

Finding Steady Ground

Coping strategies for tough moments



For men living without their children
in Stockport

Welcome

When emotions hit hard (grief, anger, loneliness, or panic) it can feel like you're losing your grip

This booklet isn't about ignoring those feelings. It's about building a set of tools you can reach for when things get too much.

Think of it as a coping "toolbox." Not everything will work for everyone. Try different strategies, notice what helps, and carry the ones that fit you.

Checking in with yourself

Before reaching for a coping tool, pause and notice:

- What am I feeling right now?
- Where do I feel it in my body?
- How big does it feel (1-10)?

Simply naming what's happening can take the edge off. You don't have to change it, just notice it.

Grounding with the senses

When your mind is racing, grounding brings you back to the present.

Try the 5-4-3-2-1 method:

- 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

This pulls your attention out of your head and into your body.

Breathing steady

Your breath can reset your body's stress response.

Two simple methods:

- Box breathing: breathe in 4, hold 4, out 4, hold 4.
- 4-7-8 breathing: in for 4, hold for 7, out for 8.

If counting feels like pressure, just slow your breathing and lengthen the exhale.

Calming the body

Sometimes your body needs to release the charge.

Options:

- Shake out arms and legs.
- Stretch your neck, shoulders, and back.
- Splash cold water on your face.
- Go for a brisk walk, even just round the block.

Strong feelings often need physical outlets.
Movement helps them shift.

Mind resets

When thoughts loop or spiral, try:

- Writing everything down for 5 minutes without editing.
- Saying to yourself: "This is a thought, not a fact."
- Setting a timer for 10 minutes to give yourself permission to "worry later."

You don't have to stop thoughts completely, just loosen their grip.

Quick comfort tools

Small things can soothe the nervous system:

- Holding a warm mug of tea or coffee.
- Wrapping in a blanket.
- Listening to a grounding playlist.
- Carrying a small object (stone, coin, photo) to touch when you feel overwhelmed.

Coping with triggers

When grief or stress is triggered (a song, a memory, a place):

1. Pause and breathe.
2. Ground yourself using senses or movement.
3. Remind yourself: this wave will pass.

Reflection prompt:

- What triggers hit me hardest?
- What's one strategy I could try when that happens?

Emergency plan

If everything feels overwhelming:

1. Stop and breathe.
2. Ground yourself with senses.
3. Call or text a safe person.
4. If you're worried about your safety, reach out to a helpline straight away.

Reaching for support is strength, not weakness.

Resources & support

Samaritans - 116 123 (24/7, free)

CALM - 0800 58 58 58 (5pm-midnight)

Shout - Text 85258 (anytime)

Closing words

Coping strategies don't erase the pain, but they can help you steady yourself when it feels like too much.

Each tool you practise is a step toward getting through the hard moments.

You are still their dad. You're not broken. And you don't have to do this alone.

Help us support more dads

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Somebody's Dad CIC is a non-profit. Everything we do is funded through grants and donations.

If this booklet has helped in any way and you want to support dads going through tough times, please consider making a donation through our website.

somebodysdad.org/fundraising

Every pound goes directly into providing our service and the support for dads who need it most.

Thank you.



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If you have suffered the loss of a child or are
unable to see your children due to the breakdown
of a relationship, we provide Six 1-to-1 funded
walking therapy sessions to help you talk through
the issues you face

Our service is open to men in Stockport (SK postcode)
Get in touch today:

somebodysdad.org
contact@somebodysdad.org

