L.L.) ON 0800 132 737 (OPEN 24/7)



# Useful Websites

For more information and advice regarding mental health and wellbeing, please visit these websites.

This list is not exhaustive but may provide a starting point for further support.

[HTTPS://WWW.NHS.UK/EVERY-MIND-MATTERS/](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/)

EVERY MIND MATTERS CAN HELP WITH ADVICE, TIPS AND ACTIONS FOR BETTER MENTAL WELLBEING

[HTTPS://WWW.MIND.ORG.UK](https://www.mind.org.uk)

PROVIDES ADVICE & SUPPORT & CAMPAIGNS TO RAISE AWARENESS, IMPROVE SERVICES & PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUNGMINDS.ORG.UK](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)

A MENTAL HEALTH CHARITY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS

[HTTPS://WWW.RETHINK.ORG](https://www.rethink.org)

PROVIDER OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN ENGLAND

[HTTPS://MENTALHEALTH-UK.ORG](https://mentalhealth-uk.org)

SUPPORTS PEOPLE AFFECTED BY MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

[HTTPS://WWW.HEADSTOGETHER.ORG.UK](https://www.headstogether.org.uk)

CAMPAIGN TO TACKLE STIGMA AROUND MENTAL HEALTH & FUNDRAISE FOR NEW MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

[HTTPS://WWW.THECALMZONE.NET](https://www.thecalmzone.net)

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY (CALM) PROVIDES FREE HELPLINE & CHAT, EMPOWERS COMMUNITIES AND CAMPAIGNS TO SPREAD AWARENESS OF SUICIDE & ITS IMPACT

[HTTPS://WWW.BACP.CO.UK/SEARCH/THERAPISTS](https://www.bacp.co.uk/search/therapists)

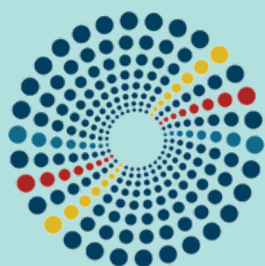
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