Little things can make a difference



Helping ourselves and our loved ones

Mindworks Surrey Resources Pack

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Proud to be part of Mindworks Surrey

The children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health service

NHS Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

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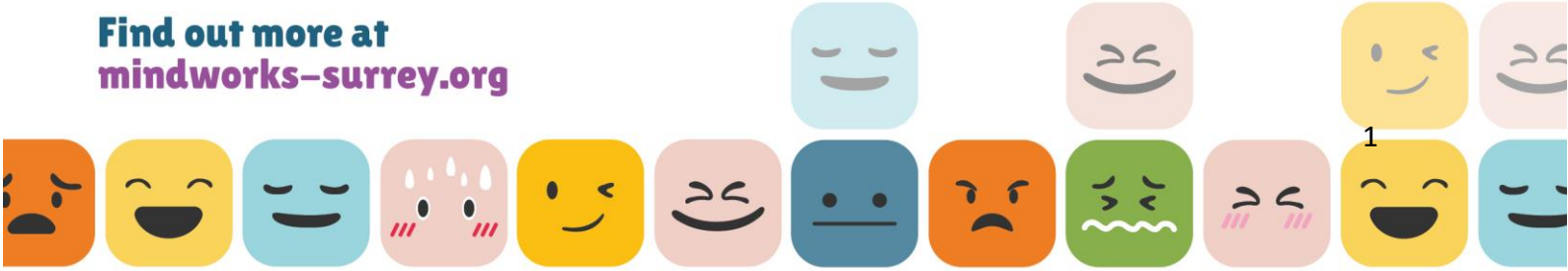
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Find out more at mindworks-surrey.org



About this pack

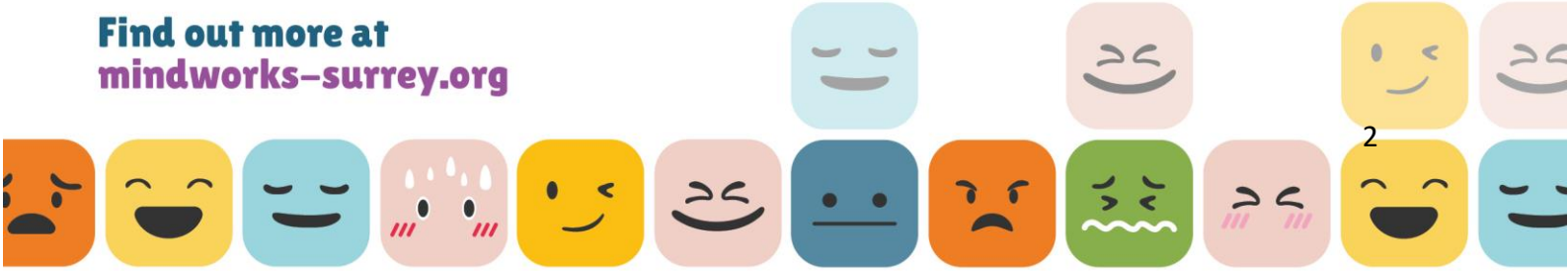
Parents/Carers/ Young people

The past few years have been quite challenging for all of us. With the pandemic, climate change, high cost of living and global conflicts, it seems as though we have been constantly tested. We had hoped that when children went back to school, things would start to calm down and return to normal. Unfortunately, for some, the impact of COVID and other crises is still being felt.

We understand that it can be overwhelming and stressful to navigate through all of this, which is why we have put together a collection of valuable resources and information to support you and your family.

This pack contains individual leaflets; and is divided into different sections so you don't need to read all the information in this pack; simply use the table of contents to refer to the subject of your interest. Most leaflets have references to useful websites, and at the end of the pack, you will find a list of useful organisations and phone numbers for your reference.

We hope you find this information helpful and easy to use.



What we need to know

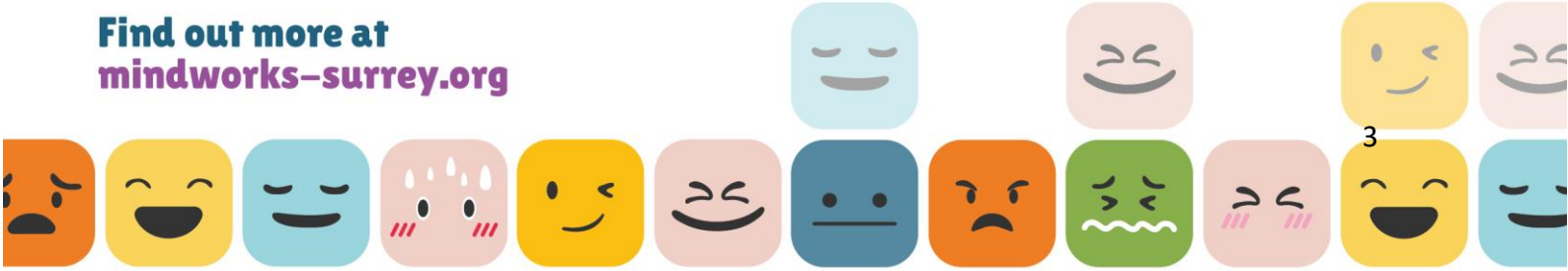
During crisis, children and young people are especially vulnerable groups. The reaction of these age groups to ongoing crisis depends on their own psychosocial developmental stage; their individual characteristics; their degree of emotional and affective dependency on adults and their previous experiences. Children and young people often respond differently than adults to difficult events. This is because their brains do not process information and events like adult brains. Furthermore, children and young people don't have the life experience and rationality to fully comprehend some events. For instance, most young children do not understand that death is permanent. Children and young people are sensitive to how a disaster affects families and communities.

It is vital to remember that children and young people's reactions to a crisis will vary widely, depending on circumstances such as:

- The extent of exposure.
- The amount of support during and after
- The amount of personal loss and social disruption.

In the aftermath of a crisis, an emotional response is expected and can be considered a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. Some of the behavioural changes can include:

- Regression to behaviours like bed-wetting, thumb sucking and baby talk
- Increased separation anxiety (e.g., not wanting to sleep alone or go to school)
- Tantrums, challenging behaviour /disruptive behaviour
- Changes in sleep and appetite
- Acting immature or younger than their age
- Avoid talking about unpleasant things
- Clingy and dependent behaviours
- Their emotions, fear, increased anxiety, depressed mood
- Increased inattention
- Lack of motivation
- Changes in appetite
- Lack of enjoyment (anhedonia)
- Social withdrawal
- Avoidance
- Hypervigilance
- Increased risk-taking activities
- Acting like there is nothing good in the future



How can we help:

Creating routines. Creating a sense of predictability is an important way to support children's development during a new or challenging situation, as well as helping them to feel less anxious by allowing them to experience some certainty and, therefore, feel more grounded and secure. Routines or schedules are an excellent way to create a sense of predictability for both parent and child.

Help Children with Feelings and Behaviors. When children go through a difficult time, they need extra attention and support from their parents. It's critical to be patient with upset children who may have outbursts. It's also important to maintain the family rules about behaviour the same, if possible. When children don't have clear boundaries and limits for their behaviour, they may feel unsafe and more anxious.

The basis for helping children is to spend time with them, give them attention and offer them praise when they are doing things you want them to do and ignore the behaviours you would like them to stop doing (if it is safe to ignore), and talk with them in the way that enables them to share with you what they are thinking and feeling.

Adapt messages Age-appropriate honest explanations about what's happening and what to expect are an important part of helping children and young people feel safe and process traumatic experiences.

Practicing coping skills is important, even for young children. Teaching learners to practice taking deep breaths and to think positive thoughts can go a long way in helping learners feel calm.

Productivity. Children aged 7 and above have growing capacity of how they can contribute to their home or community. Finding ways to help others during a crisis can provide older children and young people with a sense of purpose and provide a sense of achievement.

Encourage Play. Play is fundamental to how children develop problem solving skills. Moreover, in times of uncertainty, playing is one of the most important things for coping with stress and anxiety.

Sleep, nutrition, exercise. These three things are vital for wellbeing. A study conducted during the beginning of the pandemic suggested that children who exercised and went to bed earlier and had longer sleep durations had fewer psychosocial problems, therefore encourage children to eat nourishing foods and get enough sleep at night.

Look after your own mental health and well- being! If you have this in check for yourself, you will be in a stronger position to support your child; therefore, look after your own mental health and well-being.

References

- https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/BHG-COVID1FamilyToolbox.pdf

What do you want to know about young people?
Information for parents, caregivers, and teachers

Whether you are a parent, care provider or teacher of a young person, we want to help you understand more about teenage development and the brain. Some of what we consider to be developmentally normal can be exacerbated by an external crisis' such as a pandemic, international warfare or cost of living crisis.

Teenagers are in the stage of life between childhood and adulthood; it is a transitional phase of physical, social, emotional, intellectual and psychological development. Generally, it is thought that it is the stage between puberty and adulthood during which significant changes occur in the brain, body and in the way the young person relates to the world. This period produces a series of challenges which all young people need to navigate. These include:

- Biological changes: such as the beginning of puberty, which can start earlier for some young people than others. These changes involve "waking up" hormones, as well as changes in emotions. Examples of hormones which are 'waking up' are the sex hormones which are present at birth but hibernate for almost a decade. Puberty is a time of hormones awakening, and the teenager's brain sees these hormones for the very first time. Because of that, the brain has not yet worked out how the body should respond to these chemicals. Hence, you may notice mood fluctuation. Be patient; your child's brain is learning something new, and it needs time to adapt.
- Cognitive challenges: these are where young people develop the capacity for abstract thinking as well as egocentric thinking. Subsequently, you may notice that the young person thinks that everyone is watching them; no one understands them and believe they are invincible, this may lead to risk-taking behaviour. You may also notice that the young person can think more logically and understand that problems are not always simple; they can also solve complex issues and understand different perspectives.
- Physiological changes: these might include a growth spurt, getting taller and changes to some parts of the body such as the head, face and hands. For girls this will include having menstrual periods and for boys their voice will break (become deeper) etc.
- Social challenges: the young person starts to move away from the family to their peer group, which become their main priority as they prepare to stand alone as adults. The young person is learning how to be part of a group and they may find it terrifying to not appear to 'fit in'. The shift from dependency to interdependency starts to take place. It is a time when the young person starts to search for identity questioning "who am I," as well as exploring their sexual identity.

- Moral and spiritual changes: such as the questioning of belief systems and a search for meaning.
- Brain changes: the amygdala is a part of the brain concerned with survival. It is fully developed at birth and is associated with impulses, aggression and instinctive behaviour. The prefrontal cortex develops last, it informs decision-making, impulse control, planning, ability to process consequence and problem solving. The changes in the prefrontal cortex continues into early adulthood (the brain fully develops at the age of 25). During adolescence, the brain goes through a process of pruning and developing new neural connections. During this time, young people can find it hard to interpret facial expressions correctly. The ones they often confuse are concern/anxiety and anger. So, when the young person comes home later than planned, and the worried parent asks them where they have been, they can mistake the parent's expression as anger and respond defensively/angrily. Therefore, it is essential not to take it personally and try to state feelings to aid clear communication. Try to avoid "you-statements" as they can be interpreted as blaming; try using "I-statements" instead.
  The young person's brain is still under construction; therefore, sometimes you may notice that their behaviour appears quite mature, but at other times they behave irrationally, impulsively or emotionally. The back-to-front development of the brain and the fact that young people rely on the amygdala much more than the prefrontal cortex, can explain these shifts and changes.

Typical behaviour for young people includes:

- Wanting to be more independent, starting to question rules, the possibility of being rebellious and starting to refuse to do things.
- Not wanting to socialise with family, preferring to spend time with friends.
- Needing more sleep, they may develop different sleep patterns. The brain produces melatonin (a sleep hormone) at a different time of the day. This means that the young person may feel tired later in the evening than they used to. This may mean that they are awake well into the night, making it hard for them to get up the next morning.
- Mood swings, aggression and arguing. Adolescence is a time of increased response to stress; the young person has a different tolerance to stress to what we see in adults. The adolescent brain is still learning how to control and show emotions.
- Changing in physical appearance. If puberty starts significantly early or late, this can cause a heightened level of stress or lead to low-self-esteem.

- Worry about physical appearance. Because physical changes occur at different rates for everyone, the young person may become self-conscious and anxious about their appearance.
- Reducing communication and increasing conflict; this can occur as the young person wants to be more independent, as well as starting to think more abstractly and question different viewpoints. The conflict tends to peak in early adolescence.
- Indecisiveness: in adolescence, decision-making skills are still a work in progress.
- Attraction towards the opposite sex or the same sex.
- Risk-taking behaviour: As mentioned before, the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for thinking about consequences, self-monitoring, problem-solving and decision-making, develops last. Consequently, the young person may experience varying degrees of self-control or good judgment, subsequently, they are prone to risk-taking behaviour. However, young people do need to take risks in order to grow and develop; you can support your child by offering healthy risks, such as sports.

Top tips for parents, care-givers and teachers

- Don't be shocked when the young person does something silly that they can't explain. Remember, the young person's prefrontal cortex has not yet fully come into fruition, so be tolerant. Explore and talk about mistakes when you and they are calm.
- Take emotion out of the equation. You may not like how the young person is behaving or how they are thinking but keep your emotions out. Remember, young people may be making a poor choice as their brain is a work in progress, and at this time they lack the skills to make a better one.
- Don’t do anything until you’re both calm. If you attempt a conversation with your child and the young person is rude, do not respond reactively, make sure you don’t get dragged into a fight. Remove yourself from the situation or have a script ready that you say to yourself like, “It is not about me, arguing will make things worse.” If you can do that consistently, over time, the antagonism should calm down.
- If you are giving consequences; plan ahead**:** You don’t have to react to the situation immediately; take a little time to put your plan together. If you issue consequences in the heat of the moment, you might over-react and give a “punishment” that teaches your child nothing or is unsustainable.
- Help the young person to find healthy strategies for expressing feelings such as listening to music, writing, drawing and talking.
- Be the adult that listens and helps them to think and feel. Be the adult that they know believes in them and has faith in their abilities. Give the young person the space to work things out on their own. Don’t judge but help them to reflect on what

life throws at them. This will help the young person to gain better self-control. But, most importantly, if the young person feels a sense of connection with just one adult, it can stop their sense of isolation and not being understood.

- Ask for opinions; let the young person see that you have real confidence in her/him.
- Talk step by step about different options the young person might choose and discuss potential consequences.
- Young people need guidance and limit-setting from adults around them, so have boundaries and routines that provide structure. However, do provide some space for negotiating those boundaries and routines.
- Help the young person to get lots of sleep.
- Allow the young person to take some reasonable health risks such as encouraging them to play sport.
- Praise and reward desired behaviour.
- Be a positive role model.
- Stay connected with your child and don't get discouraged if they don't want to speak to you; be approachable and communicate that you are available for them if they need you.
- If the young person does not want to talk, you could consider texting, many parents report having a successful and meaningful conversation through text.
- Ask curious questions . . . not loaded questions. Ask your teen for his or her ideas and be collaborative.
- Talk with the young person about their developing brain. Below is a link to a video you may want to share with the young person.

Resources

- https://www.youtube.com/embed/fhI9KLwfpbM
- Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain Daniel J. Siegel
- Blame My Brain by Nicola Morgan
- https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/development/understanding-your-teenager/brain-development-teens
- https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/development

References

- Frances E, Jensen with Amy Ellis Nut 2015 "*The Teenage brain a neuroscientist's survival guide to raising adolescents and young adults".* First edition. Harper Collins, New York.

- Raising Children Network (Australia) 2006-2020. "*Brain development teenagers",* view 10 July 2020 //raisingchildren.net.au/teens/development/understanding-your-teenager/brain-development-teens

Sunderland, M 2015 "*Conversations that Matter Talking with children and teenagers in ways that helps ".* Worth Publishing, Cornwall

Information for Parents/Carers

During difficult times, trying to juggle family life, amongst all the other challenges going on in our worlds and the wider world, it can be easy to lose sight of our own needs. You are the lynch pin in your children's life and therefore it is important that you take time to reflect and pay attention to your own needs. So often it is easy to try and push those needs aside and then find your stress levels building up, impacting on relationships and our ability to cope. Chronic stress has a negative impact on both our physical and mental health. The following website can direct you to a range of information and services available across Surrey to support you: https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/mental-wellbeing/adults/local-services

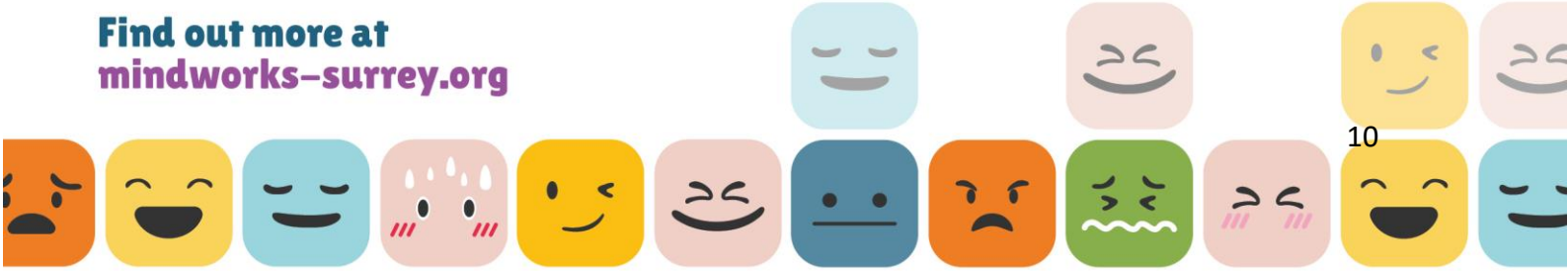
There is a search function, so if you don't immediately see what you are looking for, you can do a quick search. There are a number of services you can self-refer to, including free talking therapies and a helpline to guide you, if you are seeking financial, welfare or wellbeing support.

The key message is to take time to look after yourself - What does looking after yourself look like to you? This might include taking care of your physical, emotional, or social needs, such as healthy routines for eating, sleeping and exercise. Pursuing an interest or hobby, relaxation, exercise or mindfulness. Connecting with others, being kind to yourself and mindful of how you use social media. Try to schedule and commit to time to look after yourself and, if you feel you need more support, do look at the Healthy Surrey website.

Top Tips

1. Find things that help you feel calm. Be present and try relaxation and breathing techniques. Learn to breathe by trying mindfulness or relaxation apps, practicing deep breathing, or playing music. You also can make a self-care box or a happy box. A self-care box is something to get out on days when you feel low/sad/stressed/anxious etc. The aim is to pick objects for the box that will lift your mood. What goes in the box is individual to you. Treat yourself; this might be to a relaxing bath, a run, a favourite TV programme or a bar of chocolate!

2. Reflect: Don't ignore your thoughts and feelings. Some of us may have a habit of escaping the uncomfortable feelings that the current crisis evokes in us, but those feelings need to be processed. So, take some time to quietly reflect internally, focusing on sensations, images, feelings and thoughts; recognise that you have emotions, name them and control them enough to enable yourself to choose how you respond. You may write down your worries and anxieties; or keep a journal. It is important that you don't ignore your anxieties, but also don't allow your worries to take over you, so you don't feel swept along by your thoughts and feelings of anxiety.



- You can set aside a specific worry time of 10–15 minutes each day. Spend this time thinking about your worries: you can write them down, draw, or make notes in a journal. It doesn't matter how you express your fears as long as you acknowledge that you are feeling this way, and then remember to put your worries away. You may also try some calming breathing.
- Or you might try to approach your feelings as if you were a curious scientist — for example, during the pandemic it may have been, "I am having thoughts about catching COVID-19". After noticing and bringing this to your awareness, do some exercises that allow you to move out of your head and back into your body (do some breathing, pushing your feet into the ground, walk around, clap and rub your hands together), and remain engaged in the physicality of those exercises.

3. Ensure you have access to natural light. If your exposure to natural light is limited, it may result in a drop in the production of melatonin and serotonin, which are essential for our mental health and well-being. Plan daily exercise during the daytime and sit in the garden or next to the window to access daylight. Eat foods that help boost melatonin such as walnuts, cherries, milk or bananas. Salmon, poultry, eggs, soy products, nuts, milk and spinach are among the foods that can help boost serotonin.

4.Look after your well-being by having a regular sleep pattern and getting enough sleep. It's easy to develop unhealthy coping strategies. So, reduce your consumption of drinks that contain caffeine or alcohol. Make an effort to exercise; when you exercise, your body releases endorphins, dopamine and serotonin—hormones that are essential for your health. Also, make healthier food choices to strengthen your immune system and improve your well-being.

5. Don't pressure yourself. The pressure to know the answers, to carry on with life as if it had no impact on you; the pressure of smiling even though you may not feel like it; the pressure of having different values, making difficult decisions and feeling criticised; and the pressure to look as though you have it all together can all cause anxiety. Try to be kinder to yourself and acknowledge that you are doing your best under the circumstances you are in.

6.Keep in touch with family and friends. We are social animals, so we need and desire closeness with other people.

7. Reach out for support. Remember you are not alone; talk to someone and ask for help. It's strength to reach out and ask for support, so speak to someone you trust—a friend, a family member or a helpline. You may want to make a list of people you know and identify those who are good at providing practical, psychological and moral support.



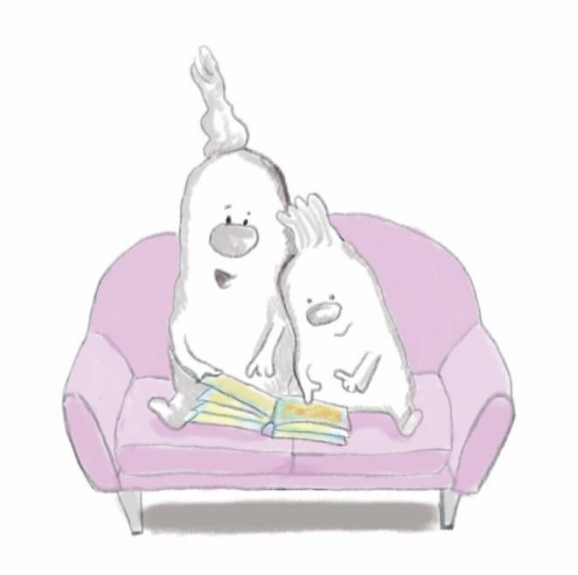
The 30-3-30 approach

(taken from: http://learn.4mentalhealth.com/sites/default/files/courses/wb8/index.html#/id/5e7dd232485e8e466da2f36a) (THIS LINK DIDN'T OPEN FOR ME)

The suggestions below are grouped into activities that take about 30 seconds, others which take about 3 minutes, and others which take 30 minutes or longer. The 30 second ones are quick fix 'emergency' actions you can do if you suddenly feel panicky, scared or unable to cope.

30 seconds	3 minutes	30 minutes
Take a few slow deep breaths. Breathe in, count to 3, breathe out, count to 3.	Phone a loved one or friend for a quick chat. Leave a message if they don't answer.	Pamper yourself with a luxurious bath, and maybe have scented candles and soothing music.
Close your eyes, hold one hand in the other, squeeze gently and repeat 'I can get through this'.	Do a household task, like a quick bit of washing up, cleaning the bathroom mirror or making a bed.	Do 'proper sort-out' of a cluttered kitchen cupboard, drawer, wardrobe or bookcase. Feel the satisfaction of having done something!
Sit on a chair and focus on the sensation of the chair pressing onto your back and bottom.	Make a hot drink in a mug and sip it slowly, feeing the warmth of the mug in both hands.	Enjoy a TV or radio programme, either a recording of an old favourite or something new.
Take a few sips of cold water, focusing on the cooling feeling as you swallow it. Even better if very cold or if you can add ice.	Quick brain workout, such as 3 minutes doing a wordsearch, crossword, sudoku. Try the 'Alphabet Game' choose a category, then using the alphabet in order, list as many as you can.	Do something 'mindful'. This means just focusing on the one thing you are doing: such as bit of gardening, spending time on an indoor hobby, doing a jigsaw puzzle, listening to a recorded book.
Look out of a window or doorway. What can you see and hear? Anything new or unusual?	Listen to a favourite piece of music, something soothing or uplifting depending on how you feel.	Prepare a tasty meal or snack, perhaps a new recipe, and eat it slowly, savouring every mouthful.
Pick up a special photo or object that evokes happy memories and focus on what it means to you.	Brush your teeth and brush or comb your hair. (Even if you don't really need to!)	Sing. At the top of your voice, sing all the songs you know, or just your favourites several times.
Learn a favourite, inspiring quote by heart, or keep a written version handy to read.	Write a worry list. Getting things down on paper can help stop them going around in your head. Now tackle them one by one.	Go out for some fresh air. If not, do some indoor exercises, yoga or stretches
Think of 2 things that are 'Just about OK'.	Phone someone for a quick 'hello'	Phone a helpline. Ask the person who sent you this leaflet to recommend a couple of helplines if you can't think of any yourself.

If they are concerned, should I talk to my child about the cost-of-living crisis?



Short answer is YES! Many children already know about the cost-of-living crisis so don't avoid talking about it with them or answering their questions. Trying to avoid the subject may create more anxiety about what you are not saying.

- It is important to be truthful but remember your child's age. Give them factual information, just adjust the amount and the level of detail you go into, so that it is age and stage appropriate.
- Find out what they are worried about and to focus on what they can control. Think about what you can change as a family.
- Try to be upbeat and positive: It is important that children do not take on adult worries and that parents are providing them with feelings of security. It is OK to say things may be difficult, but children should never go hungry and that we will find a way through it. It is also useful to state that the financial crisis is a change we are all going through.
- Be mindful of conversations your children may overhear, as these types of conversations may be a source of anxiety for young people. Consider the amount of news, on the radio or television, children and young people are exposed to.
- Show interest and be aware of the types of social media your children are accessing. It is easy to compare ourselves with others who appear more fortunate. This also applies to adults.
- Ensure you do not neglect your own wellbeing and support needs.

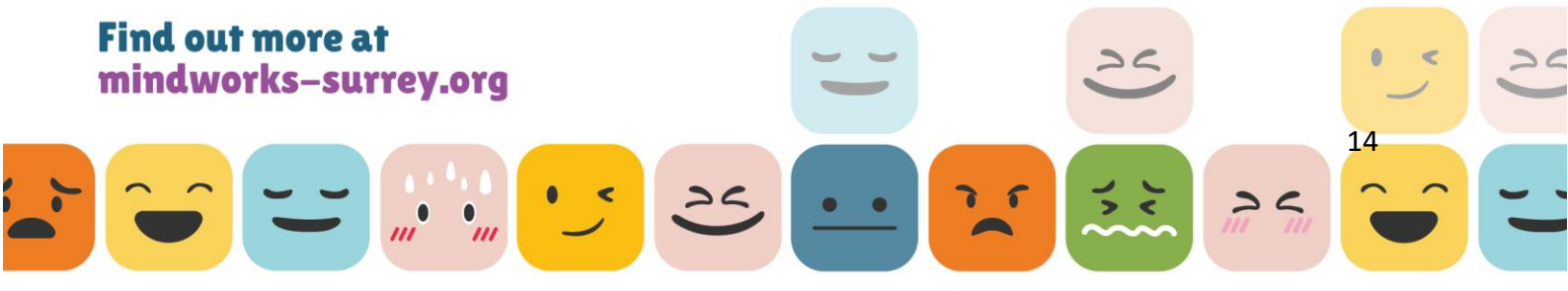
Further advice and guidance can be found here:

- https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/money-and-mental-health/#Howtotalktoyourchildaboutmoneyandthecostoflivingcrisis
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zqp2tcw

Separation anxiety

Everyone experiences anxiety sometimes, and it is completely normal. For some children, being apart from their parents or caregivers and going to school has become more difficult since the lockdown.
We've put together some strategies to help you manage and cope with separation anxiety during school drop-off.

- **Face your fear**. Although avoiding a feared situation (such as going to school) brings short-term relief from anxiety, in the long term it will only increase the anxiety as we never learn whether our fears will come true or that we can cope if they do. It can be helpful to gradually build up to facing fears, one small step at a time.
- **Create a visual timetable.** Children and young people could benefit from making a timetable, so they know what to expect. Children with anxiety may be apprehensive about changing from one activity to the next, especially if they are unprepared for the change. The timetable can have pictures for each activity in the day e.g., a picture of a parent/carer collecting them from school at 3pm, as this will remind children they will go home at a certain time and manage their expectations.
- **Make a goodbye ritual.** You could plan a goodbye ritual in advance such as a silly handshake or a hug and a positive mantra. When it comes to the moment, perform the goodbye ritual and then go.
- **Grounding techniques.** It is important to keep calm during separation even though it is very stressful, and model being calm for your child to contain their own emotions. You can use grounding techniques to help you stay calm and practice them with your child when they are anxious. Try the 54321 techniques; list 5 things that you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste and describe each item. Another technique is to pick a colour, and list 5 things around you that are that colour.
- **Familiar faces.** Children can benefit from having trusted; familiar school staff present when they arrive at school. If possible, help your child to identify two familiar school friends who will be there in the morning, at least until the anxiety is reduced. Can they travel to school together? Can they arrange a meeting place at the gates to enter together? Could you speak to a teacher to ask if they can sit near each other for the first few days?
- **Safe place.** Speak with school to identify a safe place where children can go to reduce anxiety during stressful periods. Some children benefit from taking some time to adjust by talking, which is another benefit of having a safe space before going to the classroom.

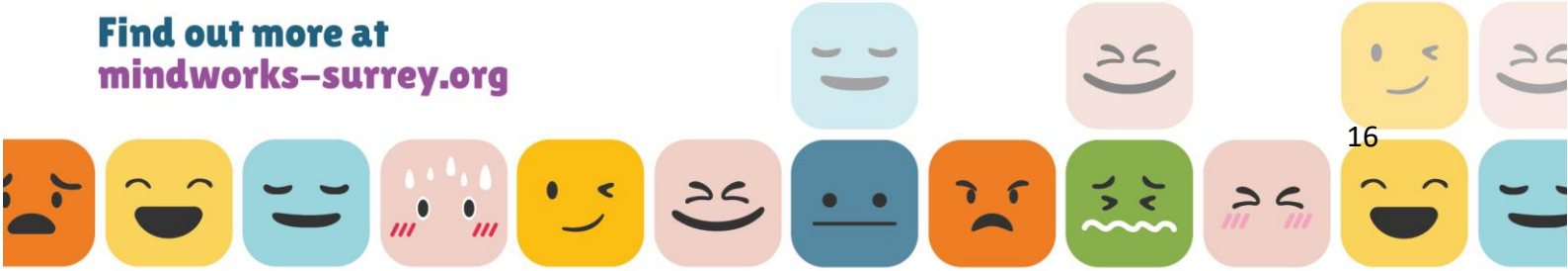


- **Trusted adult.** Help your child to think of a teacher or staff member that they can go to during times of stress. They will speak to your child with empathy and will be understanding of their feelings. However, the adult should encourage the child to return to class once they are calm and review self-calming strategies that they can use when anxiety arises. Self-calming strategies may include deep breathing, counting, muscle relaxation, holding an object that provides comfort (e.g., picture of a parent or favourite item from home), drawing a picture, writing down feelings, or thinking of a funny time. Connect with school and the trusted adult about this plan.
- **Transitional objects.** Your child could take a handkerchief with a parent's perfume or soothing smell such as lavender, or take an object from home (e.g., a pen, photo, toy, keyring) as a token to remind them that they are still connected to you even though you're apart
- **Positive affirmations.** Coping statements such as 'I love you', or 'Soon it'll be home time', or 'You're doing really well' can be helpful. Encourage your child to come up with some of their own and write them down on cards they can keep with them at school. You could even slip some positive affirmations into their lunchbox or bookbag as well for extra reassurance.
- **Contact.** At times of stress at school, a brief phone call—a minute or two—with a parent or carer may reduce separation anxiety.
- **Practice positive reframing.** It is essential to help children and young people think positively about situations. For instance, remind them that they will get to see friends in school or work on a project that they enjoy. Encourage your child to make a pro and con list about the return to school and help them notice the good points.
- **Give positive feedback** when your child makes an effort to get through anxiety-provoking situations, like going to school, or uses strategies in order to cope with anxiety. You could create a visual reward system where your child gets recognised on a daily basis for making an effort and, at the end of the week, receives a bigger reward. You could also plan something nice as a reward to look forward to at the end of the first day back, such as a favourite meal or movie night.
- **Problem solving.** Make a plan for new situations. This can alleviate the fear of uncertainty that may arise when children are separated from a caregiver. Firstly, identify the problem, e.g. 'I might not be able to find my friend at break time'. Come up with as many solutions as you can think of together, no matter how weird or wonderful. Then go through the pros and cons of each solution and give them a mark out of 10. At the end you'll be left with a couple or one solution that your child can take forward should that situation arise.
- Stories. Provide examples of coping role models by reading stories about children who are afraid and conquer their fears. Story books are a good medium to support children with a range of emotional difficulties. The following website has recommendations for

books on anxiety www.littleparachutes.com/category/feelings/anxiety. The Invisible String Book by Patrice Karst is a good book to support with separation anxiety.

Website links

- Separation anxiety https://www.anxietycanada.com/disorders/separation-anxiety/
- Free resources to use with your child https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/how-to-help-your-child-with-separation-anxiety .

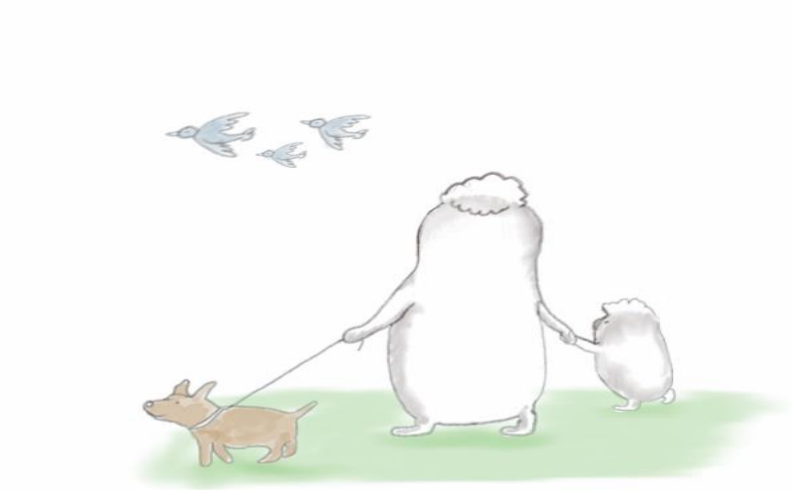


Thinking about leaving your child home alone or them going out alone?

Learning to be independent is an important part of growing up. Every parent will have to leave their child home alone at some point. But it is always difficult to know if your child is ready and what the right thing to do is. The NSPCC has developed a helpful guide" Leaving your child home alone – Advice". The following website provides lots of useful advice and tips that may guide you to understand if your child is ready to stay at home or go out alone, as well as advise you on how to prepare your child for this next step. Leaving Your Child Home Alone - Advice | NSPCC

References

- Leaving Your Child Home Alone - Advice | NSPCC



Online Safety

The NSPCC has developed several resources that are aimed at helping parents and children to keep safe when online. Here are some helpful links:

- Talking to your child about online safety could be a daunting task. You might not know where to begin or what to say. The following link provides advice on where to get support and how to start the conversation with your child if you are worried.
- Teaching Your Child about Internet & Online Safety | NSPCC

- Are you worried about how to keep your child safe online? Advice on how to apply parental controls on devices can be found by clicking on the following link:
- Use Parental Controls to Keep Your Child Safe | NSPCC

There are further resources to support parents and children navigate the risks that they may encounter when they are online. Please click on the appropriate link below:

- **Online safety guides for parents -** Keeping children safe online | NSPCC
- **Online safety resources for children** - Keeping children safe online | NSPCC
- **Online safety resources for children with SEND** -Keeping children safe online | NSPCC

References

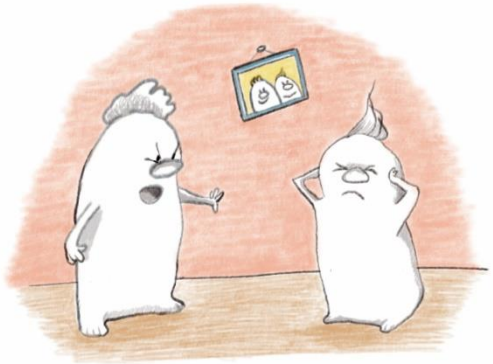
- Teaching Your Child about Internet & Online Safety | NSPCC

Managing emotional crisis in young people during times of stress

What is a crisis? For many young people a crisis will look very different, we are all individuals and what might be a crisis situation for one young person is different from another. Whilst many families are struggling with the cost of living this can affect how a young person presents emotionally and what might constitute a crisis. Often a crisis situation can be solved by using the techniques below, but presentation can vary from child to child. We must remember crisis situations are rare and although a child is distressed this is also a normal part of processing, learning how to manage extreme situations though can make us more aware of how to cope if they come.

Helping children and young people cope with stress. We all have a window of tolerance. Our window of tolerance refers to how much we can handle, emotionally, before shutting down or blowing up (emotional states called "hypoarousal" and "hyperarousal" by brain researchers.) Healthy brains in optimal circumstances have a big arch that helps us stay present to listen, learn, and grow, even when situations are difficult. Children are good at picking up the subtle signs that adults are stressed or worried. They may not know what it's about, but they can feel something isn't right. Your child might have also heard about things on the news via other children or parents and they might not understand it well enough to feel they can speak to you about it, and this might lead to an emotional crisis.

Some of the things that might be a crisis situation:



A child in significant distress. This might look like uncontrollable crying, screaming or shouting, moving around and expressing their distress by being verbally aggressive or rude. Sometimes children might throw things to express their distress. Most of the time though this is not the case, and your child will just be very upset and struggling to calm themselves down. Using the skills below can often help de-escalate the situation.

A child saying they want to hurt themselves. This is often a fear response when a child feels very out of control. Children can say things quite shocking to communicate their feelings as their brains are unable to verbally explain their distress. This might be a child saying they want to die or that they are going to cut themselves or hit their head on something. A parent

should always try to make the environment as safe as possible during this time. Use pillows to prevent a child injuring themselves if they hit something, removing dangerous objects from the vicinity such as knives and razors and keeping communication simple and direct. Often these thoughts will subside and may not literally mean the child will actually hurt themselves, but all behaviour, both verbal and physical is communication. This would be the time to call the crisis line for advice and support.

A child self-harming. Children, when distressed can try and harm themselves and might succeed in doing so. This can come in the form of hitting themselves, biting themselves, punching objects or hitting their head on things. Children might scratch their skin when distressed causing abrasions. This can also be a child putting themselves in a risky situation due to distress, such as climbing, jumping from things due to their flight response or putting themselves in harm's way such as trying to leave the house. There is also the possibility that they might try to get to something to harm themselves. This is rare and often children are much more likely to communicate verbally than physically. Parents should make sure the environment is safe, removing all objects that could be used to harm themselves quickly if this is what the child has used. If a child is self-harming by scratching or biting, reminding them that you want to help and that you can see how distressed they are helps to reassure the child that they are being heard. This would be the time to call the crisis line for advice and support. If a child does leave the house, then follow them to make sure they are safe or if you are unable to do so, or you lose sight of them then call the police to support you.

What should I do if my child is distressed?

There are some key points you can consider about how to support your child or young person, to stay within their window of tolerance.

Firstly, try to speak with your child, calmly ask them to try and communicate what is making them distressed or if you can help in any way. Often younger children will respond with "I don't know" which is ok. If they are highly anxious or frustrated their brains can 'shut down' Making it harder to think logically. If your child has a favourite toy or space to go encourage them to use this, try not to talk too much, even if the urge is there. Overwhelming them with questions can be confusing and lead to more distress.

Secondly, give them options. Often when children feel out of control they feel trapped. Giving them an option to 'get out' of a distressing situation can help. Try to use this by distracting them, offer them some food, suggest they read in their room etc this gives them a way out of a situation whereby, especially with anger, they can 'back down' without shame.

Thirdly, make sure you set boundaries, kindly but firmly. If there are physical attacks calmly remind them that this is not ok and encourage them that there are limits to what is acceptable

and what isn't. Remind them that getting physical is not something that helps solve their distress and that you're listening to what they are saying but can only do so if it's safe.

What do I do if this doesn't work? Who can help me?

There are support services which can help by offering support to you and your child in a crisis. These are services run by specialist mental health teams and offer safety advice and skills to help defuse crisis situations.

- Surrey and Borders partnership run a crisis line which is staffed by professionals and is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week. You can contact them on0800 915 4644 . They will be able to offer support at times when things can feel out of control.
- You can access guidance and support on Advice, information and resources :: Mindworks Surrey (mindworks-surrey.org) This website has many ideas and tips on how to manage different situations and distress with your child. It has a library of resources which are very supportive and useful.
- If your child has a Neurodevelopmental diagnosis or is awaiting one, please call the Neurodevelopment crisis and advice line, it runs from 5pm until 11pm, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Please call 0300 222 5755.
- Finally, when the child is able to calm down then sit and guide them to try and talk about what might have caused them distress. Encourage them to be open and honest and that they can talk to you about anything. Then you can do something such as a HOPE box (Hope box :: Mindworks Surrey (mindworks-surrey.org) with them or an anxiety tree (see details below) which can help identify their distress in the future visually and manage it with these tools.
- **My anxiety and worry tree:** Encourage your child to draw a tree. On the tree place apples on the branches and inside these apples write their worries. Remind them that every apple falls from the tree eventually, some are higher than others, but they always fall down. When your child is able to manage one of these anxieties let them cross out the apple and draw it on the ground, showing them that they have beaten this anxiety and its now fallen off the tree.

Eating on a Budget



We know that the economic crisis is impacting on our mental health and that more of us are worrying about how we can feed ourselves and our families for less. As food costs continue to rise, eating healthily on a budget can be a challenge. Knowing what foods we should and shouldn't be eating can be really confusing, especially when it feels like the advice changes regularly. However, evidence suggests that as well as affecting our physical health, what we eat may also affect the way we feel. We know that eating healthily can improve your mood, give you more energy and help you think more clearly. Eating regularly can help maintain your energy levels. If your blood sugar drops you might feel tired, irritable and depressed. Eating regularly and choosing foods that release energy slowly will help to keep your sugar levels steady. Try to eat slow-release energy foods such as pasta, rice, oats, wholegrain bread and cereals, nuts and seeds. If you don't drink enough fluid, you may find it difficult to concentrate or think clearly. You might also start to feel constipated (which puts no one in a good mood). Vegetables and fruit contain a lot of the minerals, vitamins and fibre we need to keep us physically and mentally healthy. Eating a variety of different coloured fruits and vegetables every day means you'll get a good range of nutrients. Sometimes your gut can reflect how you are feeling emotionally. If you're stressed or anxious this can make your gut slow down or speed up. For healthy digestion you need to have plenty of fibre, fluid and exercise regularly. Healthy gut foods include: fruits, vegetables and wholegrains, beans, pulses, live yoghurt and other probiotics. Eating protein rich foods such as cheese, lean meat, fish, soya and eggs contains amino acids, which make up the chemicals your brain needs to regulate your thoughts and feelings. It also helps keep you feel fuller for longer.

Caffeine is a stimulant, which means it will give you a quick burst of energy, but then may make you feel anxious and depressed, disturb your sleep (especially if you have it before bed), or give you withdrawal symptoms if you stop suddenly. Caffeine is in tea, coffee, chocolate, cola and other manufactured energy drinks. Your brain needs fatty acids (such as omega-3 and -6) to keep it working well. Rather than avoid all fats, it's important to eat the right ones. Healthy fats are found in oily fish, poultry, nuts (especially walnuts and almonds), olive and sunflower oils, seeds (such as sunflower and pumpkin), avocados, milk, yoghurt, cheese and eggs.

With sensible planning we can help reduce long term health issues and save money at the same time. Our top tips can show you how to shop and cook healthily.

1. Shop smart: Review prices online to find the best bargains. Using supermarket budget ranges for items such as pasta and rice can be a real help too. Ask a member of staff at your supermarket for fresh food reduction times and try to shop then for reduced priced items. If you can, avoid shopping on an empty stomach as it may affect what and how much you buy. Consider shopping after you have eaten.

2. Beware multi-buys: These offers aren't a great deal if you end up with a mountain of food that you can't eat before it goes off. Think before you go for a multiple offer such as 'two for one' or buy two get one free'. However, they can be great if you swap items with friends.

3. Compare like with like: Compare prices per 100g to make sure you really are getting a deal – use the price tabs on the supermarket shelves to give you this information so you can compare across different size packs. Larger packs are often better value, but only if you are going to use it all. Cheaper products are not always at eye level or positioned obviously. Check out all the shelves (including top and bottom). Larger supermarkets offer a better range of produce, often at a cheaper cost, so do your main shop there if you can.

4. Use seasonal fruit and veg: Prices often come down when food is in season particularly fruit and veg, and as an extra bonus it often tastes much better. Local food markets offer locally sourced foods which are usually good value for money.

5. Plan everything: Make a meal plan, particularly for your main meals. Write a shopping list and check what food you already have at home to avoid buying things you don't need. It's estimated that between a fifth and a quarter of food that we buy is wasted. Planning what you will eat will help you make sure you're eating a healthy, balanced diet, and reduce waste. Writing a meal plan doesn't have to be complicated, and helps you plan for days when you might not have time to cook, and so avoid buying food you might not get round to cooking.

6. Only cook one meal: Where possible, don't get into the habit of catering for a variety of likes and dislikes. Make one meal for everyone. It costs more to buy the different foods and cook separate dishes.

7.Freeze leftovers: Cooked too much? Leftover bread? Don't bin it, freeze it. Enjoy casseroles, soups and curries another day and use up bread as breadcrumbs, toast or chunky baked croutons in soup.

8.Add pulses to stretch out the meat: One of the most expensive items in your basket is meat, so learning to make a little stretch a long way is a good idea. Beans and lentils are vegetarian sources of protein and iron but shouldn't be exclusive to non-meat eaters. By adding pulses to your dishes in place of some of the meat, you'll bulk them up and get plenty of protein, plus the flavour of meat, but it costs you less.

9. Consider alternative swaps: Tinned fruit and veg count towards your 5-a-day if they're tinned in water or juice, without added sugar or salt. Tinned fish is cheaper than fresh and doesn't even need cooking. Tinned salmon, sardines, mackerel and pilchards are oily fish,

which we're recommended to eat once a week for our heart health. Frozen fish can also be cheaper than fresh – frozen fish fillets or pieces without added sauces or coatings are usually healthier than fish fingers or other breaded or battered fish, which contain added fat and salt. Plant proteins – like beans, lentils and tofu - – are generally the cheapest way to get protein, and because they're lower in saturated fat than meat, they're a great choice for your heart health too.

If you want to include meat in your diet, extra-lean mince is the healthiest way to buy mince, but it does cost more. The cheapest mince contains around four times as much unhealthy (saturated) fat, compared to extra-lean. If you need to buy the cheapest mince, you can reduce the fat if you cook it the day before, allow it to cool, refrigerate, and then remove the fat from the top the next day. Or you might be able to use less meat in dishes like shepherd's pie, Bolognese sauce, stews and curries, by adding beans and vegetables. This will reduce the fat content, and if you don't need to buy as much meat, leaner options might become more affordable. Skin-on pieces of chicken and pieces with bones are cheaper than skinless, boneless chicken pieces. Just bear in mind that chicken skin contains saturated fat, so remove it before cooking. Porridge oats are a healthy choice, and cheaper than many cereals.

10. Energy-efficient cooking: Microwaves and pressure cookers tend to be the most energy-efficient ways of cooking, so can save you money on your energy bills. When it comes to slow cookers, it depends on what temperature setting you're using, but it may work out cheaper than using the oven. If you are using the oven, you can reduce the energy cost per dish by batch cooking. You can also try turning the oven off five to ten minutes before the end of the cooking time, as the food should finish cooking in the heat that's still in the oven. If you are cooking on the hob, use the smallest pan you need for the job and put a lid on it to speed up cooking and save on the amount of fuel you use. Try not to boil more water in the kettle than you need, but if you have leftover boiling water, you can put it in a flask to use for hot drinks later.

Cheap and healthy snacks

- If you have three nutritious, balanced meals each day, you might find that you don't need to snack. But if snacks are part of your diet (or your family's), try to choose fruit, plain low-fat yoghurt and unsalted nuts for a more filling and nutritious choice. Bananas, satsumas and apples make good-value snacks and don't need any preparation, or if you have a little more time, making carrot and celery sticks can be even cheaper per portion, and any leftovers can be used in soups or stews.
- Making your own popcorn instead of buying it ready-made, or as an alternative to crisps, can save money and can also be healthier, if you have it plain or flavoured with herbs and spices instead of salt, sugar or butter. Peanuts, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds are usually the most affordable nuts and seeds and have similar health benefits to pricier nuts and seeds. Unfortunately, salted or roasted peanuts are often cheaper than plain unsalted nuts. Bear in mind that the salted ones might tempt you

to eat more of them, and that too much salt can contribute to high blood pressure. Often in a supermarket, looking in the baking aisle for unsalted nuts can be cheaper than getting the same product in the snacks aisle.

- Swapping take aways for homemade can be a fun and interactive way to learn new skills and can work out cheaper, such as pizza night.

Where to get more support



- Citizen's Advice can help you understand what support you may be entitled to and make the most of your money and can check you are receiving all your benefits.
- Food banks and supply free food to people that are struggling financially.
- Search the Trussell Trust website for your closest food bank. Usually, you need a referral for a Trussell Trust food bank (for example from a social worker, health care professional or school). Your local Salvation Army can also provide food bank provision.
- If you are pregnant or have young children, you may be eligible for Healthy Start Vouchers and can apply online or by post to: healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk. This can help provide milk, fruit, veg and vitamins.

Recommended books

- Budget Cookbook-2022 Edition. Over 120 Easy recipes to slash your grocery bill in half by Annamae Little.
- Cooking on Bootstrap: Over 100 simple, budget recipes by Jack Munroe.
- Feed your Family for £20 a week: 100 Budget friendly batch cooking recipes by Lorna Cooper.
- The Little Book of Student Food: Easy Recipes for tasty, Healthy Eating on a Budget by Alistair Williams.

References

- https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/ Information and guidance about eating a healthy and well-balanced diet.
- https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/food-facts-eat-well-spend-less.html

- https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/about-food-and-mood/
- https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/nutrition/eat-well-on-a-budget
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/budget_dinner_recipe_and_ideas recipes for budget meals

Free things to do with your children over the holidays

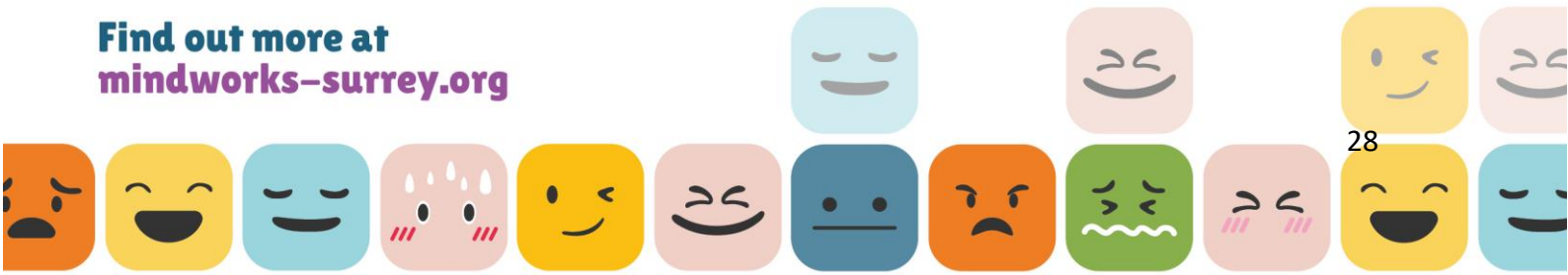
It may be harder to afford extra activities in this current climate, and you may feel sad about not being able to take your children out as much as you used to. However, you may be able to do many things with your kids that are almost absolutely free. Below are some suggestions that will not only help you save money but will allow you to bond with your child.

- Have a picnic inside- put a big towel/blanket down in the lounge and arrange a picnic tea.
- Paint some rocks – these could be given as a little Christmas present to a grandparent.
- Visit a local museum- check out their websites for free activities.



- Go Geocaching- download the free app, follow the map and explore to find the treasures, but remember to put them back where you found them- or add something new.
- On a rainy day- dress in your waterproofs and wellies and go out and have a puddle splashing competition- the biggest splash wins 😊
- Visit the local garden centre if they have a pet area/fish shop attached and look at the fish/pets- this is also good at Pets at Home stores
- Go for a bike/scooter ride
- Have a movie night- bring blankets/duvets/snacks
- Build a den under the kitchen table using sheets and blankets and have story time underneath
- Play hide and seek teddies- select 10 teddies and hide them around the garden and then the children have to find them as you relax with a cuppa…they have to bring each one to you as they find them. Do playground cross country- (if you have a car) write a list of as many local playgrounds as you can think of, and drive, when you arrive at each playground the children have to go on every item in the playground at least once in a maximum of 10 minutes and then you all pile back into the car and drive onto the next playground and so on ….
- Look online for printable activities
- Make a hedgehog picture…Go outside and collect little sticks…on a piece of paper at the edge draw the head of a hedgehog and arrange the little sticks behind to create the spikes of the hedgehog- stick them in place with PVA glue.

- Make a chalk you…outside using chalk draw around each other…fill in the clothes or silly outfits.
- Go for an alphabet walk around the park- find something with an A, then B etc…you get the picture.
- Do some cloud watching- see you what you can find, what shapes?
- Do some baking
- Create a garden obstacle course- map out the route and time each other for the fastest times
- Make an alien- use junk/recycling items to make a funny looking alien
- Flower pressing- pick some flowers and put them between 2 sheets of paper in the middle of a heavy book…add some more books on top, leave for a few days and then make a picture to hang in the bedroom or give as a gift.
- Look out for free community events listed on media websites/local Facebook pages.
- Using playdough create your most favourite dinner- what would it look like…would it include sprouts?
- Go kite flying on a windy day.
- Using leaves create a large fish- on a piece of paper at one side draw a fish head and at the other side a fish tail…layer the leaves, sticking with PVA glue to create the fish scales.
- Get a new game- see if your neighbour wants to exchange some games.



Activities that may help build resilience

We know that some children are at greater risk of anxiety impacting their well-being; therefore, it is important to develop their resilience and equip them with the skills to manage difficult situations. Remember that prevention is the most successful strategy. As a parent or caregiver, you are in the best position to empower your child and build his or her resilience. In this part of the pack, we will introduce a range of activities that you can do with your child to build resilience.

Affirmation Jar

The aim is to help children boost their confidence.

Materials: Jar, paint, ribbons, stickers, etc.

Children can use ready-made affirmation cards that fit into the jar (Motivational Flashcards | Health & Relationships | Twinkl), or they can make one.

Steps:

1. Decorate the jar using paints, stickers, labels, and ribbons. Each child will have their own idea about how to decorate the jar.

2. Make several different affirmation cards with different statements that would help boost children's self-esteem when they feel frustrated because they can't do schoolwork.

3. Cut out the affirmation cards after you have printed them or write them on paper.

4. Place the affirmation cards in a jar. Fill the jar to the top with the affirmation cards.

5. When a child feels that they can't do it, they can reach into the jar and read the affirmation.

Note: The most powerful affirmations are those that have been achieved. For example: "You say to yourself that you can't complete this task, but can you remember when you were learning to ride a bike? You thought you could never do it, and now you are such a good rider."

Achievement record

The idea of this activity is very similar to an affirmation jar.

Instruction: Ask your child to write down a positive event, such as an achievement, a challenge they have overcome, or something new they investigated, in a journal or on a slip of paper and keep it in a jam jar, shoebox, or envelope, etc. The idea is that they can look back and see what they have achieved and how they have grown. You can contribute by commenting on positives.

Confidence mind mapping

This activity offers them creative space and assists in boosting their confidence.

Steps

1. First, ask them to put, in the centre of their mind map, the punchline, "Why I am great."

2.Then, ask them to draw several arms from the centre and indicate on each arm why he/she is a good child, friend, learner and individual.

This exercise, in creating a personal confidence mind map, is really helpful, as noting their positive sides will allow their positive traits to emerge.

Some children may find it difficult to identify their qualities. Still, they can ask their family, friends and school staff to let them know what qualities or positives they see in them – for example, a lovely smile, lovely eyes, being helpful, being kind to others etc.



Note: The alternative to mind mapping would be to cut out hands with the above and create a bunting from it.

Calm Down Kit

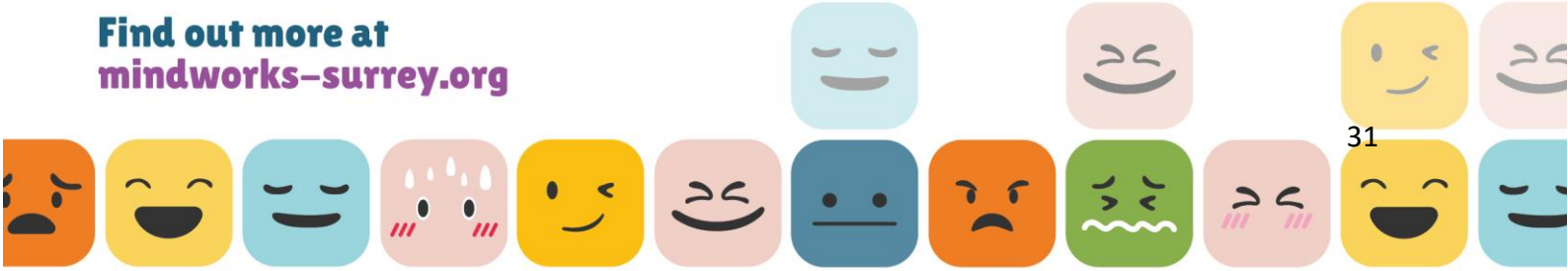
The focus of the activity is to create a kit with a shoebox or other kind of box, where children can paint or colour the box and put items in that help them calm down.

What to Put in a Calm Down Kit: Remember, although children are similar, no child of the same age is the same or has exactly the same experiences. You may offer suggestions about what to put into the box. Still, you could prompt them to think about what they are already doing when they have difficult emotions, such as frustration, sadness, or confusion that may be helping them. This way, they are engaged, and this should help them make a list of items that they would want to include. The more the child or young person is involved, the more likely they will be to utilise the box.

Materials:

- Box (think old shoebox, treasure chest, etc.)
- Markers, coloured paper, stickers, etc. for decorating
- A list of items to include

Allow the child or young person to decorate the box; this will encourage ownership of the box. Once the box is ready, fill it with items, and practice!



Change Cloud

What is a Change Cloud? You can use the text below to guide your conversation with children about the Change Cloud. Modify to address their situational and developmental needs.

We're going through some changes because of transition, event, or because of disruption. I want to talk a bit about how these changes make you feel. To help us, let's pretend transition, event, or cause of disruption is a cloud. Some clouds pass quickly and some stay for a very long time. Some clouds bring changes that we can manage easily, and some clouds bring changes that are really hard, and we wish would go away. Let's make a cloud to represent transition, event, or cause of disruption. What kind of cloud should it be? What does your cloud look like, sound like, feel like?

Suggested Reflection Questions

- Does it feel like a big or little change?
- Was it an expected or unexpected change?
- Did it happen slowly or all of a sudden?
- Has it been around for a while, or did it enter our lives recently?
- What things have changed? What things have remained the same?
- How do you feel about these changes? E.g., scared, worried, unsure, excited, disappointed, angry, sad, curious. *Note: You can use these resources to help identify different feelings-related words:*

  a. Emotions Wheel (Source: Youth First Inc.)
  b. Feelings Tree (Source: EASEL Lab)



References: This activity was copied— "Coping with Changes: Social-Emotional Learning Through Play" by The LEGO Foundation

Social Support Mapping

It is always good to help children and young people recognise their support network, especially during a difficult time when they may struggle with a mixture of emotions. Social relationships are really important, and sometimes during difficult times, it may be harder for children and young people to talk and play with those they usually do. Therefore, it is good to understand who else is there that the children and young people feel able to talk to, as well.

Materials: Paper, markers, coloured pencils, stickers, etc.
Ask them to write their names or draw themselves in the centre of a piece of paper.
Next, ask them to write or draw individuals they are close to, those they can trust and rely on, for example, friends, a family member, a teacher, or other trusted adults.
Underneath each person, they can write or draw the characteristics that they like in those people. For example, are they kind, caring, etc.? You can also ask them what they like to do best with certain friends; for example, play, talk, share ideas, etc.
as to help children and young people find a creative way of connecting.

Reflection: During this exercise, it's essential to listen to them without active judgement. Encourage children and young people to reflect on the social map that they developed.
Ask open-ended questions such as: What do you like about that person the most? How can you talk to that person now, i.e., face-to-face, via telephone or online portal, child's support bubble, writing letters, etc.? You may also ask children and young people about an animal, activity or memory that makes them feel good.



Helping hands

Children and young people could draw around their own hand and then fill in the fingers in relation to different areas where they can find strength and help. For example, on the thumb write the name of someone they trust and can talk to and on the small finger write something that makes them happy, such as walking the dog, baking etc. In the palm write something that they consider to be a strength within themselves, for example, the ability to cope with big feelings or being able to write feelings down in a diary etc.

Dream catchers

This activity aims to enhance hope. We know from the research study that hope can promote well-being during times of adversity.

You can ask children and young people to make a dream catcher. The idea is that children and young people can express their hopes and dreams in words or via drawings. They can make a small picture or charm that captures their hopes and attach it to the dream catcher.

Materials:
paper plate
yarn, any color
hole puncher
craft beads
craft feathers
color markers
scissors

Steps: Free instruction about making a dream catcher can be accessed by clicking the following link: https://www.bakerross.co.uk/craft-ideas/kids/paper-plate-dream-catcher/



Child-friendly mindfulness

Mindfulness is a great strategy because it engages the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps regulate our body following a stress response. What's important about mindfulness is that children and young people focus on the present moment—noticing what's happening within them and around them.

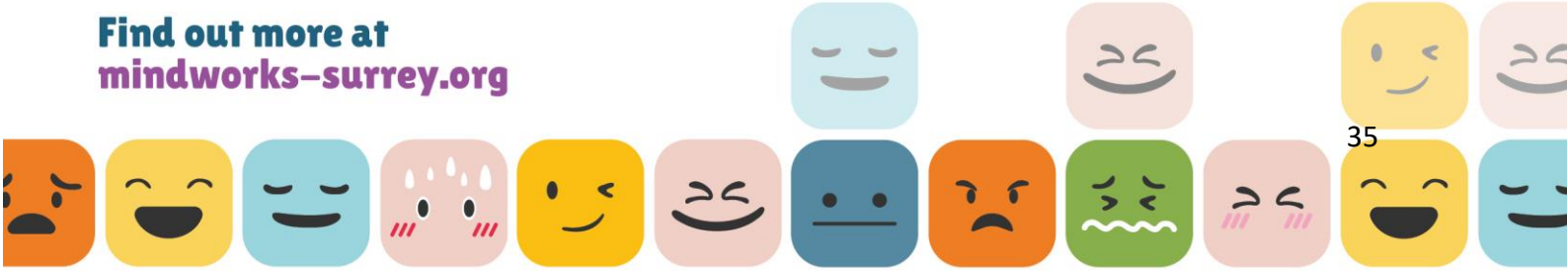
Some children and young people and adults may associate mindfulness with sitting with crossed legs and closed eyes for 30 minutes. Still, there are many different ways of practising mindfulness, and with children and young people, we need to do something a little bit different and more playful. For example, we can ask children and young people to breathe in like they're smelling a flower and breathe out like they're blowing a candle. You can also ask children and young people to imagine they are blowing bubbles. They can take a big breath and breathe out, imagining they are trying to make many bubbles. Children and young people can practise using bubbles if they have them at home/school. Other ways of practising mindfulness can be walking in nature and noticing the present moment, eating mindfully, or drawing mindfully.

Other ways to practice mindfulness with your children include:

Mindful posing - Get the kids excited by asking them to do fun poses that can help them feel strong brave and happy. You can tell them to try the Superman pose by standing with their feet just wider than the hips, fist clenched, and arms reached out to the sky stretching the body as tall as possible. Ask children how they feel after a few rounds of trying either of these poses.

Glitter jar- children will need a jar or plastic bottle, water, glue, food colouring and glitter. Ask children to decorate the bottle however they like. Then children and young people will need to fill the bottle up to three quarters over the way with water. Next, they need to add glue, food colouring and glitter. Remind children to seal and they can shake it.

Sensory mindfulness - Give something, like a small fruit to each child, then practice observing it using each of the five senses. You can repeat this activity with multiple objects, or even the same one over and over again: Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, Feeling, Seeing (if possible!)



Young people

This part of the pack has been developed for young people and contains information and resources that may support you. This part contains individual leaflets that have been developed during COVID-19 and are now adjusted to current circumstances.

Most leaflets have references to useful websites and, at the end of the pack, you will find a list of useful organisations and phone numbers for your reference. We also included a fact sheet from CATCH-22 on **Substance Misuse and Covid-19 - Staying Safe leaflet**, has an additional section for parents, caregivers, and teachers.

Coping with the Cost-of-Living Crisis

There is a lot of uncertainty around the cost-of-living crisis at the moment. As everything continues to soar such as petrol prices, food prices, energy costs, inflation, and rising housing costs it is leaving many people and families feeling worried and uncertain about the future.

It is completely natural to feel worried, stressed, and many other emotions over finances and when things feel uncertain but please know you are not alone and there are things you can do and support available to help.

There are things you can do to help with how you are feeling about the cost-of-living crisis at the moment.

Limit exposure to the news: News reports and articles can be scary to read as they tend to exaggerate how things are and make things sound worse than what they are in reality. They can be known to spark a lot of fear in people by not explaining things fully. Limiting your exposure to the news and news articles can be a good way to look after yourself during this time.

Don't overwork yourself: It may seem like something you feel you need to do by picking up more shifts to earn more money, but this can lead to more issues such as having a negative impact on your mental health or reaching burnout.

Join a support group: There are many support groups that are available locally and on social media sites such as Facebook where you can connect with people experiencing similar situations, and where people are sharing hints and tips on how to save money or how to look after yourself during this time.

Reach out to loved ones: It is important at this time to access support from friends and family, and don't be alone with your worries or feelings – a problem shared is often a problem halved.

Reach out for help: There is a variety of help available to support you during this difficult time, whether that is debt and financial advice/support or just someone to talk to who will listen to you – some support organisations available are:

- **The Mindworks 24/7 mental health crisis line**, is available for children and young people who are worried about themself, a friend, or for parents worried about their child or young person. It can be contacted on 0800 915 4644, is open all day and all night, seven days a week.
- **An out-of-hours phone line** provides advice to parents and carers who are struggling with behaviours or difficulties which could be related to neurodevelopmental need, such as autism or ADHD. It runs from 5pm until 11pm, seven days a week, 365 days a year and it can be contacted on **0300 222 5755.**
- **Kooth** is a free, anonymous, confidential, safe, online wellbeing service, offering counselling, information, and forums for children and young people aged 11 to 18.
- **PAPYRUS,** the national charity dedicated to preventing youth suicide, has developed a range of helpful resources.

This link, https://www.papyrus-uk.org/help-advice-resources/, provides further advice on the following:

- Anxiety
- Being yourself during change
- Bereavement
- Communicating with Young People
- Coping with Exams
- Self-Harm
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

If you're experiencing thoughts of suicide and need a safe non-judgmental space to talk. PAPYRUS is here for you. Call HOPELINEUK for free, confidential advice and support on 0800 068 4141, text 07860 039 967 or email pat@papyrus-uk.org from 9am to midnight every day of the year

CALL HOPELINEUK 0800 068 41 41

Self-Harm in the context of the current climate

The ongoing crisis is having a huge impact on the way most of us live our lives. We might feel concerned or upset by the news, or by things we hear or read about cost-of-living crisis, or climate change. It might make us feel isolated, lonely, angry, or depressed about the future.

Some of us might have thoughts of hurting ourselves, as a way of controlling our emotions, or wanting a release from how we feel. When we start to feel really low or alone, we might even have thoughts of wanting to end our life.

If you are thinking about hurting yourself or ending your life, it is important to know that you are not alone. You can still get the right support and help you need.

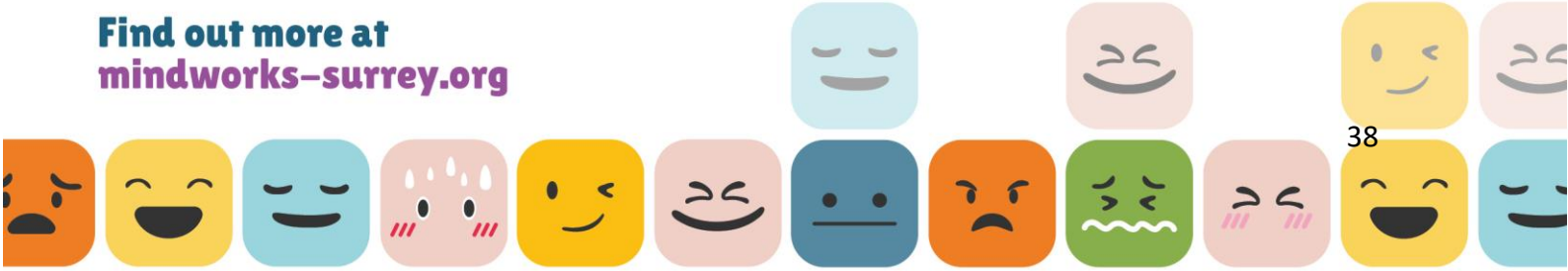
What is self-harm? Self-harm is when you hurt or harm yourself on purpose, usually when you have feelings that are distressing and unbearable. Some people do it to control their emotions or to feel relief from uncomfortable feelings. The impact of ongoing crisis may have affected how you are coping with your feelings. It might trigger distressing feelings that you may have experienced in the past or that you might be experiencing for the first time.

Suicidal thoughts are thoughts a person has about wanting to end their life to be free from what they feel is an unbearable emotional or physical pain. These might be general thoughts about not wanting to be alive, or specific thoughts about how to end one's life.

Who can I ask for help? We know it's hard, but don't be afraid to ask for help. You may feel that you don't want to burden other people. You worry about what they might think or that they could tell others. But the truth is this – people care about you, and they will want to help you.

- First, think about who you would feel most comfortable talking to? Many of us prefer talking to family or friends, or you may want to talk to professionals (staff working at your school or college, your GP, health professional or social worker), support groups, helplines or online discussion forums.

- After you have thought about the different people you could talk to decide who the best person for you to talk to is.



When you speak to them, explain how you feel and what support you would like. Share your worries with someone you trust, can help you see your problems in a different way, and understand that harming yourself or killing yourself isn't the way through this. They can help by spending time with you, talking things through or giving you help. They can also help you get professional support in a way you feel comfortable with.

Where can I get help?

If you're in an emergency or you need help right now, remember you can always call 999. But this might not be the right thing for you, so there are other ways you can get help.

You can talk to your GP by giving the practice a ring – and you can ask to speak to a GP who you know or trust as well. Or you can speak to your doctor or nurse if you have one who looks after you and you know them.

Most parts of England have a helpline if you need support with a mental health crisis. You can find out the number to ring for your local area at nhs.uk.

And there are other places where help is there for you:
Young Minds Crisis Messenger. Provides free crisis support if you are having a crisis – it's available every day of the week, at any time day or night. You just need to text YM to 85258. All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors. Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

Papyrus (Prevention of Young Suicide). A professionally staffed helpline providing support, practical advice and information advice for young people who are worried about themselves and feel like they want to harm themselves or take their own life, and all their advice is confidential. You can ring their line, HOPELineUK on 0800 068 41 41 or you can text them on 07786 209 687.

Samaritans. Are an organisation you can ring if at any time of the day or night. They will help you and listen to how you're feeling. You can ring them on 116 123. You can also email them: jo@samartians.org

Childline. Will help you if you're under 19 and you can confidentially call, email, or chat online about any problem big or small. Their freephone 24-hour helpline is 0800 1111. You can sign up for a Childline account on the website to be able to message a counsellor anytime without using your email address. Or you can chat 1:1 with an online advisor

Self-Injury Support. Support for women and girls in the form of text, email, webchat and self-help. They have UK-wide listings for self-harm support and self-help tools, and help, support, training and resources. Email: info@selfinjurysupport.org.uk.

Useful Apps for managing Self-harm:

Calm Harm. An App based around principles of dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT), developed by a clinical psychologist. Aims to help young people resist the urge to self-harm by using four task categories which reflect the reasons why many people choose to self-harm: distract, comfort, express or release. Won Digital Innovation award category at the National Positive Practice in Mental Health Awards 2016.
http://www.stem4org.uk/calmharm/

Websites for information and tips about managing self-harm

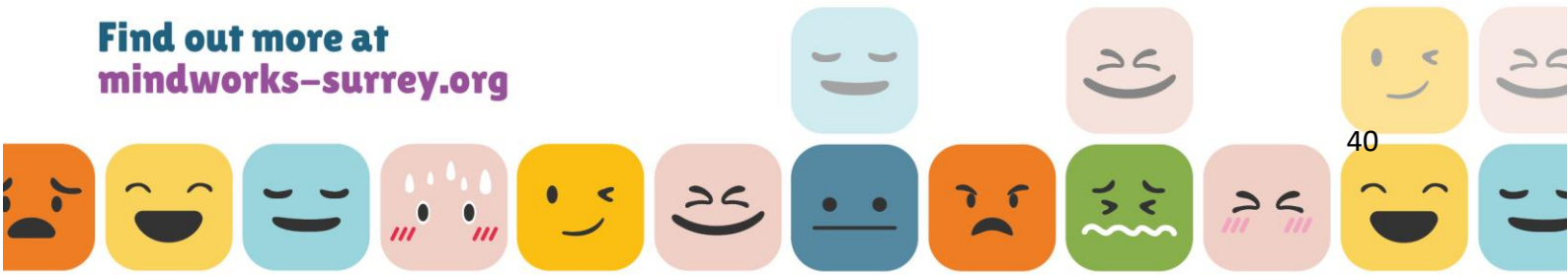
Alumina. Not an app, but a website: This online course by selfharm.co.uk for young people aged 14-18 helps them find other ways of dealing with the ups and downs of life.
https://www.selfharm.co.uk/index.php?p=alumina-online-support-for-mental-health-and-wellbeing https://www.mind.org.uk/
https://www.rethink.org/

Strategies for in the moment

If you find yourself experiencing distressing feelings more and more, then it is a good idea to talk to a mental health professional. They can help you manage your distress and also work with you to find ways to stay well. Your GP can help you find a service close to you, or you can search for one on the NHS website.

It is important to remember that the thoughts of hurting yourself will pass. There are things you can do right now to help you cope with the distress you might be feeling. It can help to come up with a list or a plan that you can follow whenever you feel like hurting yourself. These things all work differently for different people, so find the one that works best for you:

- Get through the next 5 minutes. Focus on what you can see, hear, smell, touch or taste.



- Talk to someone you trust. If that person doesn't live with you, you can call them by phone or video call

- Talk to someone on a helpline for people who are struggling with their mental health. (See the 'What resources are there out there?' section below for useful helpline suggestions, as well as other helpful resources.) You can also visit www.mindworks-surrey.org for assistance on what resources are available.

- Remove anything sharp or dangerous you might use to hurt yourself or ask someone else to do this for you.

- Distract yourself. Listen to music, watch a video, have a hot shower or find something else to do in the house that can help take your mind off how you feel.

- Go outside for one form of exercise each day. Go for a walk, run or cycle, to make sure you get some fresh air.

- Try to find something relaxing to do. Focus your mind through meditation, yoga, muscle relaxation or mindfulness activities can help reduce some of the physical tension you might be feeling.

- Find another way to express your feelings when you have the urge to harm yourself, such as painting, drawing, screaming into a pillow or drawing red lines on your skin

- Give yourself 'harmless pain'. For example, eat a hot chilli, squeeze ice cubes or have a cold shower.

- Write a diary or a letter to express your feelings. No one else ever needs to see it.

A-Z of distracting yourself from self-harm (Source FLASH – Families learning about self-harm)

Often the best thing to find out what has worked for other people who understand where you are coming from. The Site.org asked young people from young people's mental health service 42nd Street to come up with some of the alternatives they've used to help them.

- Alternative therapies, massage, reiki, meditation, acupuncture & aromatherapy
- Baking, bake a cake, cookies or something tasty
- Clean
- Listen to music
- Moisturise
- Music – sing, play an instrument
- Open up to a friend or someone in your family about how you are feeling

- Craft – draw, paint create
- Dance your socks off
- Eat sweets or chocolate
- Exercise for a release of endorphins and that feel good factor
- Forward planning – future holidays
- Go for a walk
- Go online and look at websites that offer advice and information
- Hang out with friends or family
- Have a bubble bath
- Have a good cry
- Hug a soft toy
- Invite a friend round
- Join a gym
- Knitting
- Pop bubble wrap
- Phone a helpline or a friend
- Play games – board games, computer games
- Play with a stress ball or make one yourself
- Read a book
- Scream into an empty room
- Tell or listen to jokes
- Use the internet
- Visit a zoo or a farm
- Volunteer for an organisation
- Watch TV or films – particularly comedies
- Write: a diary, poems or a book
- Yoga
- Zzzzzz – get a good night's sleep

Things to keep you busy at home (Created by young people attending Hope)

Self-care

- Sit outside
- Rest
- Cloud watch
- Star gaze
- Dye / cut hair
- Less online time
- Paint nails
- Be kind to yourself
- Meditation
- Positivity
- Online shop
- Netflix
- Do makeup
- Nap (in moderation)
- Read
- Mindfulness

Learning Skills

- Learn a new language

Games

- Board games
- Card games
- Computer games

Exercise

- Yoga
- Dance
- Pogo
- Skipping
  - Trampoline
  - Frisbee
  - Walk
  - Jog
  - Online Lessons
  - Run

Prepare Food

- Bake
- Cook

- School work
- Creative writing
- Research interesting topics

- Discover new recipes
- Try new food
- Make meals for / with family



Connect with others

- Friends
- Family
- Pets
- Neighbours
- Help others
- Skype / facetime
- Text
- Phone call

Getting creative

- Photography
- Art (paint, draw, colour…)
- Colouring books
- Draw a mandala
- Watch musicals on YouTube
- Follow tutorials
- Listen to music
- Make different playlists
- Learn a performance / song
- Learn a new instrument
- Make music

Organise

- Routine – create a timetable
- Tidy room
- Create goals

Apps to keep you busy (Created by young people attending Hope)

- Duo lingo
- Khan Academy
- Drops (learning a new language)
- Sky Map
- YouTube
- Pinterest
- Music tuner
- Simply piano
- Daylio (mood tracker)
- Pixels (mood tracker)
- Shopping (EBay, Amazon, Depop, Vinted)
- Games (Sudoku, 2048, words with friends etc.)
- Colouring Apps

References

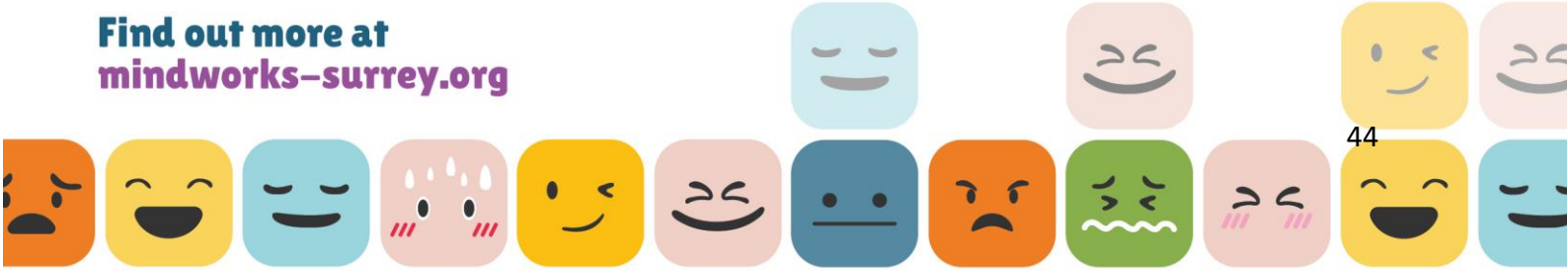
(Above Sources: https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/treatments-awellbeing/covid-19-self-harm-and-suicide)

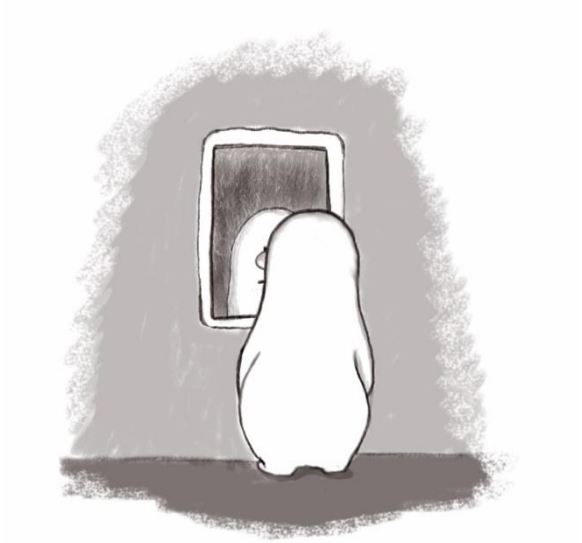
Eating Problems

During troubled times, you may have noticed that your eating habits have changed, or you are thinking more about eating or not eating, wanting to exercise, or eating healthier. We have developed this leaflet to help you understand what eating problems are and what you can do to support yourself. We will not go into detail explaining what eating disorders are, but if you want to find out more, you can explore our resources and references for further reading.

What is an eating problem? Food plays an essential part in our lives, and many people will spend time thinking about what they eat. The way we relate to food often changes. At times we may try to eat healthier, eat too much, or lose appetite, especially when feeling stress, some people may eat comfort food if they feel stressed or unhappy and have cravings. Changing eating habits like that is normal. You may want to know that lots of people worry about what they look like and from time to time might be unhappy with their weight or shape – this is very normal. Many people also try to diet for the very first time in their teens. However, if you aren't eating a regular balanced diet over a long period and become preoccupied with your body shape, it could start to become a problem. Wanting to be healthy and to feel fit is good for your mental health. Yet, at times, emotions and feelings can become blurred and lead to an eating problem.

An eating problem is when someone's eating habits become unhealthy, such as eating too much or eating too little, becoming really controlling about what they eat and being really unhappy, worried and preoccupied with things such as weight and shape. An eating problem may develop into an eating disorder, and this is when behavior meets the medical criteria for a diagnosis.





How can you help yourself?

Understand the reason for eating. Have you ever considered why we eat? In fact, there are many reasons! We eat to fuel our bodies and brains, but we also eat for pleasure—as part of our socialising as humans, to celebrate certain occasions, perhaps in response to feeling tired, sad, anxious, or happy, or just because we feel like it! All of these are valid, normal reasons for eating.

Recognise how much to eat. It can be difficult to know how much energy our body needs for the day and therefore what portions to aim for at our meals and snacks. Essentially, weight maintenance occurs when our energy input and energy output are balanced. The amount of food required will differ from person to person based on a number of factors including their base metabolic rate and level of activity, their height, weight, and overall build, their age, gender, race etc.

Learn what kinds of foods to eat. In terms of what we eat, it might help to consider your consumption across the whole day, as well as the content on your plate at each meal. There are six major food groups, and we need to get a balance of three main nutrients: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. It's also totally normal to include foods, purely for our enjoyment. like cake, chocolate, or chips. Sometimes the important thing to remember is to eat everything in moderation. That's what makes for normal, balanced, non-disordered eating. The key is having a balanced intake with many different foods from all the different food groups. It is important not to deny yourself pleasurable foods. Eating should be nice.

Eating regularly:

- Gives structure to your eating habits, so that eating can start to become a regular, normalised part of your life.
- Minimises tiredness, irritability, and poor concentration

- Helps to combat delayed or infrequent eating
- When eating regularly, you are less likely to become overly hungry and feel out of control of your eating
- Improves metabolic functioning and prevents your body from going into "starvation mode"

What do we mean by Regular Eating'? Changing your eating habits can feel overwhelming, so regular eating is a great place to start. Establishing regular eating habits is key to overcoming your eating difficulties. It is very common amongst people with disordered eating for their eating to be irregular, infrequent, or delayed eating. For example, you may have a rule that you don't eat before midday, or perhaps you've become accustomed to having a small breakfast and then not eating again until dinner time, or maybe you find yourself snacking and grazing throughout the day without sitting down for a proper meal or snack.

Ideally, humans function best when we eat regularly throughout the day; this means eating every 3 hours. For many people, regular eating involves eating 3 meals and 2-3 snacks. It's also important to make sure you are drinking an adequate amount of water—although not so much that you feel overly full and it discourages you to eat your next meal or snack! Water allows the body to absorb nutrients from food and transport them around the body. Health professionals recommend adults drink about 2L water daily. Failing to drink enough water can lead to dehydration, which can negatively impact our physical and mental functioning.

Our top tips

- Eating a healthy, balanced and varied diet and keeping active will help you maintain a healthy weight and a healthy attitude towards food!
- Planning ahead can avert disaster. Plan when and what you will have for your snacks and meals.
- Try to eat with other people, enjoying the social element of the meal rather than the focus being on the food.
- Take things one day at a time, each meal at a time. If you have a difficult meal or snack, start the next one afresh.
- Find things that will motivate you to maintain a healthy eating pattern when things are hard.
- Consider carrying a snack with you in the car or your bag, in case you get caught out of the house at mealtimes.
- Get some help by talking to a friend, family member or approaching your GP. Try to be honest about how you are feeling with those around you. The quicker you can get help for your difficulties, the better the outcome.
- Learn how to be kind to yourself; you may want to start with doing things that will help you feel relaxed and good.

- Boost your self-esteem; maybe ask your best friends to share with you what they like about you, or perhaps you may make a jar of positive affirmations and reach out to it every day or when you feel low.
- Do seek help if you think you may have an eating disorder and discuss this with your GP or your family.
- You can also find some useful information by contacting Beat, the UK's eating disorder charity https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/or your GP.

Most importantly, you may not believe it yet, but you are beautiful and amazing as you are!

Resources

- **b-eat.co.uk** The UK's leading charity supporting anyone affected by eating disorders, anorexia and bulimia. Beat services for young people (under 25): Youth line: 0845 634 7650, Mon-Fri 4:30pm-8:30pm, Sat 1pm-4:30pm, Email: FYP@b-eat.co.uk Helpline: 0808 801 0677 for parents and carers.
- **eating-disorders.org.uk.** The National Centre for Eating Disorders – a confidential counselling service that runs counselling and workshops for people with eating disorders. Helpline: 0845 838 2040

References

- https://youngminds.org.uk/media/1517/youngminds-eating-problems-yp.pdf
- https://www.bdct.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Booklet-UnderstandingEatingProblems_MIND.pdf

Coping with Stress

Stress is a feeling that we get when we are struggling to cope with the pressures of life. Everyone feels stressed at some point and it can affect people in different ways. What may be stressful for one person may not be for another!

Difficult life events or situations can cause us to feel stressed. It was very normal to be feeling more stressed during, for example the pandemic.

This leaflet will help you to understand stress, why we get stressed and how it feels/looks for you. It will also give you some ways to manage your stress and some useful links you can review that may help you further.

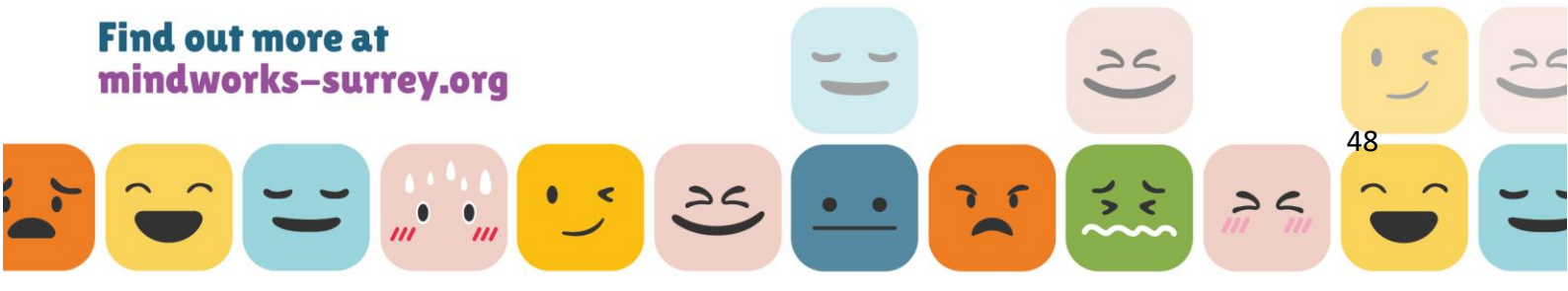
What is stress? As already mentioned, stress is a feeling we get when we are overwhelmed or unable to cope. It's a very common experience and there is no need to feel embarrassed or ashamed. Stress, in itself, is not harmful or dangerous and feeling stressed does not make you weak or bad in any way. However, if we feel stressed for a long period of time it can make us more vulnerable to other health problems.

The Fight/Flight/Freeze Response. It is common to experience some physical symptoms when feeling stressed. This is because our body automatically goes into the 'fight/flight/freeze' (FFF) response when we feel stressed, anxious or scared. This reaction quickly and helpfully prepares the body for action to keep us safe from a perceived threat. It does this with the aim of preparing us to protect ourselves (fight), escape from the danger (flight) or hide from the threat (freeze).

Physical Feelings of Stress The FFF response can cause a variety of physical feelings. Some of these are listed below (but there are many, many more):

- **Making our heartbeat faster** - to supply more blood to our muscles.
- **Producing more sweat** - to cool us down.
- **Tensing our muscles** - getting them ready for action.
- **Breathing quickens** - to supply oxygen to our muscles (which can cause us to feel dizzy).
- **Racing thoughts** - quickly narrowing the available options to make a quick response.
- **Butterflies in stomach** – our body shuts down body functions that aren't needed at the time e.g., digestion.

So why do we get stressed? In the past, such a reaction would have offered us some protection, e.g., preparing us to react quickly in case of predators or other serious threats.



However, these days our perceived threats are not often things we can fight, flee or hide from. Instead, we have to negotiate difficult circumstances, such as friendships or exams, in very different ways. Therefore, the FFF response is not so helpful and is often quite frustrating!

While these symptoms are not dangerous in themselves, they can make us feel really horrible. Although we still need the FFF response as it is our body's healthy protection system and is important to survival (e.g., to jump out of the way of a speeding cyclist), it is not helpful to have this response 'switched on' at all times.

This video is a great way to understand the fight/flight/freeze response and its effect on your body: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG_-Q&feature=emb_rel_pause

How can I overcome feeling stressed? Simply understanding the FFF response can be enough to help you to manage the physical symptoms. Now that you know what they are, you do not need to worry about them and can let them pass (which they will do quite quickly!).

However, sometimes we need a little more than just understanding what stress is, why it is there and how it feels.

Top tips! Below are some top ten tips in managing stress

Talking. The first step in managing stress is opening up to someone that you are struggling. Talking to someone you trust - a friend, a parent or another trusted adult (such as a teacher) Talking can be the first step in helping you to reduce your stress. You'll likely to find that they are feeling a bit stressed too!

Limit your time spent on social media and news. Limiting your time spent on social media can help remind us that there are other things going on in the world. Choose an amount of time you allow yourself online (such as 30-60 minutes a day) and try not to exceed this. You can find some other things to do instead, such as some of the below recommendations.

Breathing. As stress triggers the fight/flight/freeze response, our breathing often becomes very fast and shallow as a response. Learning how to slow our breathing down and ensure that we use all of our lung capacity can be a really helpful way of calming down and reducing feelings of general anxiety and stress. It's really important initially to practice this skill when you are in a calm and quiet place. Once you have practiced it a lot and feel confident, it is then much easier to use to help you calm down at times when you are anxious or stressed.

7-11 breathing:

- *Find somewhere comfortable to sit or lie down.*
- *Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach.*
- *Take a deep breath in slowly through your nose for 7 (or 5) seconds.*
- *Then release the breath slowly for 11 (or 9) seconds.*
- *Repeat.*

Square breathing:

- *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfUGpJE1D9o*

Progressive Muscle Relaxation. As stress triggers the fight/flight/freeze response, our muscles often become tense as a response This technique can help you recognise how different your body feels when you are tense and when you are relaxed. Learning to relax your muscles when thinking of a key word, such as relax, can help at times when you feel stressed. Tense each muscle in the series below for 5 seconds and then release the tension whilst thinking of the word "relax". Notice how different it feels when you relax the muscles.

Hands *– clench your left fist and then relax, do the same with your right.*
Arms *– bend your elbows and tense your arm and bicep and then relax.*
Neck *– press your head back and roll it from side to side slowly. Feel the tension moving and then bring your head back into a comfortable position.*
Face *– focus on the jaw and forehead. Lower your eyebrows into a frown and then raise them. After 5 seconds relax them and clench your jaw for 5 seconds and then relax.*
Chest *– take a deep breath and notice your chest rising. Hold it for 5 seconds and relax.*
Stomach *– tense your stomach as tight as you can and then relax.*
Legs *– straighten your legs and stretch out as far as possible. Bend your feet up towards your face. After 5 seconds of tensing, wiggle your toes and relax.*

Grounding techniques. Helping to find ways to focus on the here and now when you are feeling very stressed and lost in your own thoughts can be really helpful. Below are a couple of strategies that you might want to practice and try using when you are stressed.

<u>54321</u>
Describe/name 5 things you can ***see***
Describe/name 4 things you can ***touch***
Describe/name 3 things you can ***hear***
Describe/name 2 things you can ***smell***

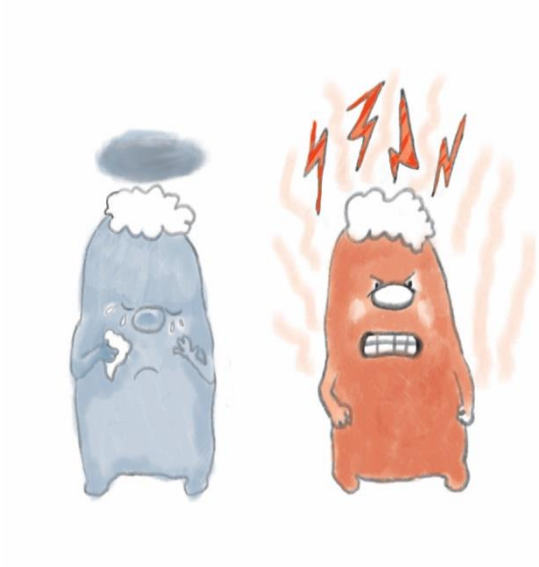
*Describe/name 1 thing you can **taste***

Keeping a diary/journal. Keeping a diary or journal to record your stress can be a simple but effective way of both reducing and understanding your stress. It has been long known that writing things down can be cathartic (i.e., a way of providing psychological relief) as it helps us to release and express our emotions in a healthy way. It also allows us to reflect upon our stress and understand why we were feeling that way, what exactly triggered us to feel stressed and what helped reduce our stress in the moment.

Routine. Keeping a clear routine is helpful for our bodies and our minds. It is even more important to keep a consistent routine during a new or challenging situation. So, ensure you keep to a good routine that incorporates healthy self-care habits.

Learning how to be assertive and de-escalate conflict can also decrease your stress levels.

How to de-escalate conflict and calm a situation down



- **Take a slow, deep breath**: As you take a deep breath, try and check in with yourself. Try and pay attention to your physical sensations and the thoughts that are coming up.
- **Listen with interest** – Try to think about how things are from the other person's perspective and to understand their viewpoint. Try to give the other person uninterrupted time to speak.
- **Tackle one issue at a time** – Focus on the most important things and talk about these one at a time. Think about whether you can let some issues go.
- **Take a step back**: If things are still escalating, take yourself away from the stressful situation and agree a suitable time to talk. Make a list of activities that help improve your mood – taking a long shower, going for a walk, going to the gym, cooking, journaling, playing music.
- **Write down your negative thoughts**: recording your negative thoughts can be a great way to release that negative energy.
- **Be open-minded**: Remember there may be a number of solutions to the problem you are discussing. Be creative and be prepared to compromise.

- **Focus on what you can control**, not what you can't. You are responsible for your own behaviour. Think about what you can do or say to try to have a helpful conversation.

Resources

- **SupportLine** https://www.supportline.org.uk/problems/relationships-and-family/ - offers confidential emotional telephone support in the UK for men, women, children and young adults
- **National Domestic Violence Helpline** https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/ - A 24-hour free helpline run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge.
- **Mind** https://www.mind.org.uk/ - Dealing with mental health in relationships

Useful books

- **Banish Anxiety** by Dr Kenneth Hambly ISBN 0722531125
- **Embracing the Fear: Learning to Manage Anxiety & Panic Attacks** by Judith Bemis ISBN 089486971X

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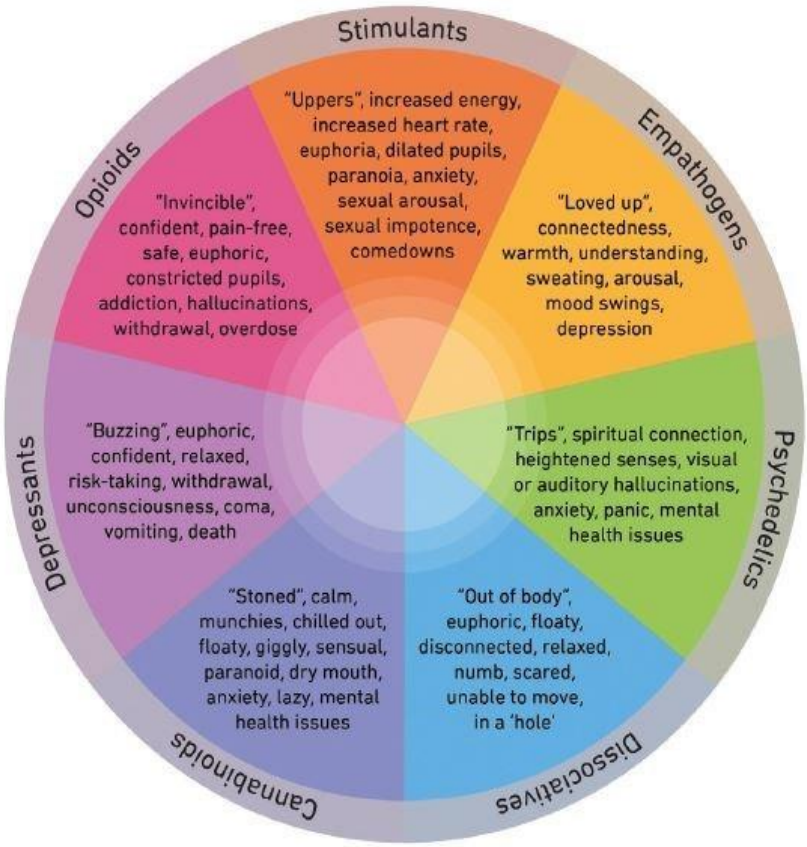
The children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health service

NHS Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Substance Misuse - Staying Safe

Surrey Young People's Substance Misuse Service

Sometimes in challenging times, people may have noticed their drug and/or alcohol (substance) use increasing, some may be finding it harder not to use substances and some people may be concerned about someone they know that is using substances. Support is available, and it is okay to speak to someone if you are concerned about your own or someone else's substance misuse. This leaflet is for young people, parents and professionals affected by substance misuse who would like to find out more about how they can keep themselves and other people safe.



Overdose - An overdose happens when you take too much of a substance and it overwhelms your body which makes it shut down. ***If you think that you or someone you know may have overdosed, contact 999 or go straight to A&E immediately. The quicker you do this, the greater the chance of survival.***

Mixing Substances - Some people choose to mix substances, particularly with alcohol - this significantly increases the potential harm that could be caused and can carry a high risk of overdose.

Relationships - Many substances affect the part of your brain that is responsible for self-control, decision-making and logical reasoning; they can cause people to act and behave in a way that they would not normally do. People using substances may experience extreme mood swings and can be unpredictable. This can have a negative impact on family, friends and the wider community, and can result in a breakdown in relationships. When faced with a young person behaving this way, it is not always easy to remember that it is the substance and not the young person that you are seeing.

The Unknown - You never truly know what is in the substance you are taking... even alcohol contains many chemicals that most of us have never heard of. People often refer to taking substances as a 'Russian Roulette' and unless you are a chemist with a testing lab, you never know what is in the drug and how your body is going to react to it.

Just because you have taken a drug before, for example cannabis, and never experienced any negative effects, does not guarantee that you will have a positive experience every time

Tips to keep you safe and reduce harm

Talk to a trusted adult - if you are struggling with substances or know someone who is. This could be a parent, GP, friend, mental health professional or teacher. They may be able to provide you with support and signpost you to services that can help.

Go straight to A&E or call 999 and ask for an ambulance if you start to feel unwell or a friend appears unwell as a result of taking a substance. Some people are worried about seeking help when things go wrong, however it is important to remember that health professionals are there to help you.

If you are using substances, keep a diary of how much you are using. This could be on your mobile phone, on a piece of paper or on a computer. Knowing what you are using, how much and how often, can be helpful if you want to make changes to your substance use.

Do not consume or mix more than one substance at a time. Some combinations can be harmful to your physical and mental health and increase the risk of overdose, which can be fatal.

- **If you are going to use a substance,** whether drugs or alcohol, start by taking a small amount and don't be tempted to take it all in one go. You cannot take a substance out of your body once it is in there, and if you are going to have a bad reaction it will last longer if you have taken a large amount.
- **Make sure** that you are in a safe place if you are going to use substances.

- **Some questions to ask yourself include**: What are you using? Where are you? Who are you with and how are you feeling? All these factors affect the experience you are going to have. Be with people that you trust, then if the worst happens and something goes wrong, they can share information with a health professional, such as a paramedic, and this could save someone's life.
- **Substances can have a negative impact on your immune system** which can reduce its ability to fight off bacteria and viruses. Try to keep your use to a minimum and make sure you are taking care of yourself, for example eating well and getting regular exercise.
- **The best way to keep safe is not to use substances at all**.

Tips for parents/guardians and teachers

- **According to** the 'Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England' survey (2018) of pupils in secondary school in years 7-11, 24% of pupils reported that they had previously used substances and 9% had reported taking substances in the last month. Parents and teachers can be some of the most influential people in a young person's life, and there are things that you can do to help and support. Here are a few suggestions:
- **Educate** and inform young people to know about the risks and effects of substances. The FRANK website is an excellent resource.
- **Use a harm reduction approach**. Some young people will choose to use substances despite your best efforts to intervene. It is therefore a good idea to let young people know ways that they can reduce their risk of harm. For example, not to mix substances, taking a small amount as opposed to a larger dose, etc.
- **Encouraging young people to stay safe**. Exploring ways with the young person that they can keep themselves safe if they are going to choose to use substances. For example, when your young person is going out, have they got their phone charged? Do they have credit if not on a contract? Do they know who to call if they get into any sort of danger/ trouble? Who are they going to be with? Where are they going to be? Supporting your young person to think about the potential risks and how they might respond if something happens, will help to keep them safe.
- **Be ready to listen**. Let the young person know that you are there for them and will not judge them, this will help to encourage them to be more open with you. Wherever possible encourage communication and try to avoid confrontation; ask the young people to explain why they are using substances, what does it feel like, etc.

- **When supporting the young person**, be aware of the balance between supporting and 'enabling' them to use substances – For example if they ask you for money to go and see a film and you think they will use the money to buy drugs or alcohol, you could book the cinema ticket online for them instead.
- **Agree and set boundaries with the young person**. Young people may be more responsive if they are given some level of responsibility with this. You can do this by asking the young person what they think that they can do to help reduce or abstain from using substances and making an agreement around this.
- **Try to be positive**. This is not always easy... As parents/adults we can understandably get caught up focusing on the negatives, particularly when the young person's behaviour is challenging and impacting on themselves and others around them. Remember to look for any positives and reinforce these with rewards such as a verbal praise, treats and sharing a favourite meal or movie together. A small achievement for the young person, may be having a substance free day, seeking support, achieving a personal goal or sticking to a boundary.

Resources

- **Frank.** Drug Information for Young People: www.talktofrank.com
- **Catch22 Surrey Young People's Substance Misuse Service** is a county-wide specialist treatment service, offering; one-to-one support to young people and their families, a 24-hour help line, counselling and pharmacological support, as part of a tailored recovery approach for young people aged 11 to 25-years -old, successfully delivering positive outcome for the young people we work with.



- **24/7 Helpline –** 0800 622 662,
- **Tel:** 01372 832905 / 07579 088388,
- **Email:** ypsm@catch-22.org.uk
- **Website:** www.catch22.org.uk/services/surrey-young-peoples-substance-misuse-service/sm@catch-22.org.uk

"I learned so much about myself through having the support with Catch 22. My worker and I talked about what I have been going through, he listened to me and never judged me; it was a safe place for me to really talk"

Further Resources

General

- December Community Connector newsletter Focused on financial support, along with the help available for both children's and adults' emotional well-being, there are also many more services to be found on **Family Information Service** and **Local Offer** websites and **Directories** so please take a look. https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/families/support-and-advice/community-connector#activities

Page Contents

- Financial support
- Mental health
- Relationships and separation
- Domestic abuse
- Activities, events and things to do
- Spotlight on services

- **Directory of support** is designed to help, by pulling together all the financial and welfare advice on offer in the county. Health and welfare support - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)
- **Events and activities in libraries** Events and activities in libraries - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)
- **Help for Households government resources** Help for Households - Get government cost of living support
- **Citizens Advice** Citizens Advice
- **Get help with Tax** Get help with tax - GOV.UK (https://www.gov.uk/tax-helpwww.gov.uk)
- **Childcare Choices** Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK
- Housing Housing Benefit and Council Tax support - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)
- **Step Change** – offers free debt advice and support: https://www.stepchange.org/
- **National Debt line** – offers free, independent debt advice: https://nationaldebtline.org/
- **Food banks** supply free food to people that are struggling financially. Search the Trussell Trust website for your closest food bank. Usually, you need a referral for

a Trussell Trust food bank (for example from a social worker, health care professional or school). Your local Salvation Army can also provide food bank provision.

- If you are pregnant or have young children, you may be eligible for Healthy Start Vouchers and can apply online or by post to: healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk. This can help provide milk, fruit, veg and vitamins.
- **List of warm hubs in Surrey**

Mental health and emotional well-being (adults)

- The following website can direct you to a range of information and services available across Surrey to support you: https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/mental-wellbeing/adults/local-services
- CampaignAgainsLivingMiserably (CALM) **Call 0800 58 58 58** Visit the webchat
- **CatalystDrug and alcohol service**
- **Cruse Bereavement care** Helpline: **0808 808 1677 Website:**
- **Mindhelpline** provides information and signposting service. Open 9 am to 6 pm, Text: 86463 - Phone calls from UK landlines are charged at local rates.
- **Mind Matter Surrey IAPT** (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) is a talking therapy service for adults (18+) registered with a GP in Surrey. They provide quick and easy access to talking therapies,
- **Samaritan helpline** - Whatever you're going through, Samaritans will face it with you. Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call 116 123 for free
- **Surrey domestic abuse helpline** 01483 776822 9am to 9pm, 7 days a week
- **Recovery College**
- **The Mental Health Crisis Helpline** is a telephone service offering support to adults of all ages in Surrey and North-East Hampshire who are experiencing a mental health crisis. Lines are open 24 hours, seven days a week. You don't need to book an appointment and calls are free of charge on 0800 915 4644

Mental health and emotional well-being (Children and Young People)

- **The Mindworks 24/7 mental health crisis line**, is available for children and young people who are worried about themself, a friend, or for parents worried about their child or young person. It can be contacted on 0800 915 4644, is open all day and all night, seven days a week.
- **An out-of-hours phone line** provides advice to parents and carers who are struggling with behaviours or difficulties which could be related to neurodevelopmental need,

such as Autism or ADHD. It runs from 5pm until 11pm, seven days a week, 365 days a year and can be contacted on **0300 222 5755.**

- CYP Haven are safe spaces for young people to drop into to talk about worries and mental health confidentially. There is also a phone service and virtual workshops operating alongside the face-to-face sessions. The opening times and phone number are listed on their website.
- Kooth is a free, anonymous, confidential, safe, online wellbeing service, offering counselling, information, and forums for children and young people aged 11 to 18.
- Young Minds provides advice about mental health and behaviour problems in children and young people up to the age of 25. The Young Minds Crisis Messenger text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and need support, you can text YM to 85258. Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 4:00 pm).
- Young Scot is the national information and citizenship organisation supported by the Scottish Government for young people aged 11-26 in Scotland. The declared aim of the organization is to make young people informed, incentivised and active citizens through the information they provide.
- TheMix provides a free confidential helpline and online service that aims to find young people the best help, whatever the problem. Speak to their team on 08088 084994. It provides essential mental health support for under 25's, 1:1 online chat, crisis messenger service and helpline.
- ChildLine is a service to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. Call ChildLine free on 0800 1111 or speak to a counsellor online.
- Papyrus: Offers advice and support for young people, parents and friends. HOPELINEUK – Call 0800 068 4141, Text 07860039967, Email pat@papyrus-uk.org (9:00am – 10:00pm, Mon – Fri, 2:00pm – 10:00pm Sat and Sun).

  This link, https://www.papyrus-uk.org/help-advice-resources/,provides further advice on the following:

- Anxiety
- Being yourself during change
- Bereavement
- Communicating with Young People
- Coping with Exams
- Self-Harm
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- Supporting your Child: Self-harm and Suicide

Bereavement

- **Child Bereavement UK** Information and helpline providing confidential support, information and guidance to young people, families and professionals affected by bereavement. Information and helpline providing confidential support, information and guidance to families and professionals affected by bereavement. Telephone: 08000 288840
- **Winston's Wish** Information, advice and guidance on supporting bereaved children and young people. Winston's Wish can provide advice and support to parents, teachers and anyone who is supporting a grieving child. telephone: 08088 020021

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

- Local offer
  Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) | Surrey Local Offer
- Parents padlet
  EBSNA Resources for Parents (padlet.com)

- Other parent support:
  - I am a parent/family member/carer :: Mindworks Surrey (mindworks-surrey.org)
  - Family Voice - Calendar – Family Voice Surrey
  - Not Fine in School - School Refusal, School Attendance

Services

- **Barnardo's** supports children, young people and their families.
- **Catch 22** **Surrey Young People's Substance Misuse Service** is a county-wide specialist treatment service, offering one-to-one support to young people and their families, a 24-hour help line, counselling and pharmacological support, as part of a tailored recovery approach for young people aged 11 to 25-years -old. **24/7 Helpline –** 0800 622 662, **Tel:** 01372 832905 / 07579 088388, **Email:** ypsm@catch-22.org.uk
- **Eikon** is an award-winning charity that has been working in local Surrey communities for over two decades. They provide support to children, young people and their families.
- **Family Voice Surrey**

- Heads Together provides free and confidential counselling to young people aged 14-24 in East Surrey
- Home Start is a local community network of trained volunteers and expert support helping families with young children through their challenging times.
- Learning Space Learning Space is a children and young people's mental health charity based in Surrey supporting children, young people and their families.
- National Autism Society Surrey Branch
- Relate provides free and confidential counselling to young people aged 10–18-year-old.
- RASAC Rape and Sexual abuse service; Registered charity, established in 1992 and based in Guildford. RASAC works with anyone in Surrey whose life has been affected by rape or sexual abuse, whether recently or in the past. Youth counselling service offers face-to-face counselling for young survivors of rape or sexual abuse aged 13 to 17. https://www.rasasc.org/get-support/counselling/youth-support/. FAMILY SUPPORT offers specialist emotional support to the families of people affected by rape or sexual abuse.
- Early Help support through Surrey Care Trust North (Spelthorne, Runnymede, Elmbridge and Woking): 07765 257022 West (Guildford, Waverley, Surrey Heath): 07593 438137. Surrey Care Trust provide a range of services in Surrey.
- Free and independent counselling for 16 to 25s; (? – WHAT ARE THE DETAILS OF THIS?)
- Employment support and mentoring in Woking through our Steps2Work project for 18 – 24's; (AGAIN, WHAT ARE THE CONTACT NUMBERS ETC?)
- STEPS to 16- alternative educations for 14- to 16-year-olds who struggle with mainstream school due to challenges such as social disadvantage, or poor mental and emotional health.
- The Family Centre in Stanwell supports families in Spelthorne through specialist outreach work, access to key services and expert advice and guidance for vulnerable families.
- Local Conversation in Stanwell also supports Stanwell residents, and the Stanwell allotment is an excellent resource for the community.
- Gateway Community Allotment is a haven of support for mentoring, including mentoring for those who are furthest from the labour market and helps them re-engage with learning and employment.
- Similar work takes place in the West of the county for long term unemployed adults. Swing bridge boats combine mentoring with environmental work, and trips for vulnerable people - supporting them through challenges. Their volunteers and staff team make all this work possible. www.surreycaretrust.co.uk
- Switchboard is a charity for LGBTQ people looking for community, support or information. They connect people and support them directly through specially

developed Switchboard services or link them to other specialist organisations. Helpline – 0300 330 0630, where all the volunteers who answer the calls are also LGBT+. Callers can discuss any concerns they have, including coming out and relationships

- **Outline** - Outline provides support to people with their sexuality and gender identity, including but not limited to the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans community of surrey, primarily through a helpline, website and support groups. telephone: 01483 72767 mobile: 07451289261
- **Muslim Community Helpline** National organisation providing listening and emotional support service for members of the Muslim community in the UK. **020 8904 8193/020 8908 6715**
- YMCA East Surrey supports Children, young people and their families.
- Parent Workshops - YMCA East Surrey
- Holiday Club - YMCA East Surrey
- Youth Clubs - YMCA East Surrey
- 1,000 Days of Play - YMCA East Surrey
- **Your Sanctuary** offers Support for children and who have been affected by domestic abuse; information about Children's Service please phone the helpline on 01483 776822
- **Youth Counselling Service** **YCS;** provides free and confidential counselling to young people aged 12–24-year-old with mild to moderate issues living, working or studying within West Surrey and North East Hampshire.

Helpful apps

- **Big White Wall** is an online community for people who are stressed, anxious or feeling low. The service has an active forum with round-the-clock support from trained professionals. You can talk anonymously to other members and take part in group or one-to-one therapy with therapists. Downloads and publications for The Big White Wall - mobile app for anxiety and depression | DPT
- **CalmHarm** is an app designed to help people resist or manage the urge to self-harm. It's private and password protected.
- FeelsFM is an emoji-powered jukebox made in collaboration with mental health charity See Me. The jukebox aims to create a playful, interactive space where young people can share how they are feeling without the pressure of having to have a 'big conversation'.
- **The Mee Two** **app** provides a safe and secure forum for teenagers wanting to discuss any issue affecting their lives. You can anonymously get advice from experts or other

teenagers going through similar experiences in areas such as mental health, self-harming, relationships and friendships.

- **The Worry Tree** app aims to help you take control of worry wherever you are. You can use the app to record whatever you feel worried about. It uses cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques to help you notice and challenge your worries. It can also help you create an action plan for managing worry.

Useful websites

- **Mindworks Surrey** website has a range of helpful information for children, young people, parents, and professionals.
- **Royal College of Psychiatrists** – leaflets and advice on various mental health issues.
- **GET self Help** – free worksheets and CBT tools.
- **Mind** is a UK Mental Health charity providing information and advice on a range of mental health topics and an online mutual support community (elefriends). They have an information and signposting service, open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, 0300 123 3393. https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/
- **The NSPCC** run dedicated helplines for those who want to reporting child abuse and neglect or are worried about a child and not sure what to, call NSPCC on 0808 800 5000. https://www.nspcc.org.uk/
- **YMCA** Where to go for support if you are homeless
- **Link to One Minute Guides** for Family Support Programme, Early Help Assessments, Team Around the Family, Locality Early Help Advisors, Family Centres Level 2 and 3 Services, Reducing Parental Conflict

Immediate advice and support

Please refer to the NHS website regarding emergency mental health care or contact one of the following:

- **The Mindworks 24/7 mental health crisis line**, which is available for children and young people who are worried about themself, a friend, or for parents worried about their child or young person. It can be contacted on 0800 915 4644, is open all day and all night, seven days a week.
- **HOPELineUK**: Tel: 0800 068 41 41 Text: 07786209697
- **SHOUT:** Crisis text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. Text Shout

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NHS Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

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