



WICKERSLEY  
PARTNERSHIP  
TRUST.

# *Wellbeing Support*

# Wellbeing Support

We understand that mental health is a crucial aspect of your overall wellbeing, and we are committed to providing you with the support and resources you need. This booklet is specifically designed to address mental health concerns and offer guidance on how to navigate and improve your emotional well-being during your time in secondary school.

Within these pages, you will find valuable information, practical strategies, and links to external support agencies that specialise in mental health. These resources have been carefully selected to ensure that you have access to professional help and advice whenever you need it. We encourage you to explore this booklet, engage with the content, and utilise the provided links to seek additional support if required.

Remember, you are not alone in your journey. It is essential to prioritise your mental health and wellbeing, and we are here to support you every step of the way. Together, we can create a nurturing and inclusive environment that promotes positive mental health for all students. Let's embark on this journey towards wellbeing together, with confidence, resilience, and a commitment to self-care.

## The Gainsborough Academy Safeguarding Team

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead  
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# Advice, Help and Support

<b>Divert</b> (Substance misuse support)	<b>01709 917651</b> <a href="http://changeorlive.org">changeorlive.org</a>
<b>Youth Start</b> (Advice for young people)	<b>01709 255266</b> <a href="http://youthaccess.org.uk">youthaccess.org.uk</a>
<b>Emergency Youth Clinic &amp; Sexual Health Medicine</b>	<b>01709 427777</b> <a href="http://therotherhamft.nhs.uk/sexualhealth/">therotherhamft.nhs.uk/sexualhealth/</a>
<b>The Samaritans</b>	<b>116 123</b> <a href="http://samaritans.org">samaritans.org</a>
<b>Childline</b>	<b>0800 1111</b> <a href="http://childline.org.uk">childline.org.uk</a>
<b>NSPCC</b>	<b>0808 800 5000</b> <a href="http://nspcc.org.uk">nspcc.org.uk</a>
<b>BEAT</b> (Eating disorder support)	<b>0808 801 0677</b> <a href="http://beateatingdisorders.org.uk">beateatingdisorders.org.uk</a>
<b>Safe@last</b> (Thinking about running away)	<a href="http://uk.depaul.org.uk">uk.depaul.org.uk</a>
<b>My Mind Matters</b> (Mental health)	<a href="http://mymindmatters.org.uk">mymindmatters.org.uk</a>
<b>Young Minds</b> (General support and advice)	Parent Helpline: <b>0808 802 5544</b> <a href="http://youngminds.org.uk">youngminds.org.uk</a>
<b>Love Respect</b> (Advice on healthy relationships)	<a href="http://loverspect.co.uk">loverspect.co.uk</a>
<b>The Proud Trust</b> (LGBTQ support)	<a href="http://theproudtrust.org">theproudtrust.org</a>
<b>Grief Encounter</b> (Bereavement support)	<b>0808 802 0111</b> <a href="http://griefencounter.org.uk">griefencounter.org.uk</a>
<b>With Me in Mind</b> (Wellbeing support)	<a href="http://withmeinmind.co.uk">withmeinmind.co.uk</a>
<b>Shout</b> (Mental Health)	<b>Text 'Shout' to 85258</b> <a href="http://giveusashout.org">giveusashout.org</a>
<b>Anxiety UK</b>	<b>Text: 07537 416905</b> <a href="http://anxietyuk.org.uk">anxietyuk.org.uk</a>
<b>No Panic</b> (Anxiety, OCD)	<b>0330 606 9844</b> <a href="http://nopanic.org.uk">nopanic.org.uk</a>

## *Safeguarding our students:*

Safeguarding our students continues to be a key priority. If you have any concerns about the safety of a young person in any of our schools, please visit the school website. The Safeguarding tab will provide you with the correct staff name and their email address. Alternatively, please contact the child's Non-Teaching Head of Year.

## *Supporting our students:*

We are lucky to work in partnership with 'With Me In Mind', who are mental health practitioners. Follow their social media accounts @WithMeInMind to find out more. We also have our [AWARE](#) page on all our schools' websites - this has a wealth of information for both students and parents/guardians to access.



The following pages contain lots of help and advice from our partner agencies.

With thanks to:

The NHS  
MHST  
Healthy Minds Lincolnshire  
Charlie Waller Memorial Trust  
Lincolnshire County Council  
Stem4  
Therapist Aid  
The Mental Health Foundation

# Care Pack

**This leaflet might help you when...**

An event happens that is outside the range of ordinary human experiences, usually sudden, which can give rise to intense emotional and physical reactions at a level that can, potentially, overwhelm individuals.



**Those who are grieving don't usually need an expert... just familiar people who care.**

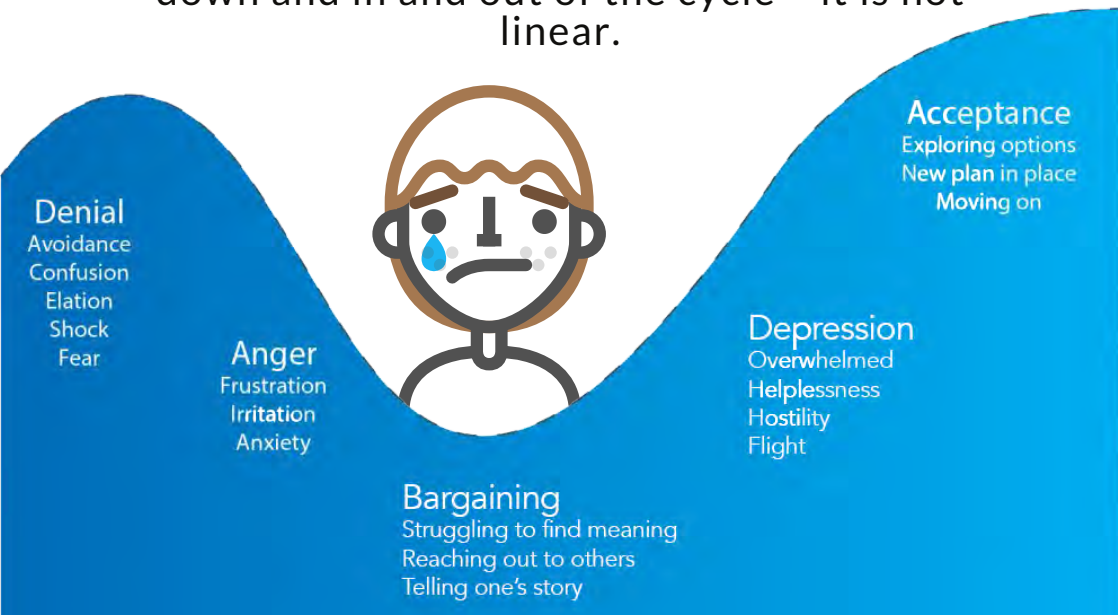


Grief can be caused by many different things, for example, the death of someone you know, the death of a pet, the ending of a relationship, big life changes. It could also be called “the loss of something in your life”. Quite often, these events are unplanned and will come as a shock.

There is no right or wrong way as to how you may feel because everyone will experience grief in a way that is unique to them.

Some people may feel confused, guilty, scared, lonely. Some people may be angry, others really upset and some people may act as though nothing has happened – these are all normal reactions and are all okay.

The Grief Cycle (below) shows that there are different stages and different ways of responding to a loss. The Grief Cycle does not always flow like this, though – everyone responds differently and people can slide up and down and in and out of the cycle – it is not linear.



# What can help?

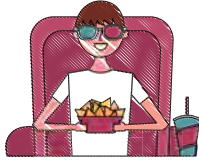
Listen to a playlist, or  
some of their favourite  
music



Write a poem or a song  
Write a story  
Draw a picture



Watch their favourite  
film



Spend time in a place  
that makes you feel  
happy or reminds you  
of the loss

Focus on happy  
memories



Make a memory box or  
jar



Create a memory book  
Create a photo collage

Talk about what has happened  
Be honest about how you are feeling



# Body Scan

Take some time to notice what is  
happening in your body. You might  
notice some tension in your shoulders  
or other muscles. Take time to notice  
and accept these.

Tense your muscles one by one, start  
with your face, scrunching your eyes  
and nose.

Tense for 5 seconds and then relax.

Repeat as you follow your muscles  
down, tensing your shoulders, arms  
then hands.

Tense your shoulder blades and  
stomach muscles.

Tense your thighs, your calves, push  
your feet into the ground.

End by curling your toes.

Feel the tension melt away.

Place your right hand on your heart,  
and your left hand on your belly. Give  
yourself a safe, calm hug for 30  
seconds.



Scan the QR code for access to further  
self-help advice, including guided  
relaxation

# Further Support

There is no set time scale for coming to terms with a loss.

It is important to remember that feelings will come and go in waves but what most people find is that, gradually, over time, things do get easier.

And remember, it is ok to laugh and to have fun – this does not mean that you will forget about your loss or that it will be any less important to you.

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[www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people](http://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people)  
Here4You - 0800 234 6342

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)  
Childline - 0800 1111

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)  
Samaritans - 116 123

[www.lpft.nhs.uk/steps2change/home](http://www.lpft.nhs.uk/steps2change/home) (16+ self-referral)

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) (11+ online counselling and forums)

[www.lcgl.org.uk](http://www.lcgl.org.uk) (Lincolnshire Centre for Grief and Loss)

[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

[www.hopeagain.org.uk](http://www.hopeagain.org.uk)

[www.griefencounter.org.uk](http://www.griefencounter.org.uk)

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

**Please contact a trusted adult at your school if you would like any further information or support.**



# Parent/Carer Support Pack

**This leaflet might help you when...**

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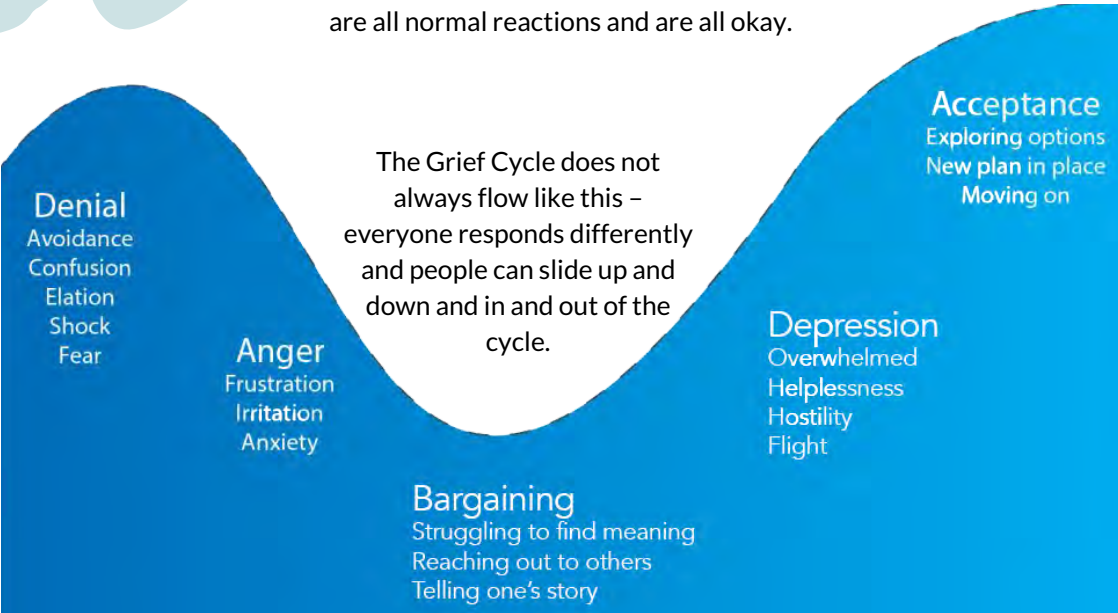
**Those who are grieving don't usually need an expert... just familiar people who care.**



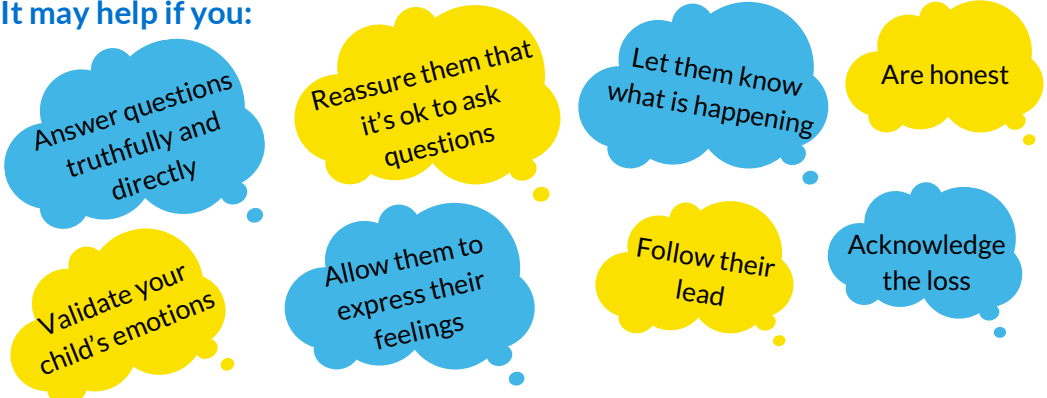
Grief can be caused by many different things, for example, the death of someone you know, the death of a pet, the ending of a relationship, big life changes. It could also be called “the loss of something in your life”. Quite often, these events are unplanned and will come as a shock.

There is no right or wrong way as to how you or your child may feel because everyone will experience grief in a way that is unique to them.

Some people may feel confused, guilty, scared, lonely. Some people may be angry, others really upset and some people may act as though nothing has happened – these are all normal reactions and are all okay.



You may be worried about what to say in case you say the wrong thing. It may help if you:



Your child may struggle to verbalise how they are feeling – encourage them to draw or write instead

## Some things you could say to open up conversation:

"what can I do to help you?"

"how can I support you?"

"would you like to talk about how you are feeling?"

"It's okay to talk to me"

"I can see you are feeling..."

"it's ok to feel..."  
"It's ok not to feel ok"

"I'm here to listen"

There is no magic wand to make pain go away or make things go back to normal. But there are some things you can try that might help ease the pain and help you and your child come to terms with loss. Remember, an adult and child may feel and respond differently.

## How you may be able to help yourself:

Acknowledge your own emotions

Recognise that it is okay for your child to see that you are upset

Reach out - don't be alone

Seek support for yourself if you are finding things difficult - speak to someone you trust

Share your own feelings

Create a safe environment for opportunities to remember

## There are places you can go if you need some extra support such as:

[www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people](http://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people)  
Here4You - 0800 234 6342

[www.lpft.nhs.uk/steps2change/home](http://www.lpft.nhs.uk/steps2change/home) (16+ self-referral)

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) (11+ online counselling and forums)

[www.lcgl.org.uk](http://www.lcgl.org.uk) (Lincolnshire Centre for Grief and Loss)

[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

[www.hopeagain.org.uk](http://www.hopeagain.org.uk) / [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

[www.griefencounter.org.uk](http://www.griefencounter.org.uk)

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)  
Childline - 0800 1111

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)  
Samaritans - 116 123

[www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)  
[www.winstonswish.org/suggested-reading-list/](http://www.winstonswish.org/suggested-reading-list/)

[www.UKtraumacouncil.org](http://www.UKtraumacouncil.org)

[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

[www.stbarnabashospice.co.uk/services/wellbeing-support/bereavement](http://www.stbarnabashospice.co.uk/services/wellbeing-support/bereavement)

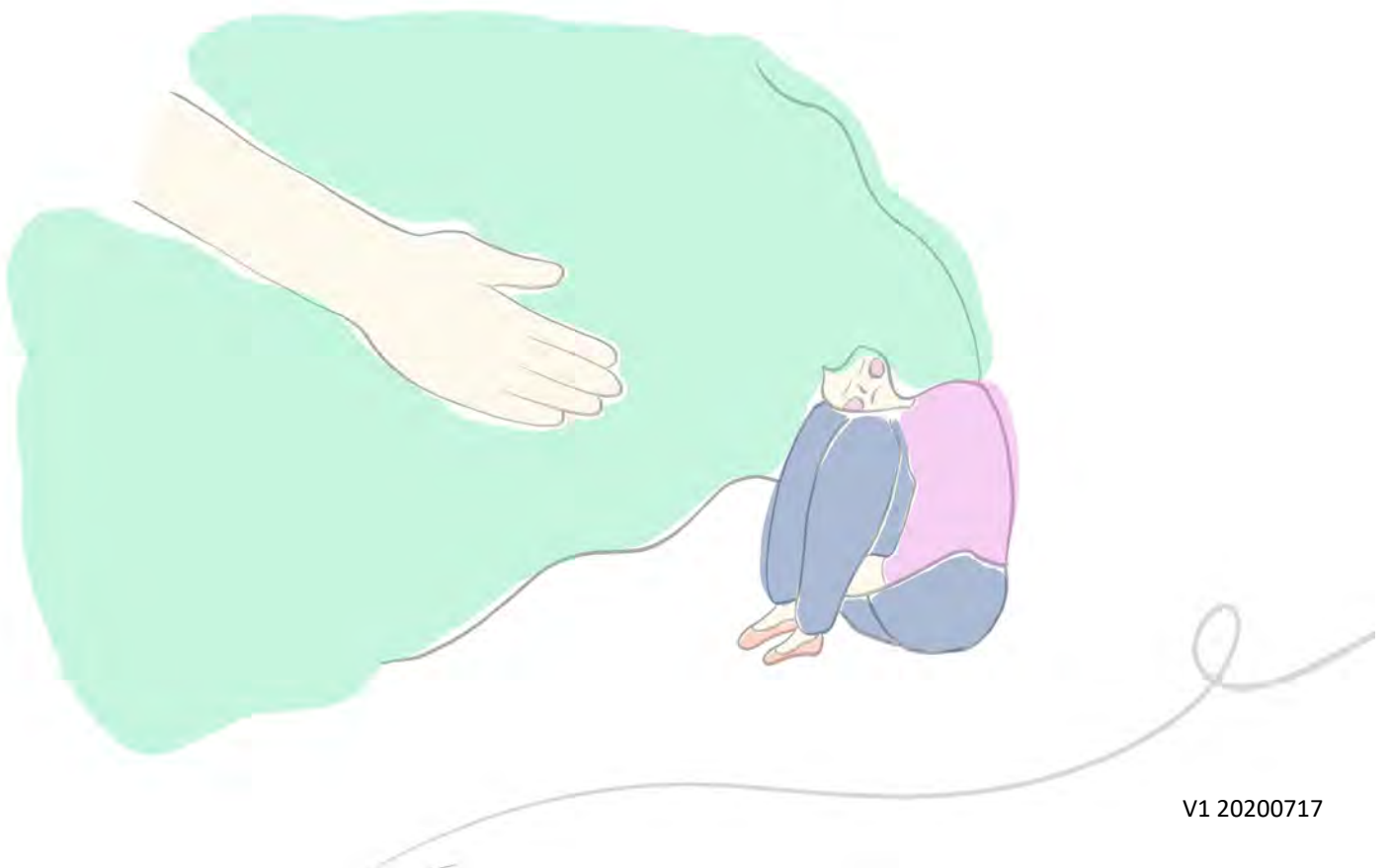
**Please contact a member of staff at your child's education setting if you would like any further information.**



**Lincolnshire Partnership**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Healthy Minds Lincolnshire

Grief and Loss support pack  
for child / young person



# Contents

This booklet is for children and young people experiencing grief and loss. It contains lots of information and some activities you may find helpful.

Take a look at the different sections when you feel ready. You may want to look through this with someone close to you.

You do not have to read this information in one go and can put this booklet down and pick it up again as needed.

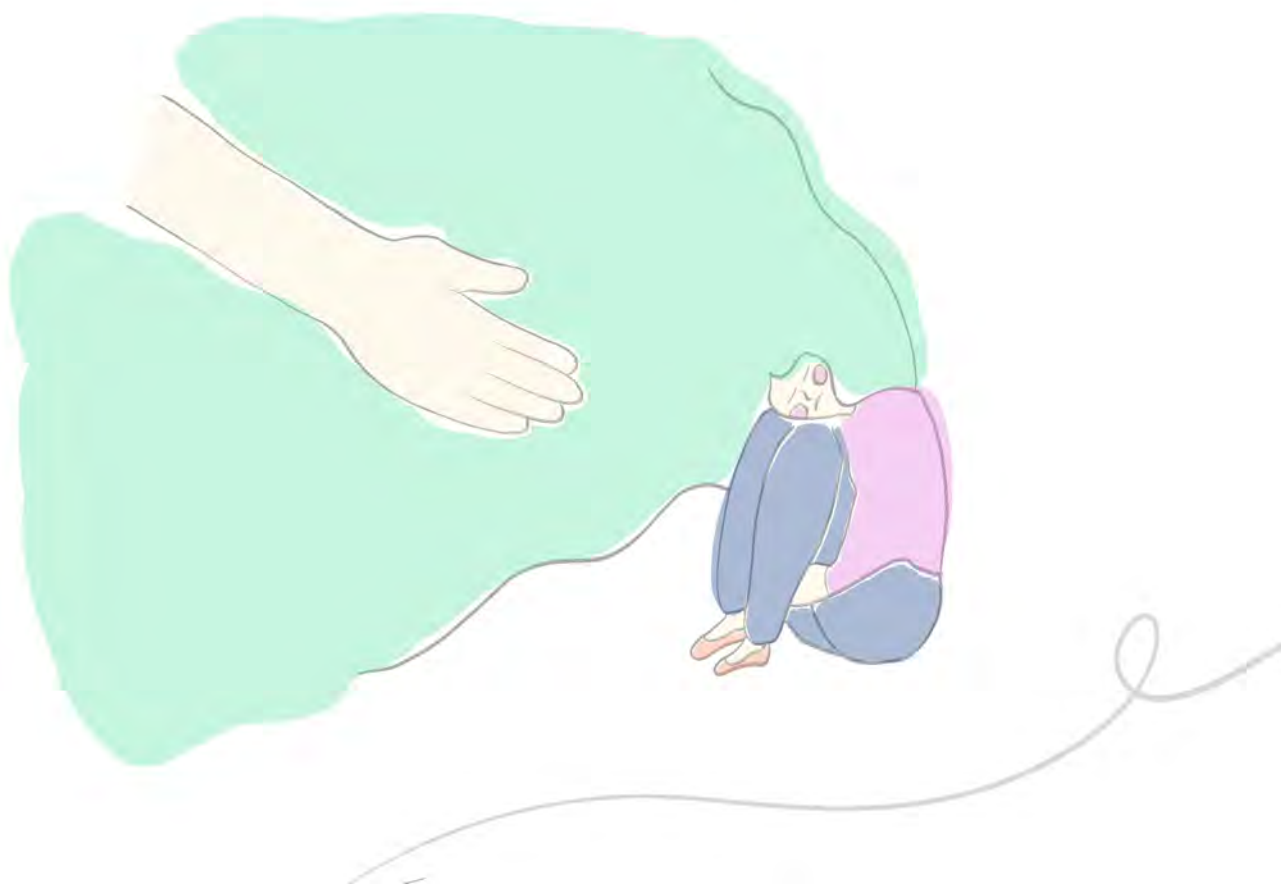
**Pages 2-7 Understanding Grief and Loss**

**Pages 8-10 Talking about a loss**

**Pages 11-16 Activities to help us manage Grief and Loss**

**Page 17 Other resources**

# Understanding Grief and Loss



# Understanding Grief and Loss

Losing someone that we care about and the change that loss brings to our life can be really difficult. Grief is our individual response to this loss.

Everyone's experience of grief and loss is different; you might experience lots of different emotions that at times may feel overwhelming, or you might find that you do not feel anything at all. This can be described sometimes as "feeling numb."

These mixed and ever changing emotions are a natural reaction to loss and the grieving process. One thing to remember is that there is no set pattern when it comes to grieving and there is no right or wrong way to feel.

## **There are many different reasons that may lead to us feeling grief, such as;**

- \* The death of a member of our family
- \* The death or loss of a pet
- \* The death of a friend, a teacher or someone you knew at school
- \* An illness of someone close to you
- \* The loss of a relationship or friendship, like someone moving away or no longer being in your life as often as they had been.

Whatever the loss, when we are grieving we need time to accept and come to terms with this.

The way that we feel and the way that we cope can vary from person to person. Some people may find it helpful to be around people for example, whilst others may prefer to have some alone time.



**Grief can impact every part of our lives, such as our thoughts, our physical health, our emotions and our behaviour.**



Grief can affect the way we think, we may struggle to concentrate, become forgetful or find it difficult to make decisions.



Grief can affect our physical health – this can lead to us getting headaches, having aches and pains or feeling sick.



If our emotions are affected, this can impact how we feel about the world around us, such as how we feel about our friends, family and school.



Grief can affect our behaviours, so we may argue more with other people, we might cry or we may find that we struggle to get to sleep or that we want to sleep more often.

## Changes to be aware of

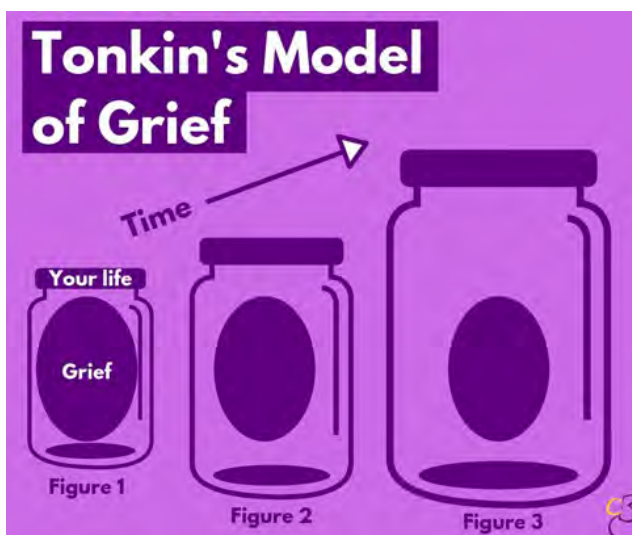
Sometimes we don't realise we're having a hard time or that we're struggling with our loss, but other people around us, such as parents/carers, teachers or friends may notice this and point it out to us. You may notice some changes, such as:

- \* Changes in your sleep or eating patterns. This can mean sleeping less/more or eating less/more.
- \* Struggling with being separated from those close to you, such as a parent/carer.
- \* Thinking more about the deceased person and wishing you could be with them again.
- \* A lack of interest in playing with friends
- \* Changes in grades at school
- \* A loss of interest in activities that once excited you
- \* Changes in behaviour, such as arguing more with others.

Noticing these changes in yourself, or having others point them out to you, can feel challenging or worrying. Later on in this booklet we discuss how you can talk to others about how you are feeling and there are also activities for you to try that can help with managing grief and loss.

## Tonkin's Model of Grief

Lois Tonkin's theory of grief (below,) suggests that over time our grief stays the same but that our life begins to grow around it, making it feel easier to manage. With new experiences and new relationships, slowly the jar around our grief grows a little bigger, so eventually the grief does not feel as big and hard to cope with. The idea of growing around grief accepts that grief doesn't leave us, but at the same time this does not mean that we will always feel as sad as we do right now.



Picture from Cruse bereavement

# Kubler-Ross 5 Stages of Grief

The Kubler-Ross Stages of Grief model explains what we may be feeling at different stages.

The different stages are **Denial**, **Anger**, **Bargaining**, **Depression** and finally **Acceptance**.

People move through the different stages at different times, so one person may feel acceptance of the loss, while another may still be feeling angry. Remember, we are all different.

One way to understand this is by looking at the popular Disney movie The Lion King, where the 5 Stages of Grief and Loss can be seen.



**1. Denial** – After the stampede Simba finds his dad, Mufasa, lying on the ground not moving. He initially is in denial that his dad has died and says, “Dad, come on, you’ve got to get up.”



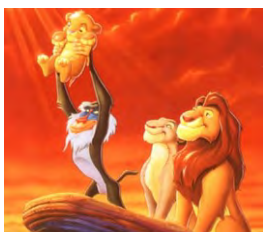
**2. Anger** – When Nala finds Simba as a grown up, she asks him to come back and he becomes angry and defensive with her because he believes it is his fault his dad died (remember Uncle Scar telling Simba it's all his fault?) Simba is angry with his dad for leaving him and shouts at the sky, “You said you would always be there for me, but you’re not.”



**3. Bargaining** – Simba sees a figure of his dad in the sky and pleads for his dad to stay.



**4. Depression** – After Simba moves past bargaining, he looks down and says, “It’s me, it’s all my fault,” believing that he was responsible for the stampede. He feels a great sadness and emptiness from his loss.



**5. Acceptance** – Simba realises the truth – that his Uncle Scar killed his father. Simba accepts his rightful place as king and his father's death. In the final scene he has moved forward with his grief and stands on the top of Pride Rock with Nala and their new born cub.

# Talking about a loss



# Talking about a loss

Talking to others about your grief and loss may feel tough or a bit scary. If the person you have lost was also close to your parents/carers/friends, you may feel worried about talking to them in case you upset them.

Remember the Kubler-Ross model in the previous section and that others around you may be in different places with their grief and loss journey. It's ok to talk about your loss, but try to not feel too disheartened if you feel ready to talk, but those close to you do not. If others around you aren't ready to talk, it may be helpful to speak to someone you can trust who is not in your immediate family or circle of friends, such as a teacher or school counsellor.

If you don't feel ready or able to talk out loud about how you're feeling, you may find it helpful to draw or write your feelings. If you want to share this with others around you, you can share your letter or picture with them. There are some activities for doing this later on in this booklet.

## Talking to others about their loss

If a friend or family member wants to talk through their loss and how they are feeling, this may seem a bit daunting.

Often, people are worried about saying or doing the right things and not making the situation worse.

### There are some things you can do help....

- \* **Listen without interrupting** Try to listen to your friend or family member without interrupting. As they're talking, lots of thoughts or questions might pop into your head, but try to just listen to what they're saying and wait for them to finish speaking. Sometimes people don't want solutions to what they need to do next, they just need to talk through how they're feeling.
- \* **Face them and make eye contact** This shows that you are listening and are interested in what they have to say.
- \* **Use validation** A great example of validation can be found in a video clip of the film Inside Out, which you can watch here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QT6FdhKriB8>

Alternatively, you can type 'inside out validation clip' into a search engine and find the YouTube video in the search results.

There is more about validation next....

## Using validation

**Validation is the recognition that a person or their feelings or opinions are valid and worth while. Here are some examples of phrases you may wish to say to someone who has come to speak with you about their loss.**

- \* I hear what you're saying
- \* I have felt the same way before
- \* It's ok to feel like this
- \* That must be really difficult for you

Occasionally people may ask what the other person thinks they should do and you are unlikely to have the answers or be able to help with this. If someone asks what you think they should do, where they can go for help, or if you are also struggling with a loss and don't feel able to help someone else right now, you could use validation by saying,

"I can see this is really important to you," and then explore who else they could talk to, such as a teacher or another trusted adult.

**Remember**, you can be a listening ear to a friend or loved one who is experiencing a loss, but it is not your responsibility to try and make things better for the other person or to have solutions for what might help. Sometimes it is enough for people to say how they feel and "get this off their chest." If they need more support or you are concerned about them, always speak to a trusted adult, such as a teacher or parent/carer.



# Activities to support Grief and Loss



# Activities to support Grief and Loss

These activities can be helpful if you are experiencing a loss, however if you have recently experienced the loss, you may not feel ready to explore activities just yet and are likely to need time to come to terms with your grief and how you are feeling.

Remember that we're all different in how we cope with our grief and different children/young people are likely to feel ready to look at coping strategies and activities at different times. If someone else close to you has started to try some of these activities, but you don't feel ready yet, that's ok and you can explore them when the time is right for you.





# Memory Jar

**Memory jars are a nice way to remember someone. They are made using natural materials, such as chalk. Chalk has been found to contain negative ions, which also provide soothing sensations. Follow the steps below to create your memory jar.**

## You will need:

A small jar (try not to pick one too big as you need to fill it!)

Table salt

Coloured chalk (powder paint works well if there is an allergy to chalk)

2x pieces of paper

**Optional:** Glitter and Cotton wool



## Steps:

1. Write down some memories or words that remind you of the person/place you are creating your jar about.
2. Choose a colour to represent that memory/word from your chalks/paints/glitter available.
3. Take the plain piece of paper, and in the centre pour some salt (think about how much you may need for the jar, and how you wish to divide this between your chosen colours.)
4. Rub the salt with the coloured chalk. If using powder paint, mix this in well with the salt. While doing so, think about why this memory or word is special to you. You may wish to add some glitter.
5. Pour the salt/chalk/paint mix into your memory jar.
6. Repeat steps 3-5 for each of your memories/words until your jar is full!
7. If you have cotton wool, you can place this on top of your chalk/salt mix in the jar to hold firmly in place.
8. Place the lid on your jar. Don't shake it if you do not want the colours to mix!
9. If you are making this with another person, talk about what memories/word each coloured layer represents.

**Keep this somewhere you can see to remind yourself of the happy memories/words within the jar.**

# Memory Box



## What is a memory box?

A memory box is a container that holds special things that belong to you and your loved one. The things in your memory box can help to remind you of happy times and nice memories.

Finding ways to remember the person who has died can be helpful in the grieving process. Some of the memories might make you laugh or cry, but that's ok, it is all part of the process of remembering the person who has died. Creating a memory box can make you feel emotional, sad or overwhelmed so you might find it useful to have a relative or friend help you.

## Making the box

A memory box can be as simple or elaborate as you like. You could use an old shoe box, a biscuit or sweets tin or a gift box. You could cover it with wallpaper or decorate the box with photos, stickers, pictures or drawings.

## What goes into a memory box?

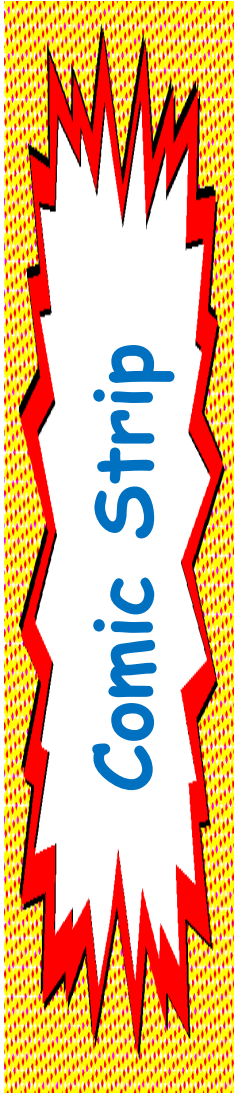
**Before you decide what to put in your box, you may find it helpful to think about your different types of memories. For example:**

- \* A special time you shared together
- \* Something you both enjoyed or laughed about
- \* A memory that gives you some comfort

## Some ideas



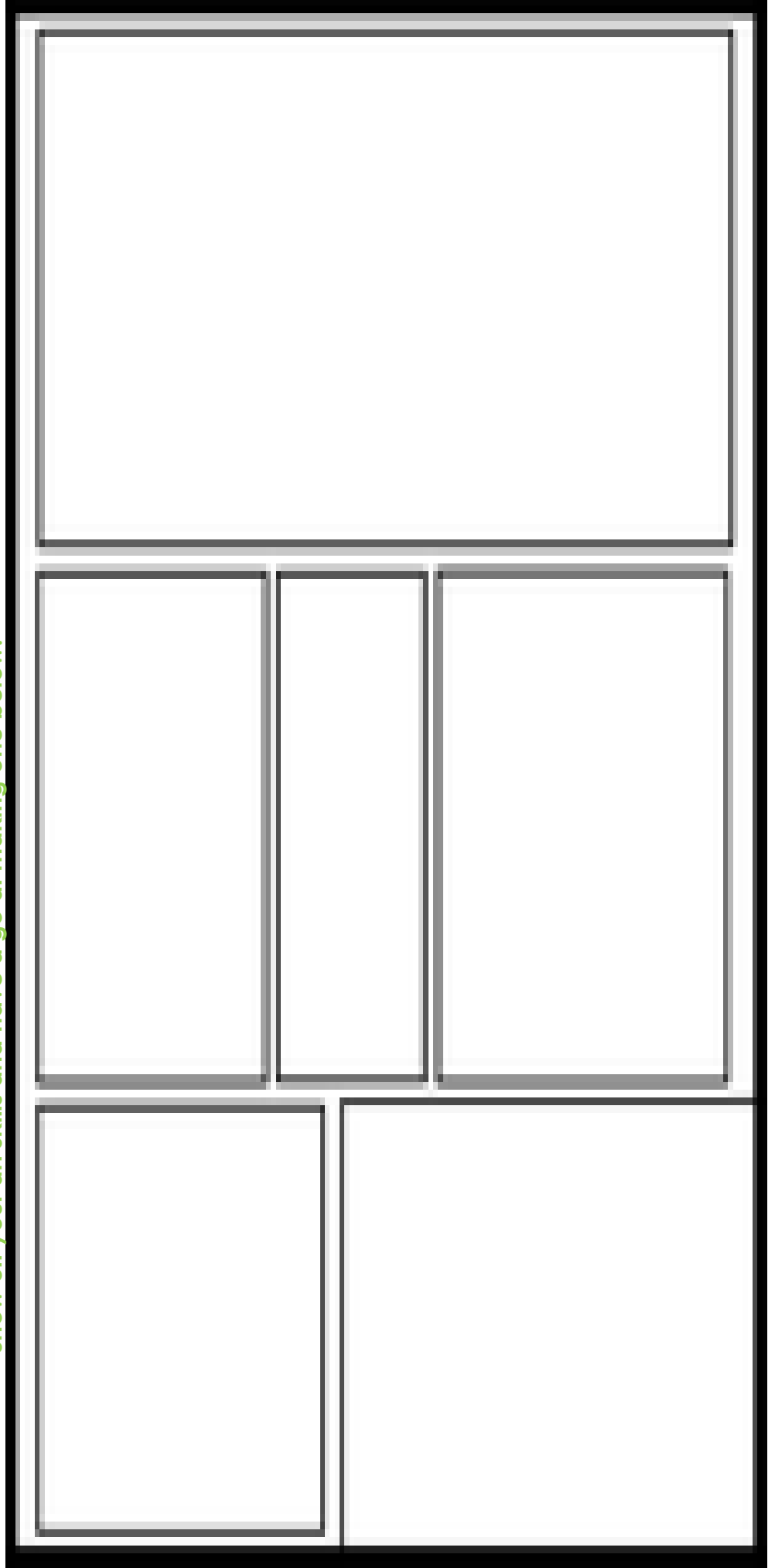
- \* Spray some of a loved one's perfume or aftershave onto a tissue or small toy
- \* Include photographs of you and your loved one together
- \* Add your favourite music onto a USB memory stick so you can listen to this
- \* Use anything that has a personal story attached to it, such as jewellery, birthday cards you received from your loved one, or tickets from places you visited together that hold special memories.



# Comic Strip

Drawing a comic strip is another way to help you relax and remember happy times with your loved one.

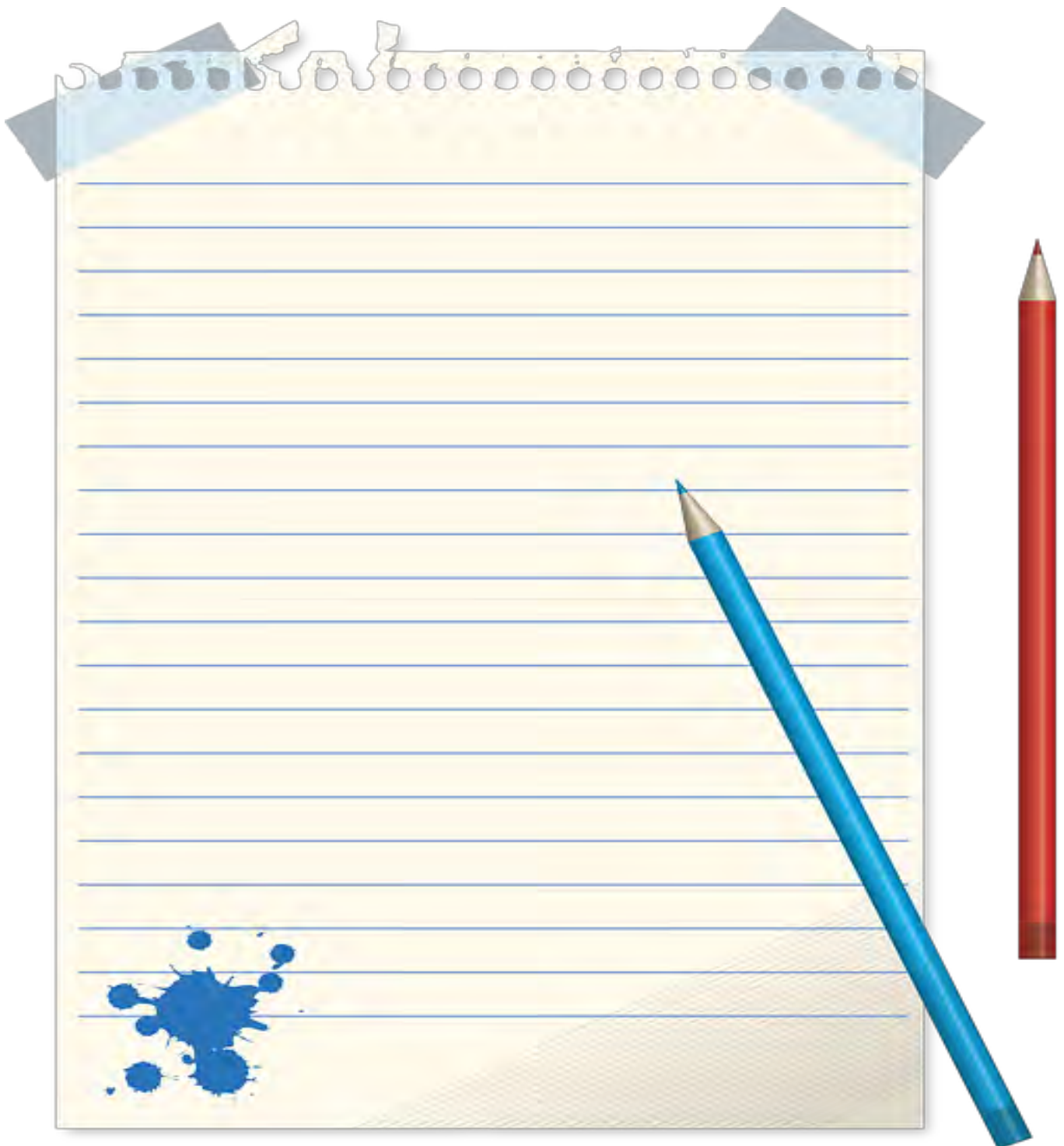
Show off your art skills and have a go at making one below.



# Writing a letter

Sometimes it can feel hard talking to others about how we feel, or we may not feel comfortable sharing our feelings out loud. Writing down our thoughts and feelings when we feel sad, ripping this up and throwing it away and then focussing on something that makes us feel happy can help us to feel better.

You may also wish to use this space to write a letter to the person you have lost, or to those closest to you to explain your feelings if you do not feel able to say this out loud.



# Padded Hearts

If you have an item of your loved one's clothing you could cut out and sew a simple padded heart as a reminder of them. You could hang it by your bed on your bag – or wherever you would find it helpful.

## Making a padded heart

1. To make a heart you will need a piece of fabric such as a top or a shirt.
2. Cut out a heart from paper to use as a template. Fold your fabric in two and cut out a square of fabric that is a bit bigger than your heart template. Put the heart template on your fabric and draw around it, you can use a pen or a pencil.
3. Using a simple running stitch, stitch around the heart, leaving a gap so you can stuff it. You could use cotton wool, the insides of an old pillow or even an old odd sock.
4. After you have stuffed it, finish sewing it up, you can then carefully cut around the padded heart, taking care not to snip the stitches. Sew a piece of ribbon at the top of the heart to make a loop.



**Idea** - You could spray a little of your loved one's perfume/aftershave or a scent that you find comforting to the heart.



# Other resources

## Books

Crossley, D. Illustrated by Sheppard, K. (2000) *Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine: your activity book to help when someone has died.*

Rosen, M. & Blake, Q. (2004) *Michael Rosen's Sad Book (Understanding deep sorrow after Loss)*

Dr Coombes, Sharie. (2020) *Letting Go! Mindful Kids: An activity book for children who need support through experiences of loss, change, disappointment and grief - Mindful Kids*

## Websites

**[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)** Helpline, online chat and information about bereavement.

**[www.hopeagain.org.uk](http://www.hopeagain.org.uk)** The support service for young people offered by Cruse.

**[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)** Helpline, online chat, email and information around loss.

**[www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)** Support for bereaved children, young people, their families, and the professionals who support them.

**[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)** Support for under 25s with a range of challenging issues.

**[www.lcgl.org.uk](http://www.lcgl.org.uk)** Lincolnshire Centre for Grief and Loss. Website with further support guides and advice.

**YoungMinds Crisis Messenger** provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. If you need urgent help text YM to 85258.

**[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)** Counselling forum, online information where young people can speak also with trained counsellor.

**Lincolnshire Here4You** 01522 309120

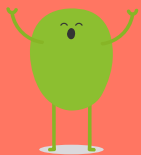
Joint Healthy Minds Lincolnshire and CAMHS advice line. – available Mon- Fri 09.30 – 16.30

Alternatively, please visit our website [www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people](http://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people) where you can find useful information and self-help advice.

“ I never realised that there could be help for anxiety. I have been anxious for most of my life and I just thought that was the way I was. ”

“ It was mind blowing for me to realise that my son, who is always angry, might actually be expressing his anxiety. It's made me see his behaviour in a completely different light. ”

“ Simple, not overwhelming and exactly what I need in situations of stress, anxiety or fear! Can only recommend :) ”  
(Clear Fear app review)



©stem4

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### Anxiety UK

Support and help for those diagnosed with, or who suspect they may have, an anxiety condition.

Text Service: 07537 416 905

Infoline: 03444 775 774 (Mon – Fri, 9.30am – 5.30pm)

Website: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

### No Panic

Information for sufferers and carers of people with panic, anxiety, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD).

Helpline: 0300 772 9844 (Every day, 10am – 10pm)

Youthline: 0330 606 1174 (For under 18s, Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, 3pm – 6pm / Thurs, 3pm – 8pm / Sat, 6pm – 8pm)

Website: [www.nopanic.org.uk](http://www.nopanic.org.uk)

### OCD Action

Support and information for anybody affected by OCD.

Helpline: 0300 636 5478 (Mon – Fri, 9.30am – 8pm)

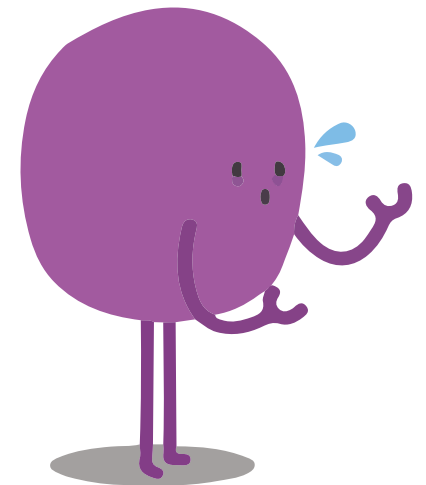
Website: [www.ocdaction.org.uk](http://www.ocdaction.org.uk)

stem4  
51 St George's Road  
Wimbledon, London SW19 4EA

e: [info@stem4.org.uk](mailto:info@stem4.org.uk)  
[@stem4org](https://www.instagram.com/stem4org)  
[stem4.org.uk](http://stem4.org.uk)

**stem4**  
supporting teenage mental health  
Registered Charity No. 1144506

# ANXIETY



**stem4**  
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# ANXIETY

## Key facts:

Anxiety is the most common mental health condition people experience and is characterised by a range of anxious thoughts and behaviours.

Anxious thinking is almost always fear-based and anxious behaviour is often carried out to make the person feel less fearful. This behaviour is not generally positive. So, for example, someone who is anxious of flying may not get on a plane.

Anxiety can show itself in many forms, which include:

- **Generalised anxiety** – the anxiety is there most of the time, with times of excessive, uncontrollable, and often irrational worry and increased apprehension.
- **Panic attacks** – a sudden surge of overwhelming anxiety and fear which brings about a strong physical reaction.
- **Constant worry** – frequent, negative thoughts that a person goes over and over.
- **Phobias** – very strong, irrational fears.
- **Social anxiety** – a fear of social situations and interactions that often leads to avoidance.

## How do I know if I'm anxious?

- Are you feeling worried and agitated?
- Are you feeling fearful about things that others are generally not fearful about?
- Do you constantly worry?
- Do you always predict a dramatic and negative outcome?

- Do you overthink and overcheck things always with a negative prediction?
- Do you have a range of physical symptoms that are consistent with a fear response such as your heart racing, increased breathing, and muscle tension?

People who are anxious are more likely to answer 'yes' to most of the above questions.



## Why deal with anxiety?

Anxiety can be very unpleasant to experience and it can limit the things you want to do. Left untreated, anxiety can last a long time and may lead from one anxiety condition to another. For example, someone who has generalised anxiety might develop panic attacks. Anxiety can also have a significant physical impact. Some people may drink too much or misuse recreational drugs to deal with anxiety, which in turn will lead to further problems.

## What can I try to do?

- **Face it**  
If you are putting off either thinking or doing something because it makes you feel anxious, try and support yourself to face it, bit by bit.
- **Do less**  
If your anxiety makes you think too much (e.g., you go over something again and again in your mind) or do too much (e.g., frequent hand washing) try and reduce the behaviour, one step at a time.
- **Accept it**  
The thoughts and behaviours you experience are symptoms of anxiety. See if you can calm your breathing and just let go of your fears by accepting them for what they are.
- **Relax**  
Have regular breaks, learn to relax, be mindful. Activities such as art, exercise, writing, acting, yoga, massages, and listening to music can help.

- **Monitor**  
Keep a diary to work out triggers and patterns.
- **Seek help**  
Visit your GP by phoning your local practice and booking an appointment (check if you can book it with their mental health lead). Go ready to discuss your concerns and the problems you are experiencing. You can always take your diary with you in order to help this process. If you have a lot to discuss, book a double appointment.

## Clear Fear

Why not try the stem4 Clear Fear app?

Clear Fear is an app to help young people manage the symptoms of anxiety, developed by a clinician in collaboration with young people.

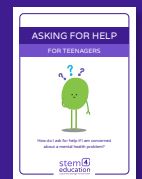
The Clear Fear app uses evidence-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

It is FREE to download from the Apple Store and Google Play.



## Asking for help

stem4 has an Asking for help booklet available on our Resources page [www.stem4.org.uk/resources](http://www.stem4.org.uk/resources)



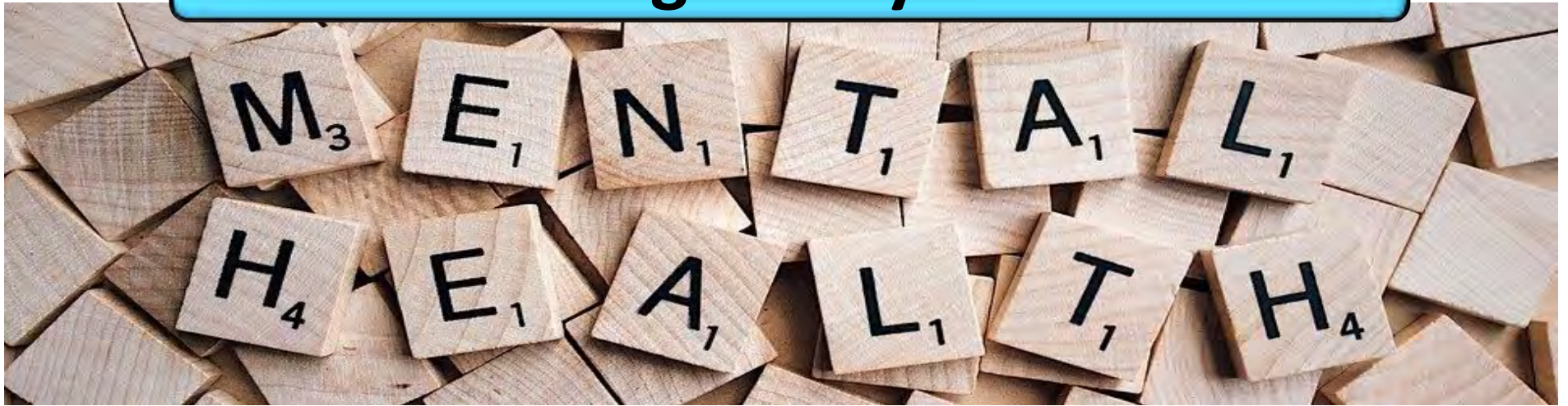
## Take5

Try stem4's Take5 Controlled Breathing exercise.





# Looking after yourself



Mental health is the way you think or feel about yourself and the world around you. It's related to how you cope with life's challenges and stresses. An event like the covid-19 pandemic could affect your mental health and ability to cope.

Mental health is important at every stage in life, from childhood through to adulthood

## What is Positive Wellbeing?

It is a state of overall good health in both body and mind and can include:

- ✓ **Social Wellbeing** (building relationships and community support through friends and family and neighbours etc.)
- ✓ **Physical Wellbeing** (Movement, whether in sports or walking, movement that brings joy.)

## Did you know?

*Looking after your mind is just as important as looking after your body and caring about your physical fitness.*

*When we're physically ill, we visit our GP or seek support and help but people are less likely to do the same when it comes to looking after emotional well-being.*

**“Sleep is the best—  
and least expensive—  
anxiety medicine.”**

*Ellen Vora, MD*



**“Good mental health is when you can feel happy and positive about yourself and enjoy life and learn well. Good mental health helps you to have healthy relationships with family and friends and enables you to manage sad, worrying or angry feelings and you can bounce back from tough times.”**



# Coping Strategies

Everyone has mental health. It's on a spectrum as such, everyone has good mental health days and bad mental health days with everything else in between as well. Emotional well-being is our coping and resilience in relation to situations that make impact our mental health and is therefore unique to the individual.

Being aware of our coping strategies and how certain situations affect us shows that individuals are in-tuned with their emotional wellbeing and therefore promoting and increasing improved mental health and visa Versa when we use bad coping strategies showing negative emotional well-being and promoting bad mental health

## Reaching out for support.

It's important to have a community or someone to confide in that you trust with your thoughts and feelings. Nothing you think or feel should be used to bully you or belittle you. If you don't have anyone, there are free helplines you can call or chat lines to get support

## Tracing your thoughts

Trace your negative thoughts and feelings back to where they began. Was it something someone said? Was it a recent event or particular aspect in your life that is creating a negative response?

## Taking breaks from technology



It can create strain on the eyes, disrupt sleep, overstimulate your brain and normally, technology is linked to a lack of movement.

## Deep breathing exercises

Breathing in for four seconds, holding for four, releasing for four is one way of helping us deal with the physical effects of stress and helps to calm our nervous system and bring more oxygen into the body.

## Emotional resilience

This comes into play where we can't control the stress that is coming in from the outside. To gain a wider perspective, write a list of all the things that are going well and good in your life, what are you grateful for?

## Eating well

In recent years, the gut has been linked to depression, our emotions and behaviour. It has been nicknamed "our second brain". Eating fresh fruit, vegetables and whole grains, lean meats and health fats will help alleviate your body from digestive stress and feed your body with what it needs to be happier and healthy.

## Keep a diary of your days

Write down what went well each day, what didn't go well and you feel about it. Then write down what you plan to do differently tomorrow. Reading back on this will help you gain a clearer perspective on how things are going inside.

## Tips for managing anxiety

### Self-care

Introduce activities/times to help you relax and reduce any anxiety/worry. This might be a home workout, having a bath, cooking, cleaning, organising areas of your house, watching TV, DIY projects, anything that you enjoy and find pleasure in!

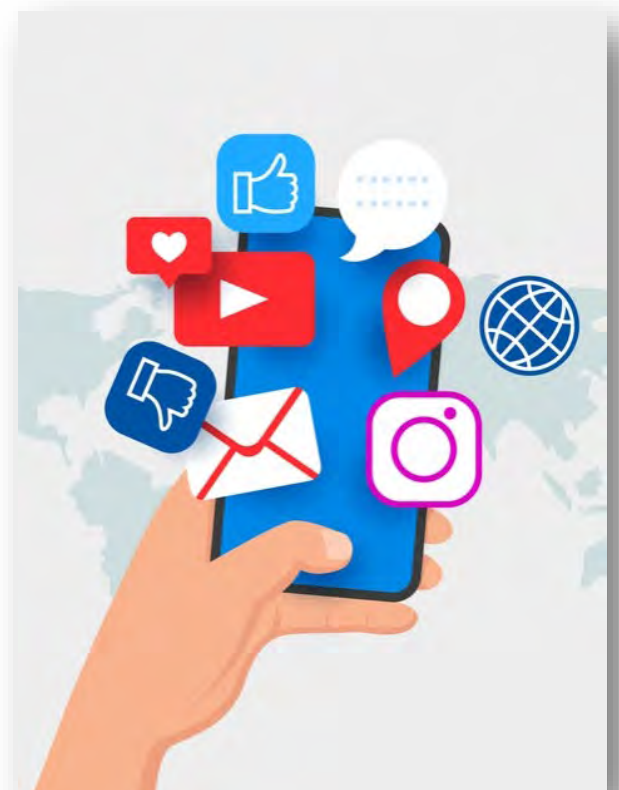


### Routine

We are all used to routine, be that going to work or school or getting up at particular times. Try and create a routine or plan each day and maintain aspects of it during holidays and weekends. Allow yourself time to rest, keep a balanced diet and be more flexible in putting in activities like watching the tv, reading, listening to music and spending time with people who care about you.

### Social media

For some social media is highly important in keeping connected and in touch with family/friends/vulnerable people. But it can also be a source escalating your worry. Consider whether it might be better to reduce social media use, perhaps by time (10 minutes at a time) or only at certain times of the day.



## Tips for managing anxiety



### Time and space

Give yourself a space to worry: It is natural and normal to worry, however this can get the better of us. You could consider planning small time frames where you allow yourself to worry, or use a form of expression (e.g. writing, art or talking) to let out these thoughts. Giving yourself a space to allow this can help contain worry so that it does not feel all consuming all of the time.

### Exercise

Exercise helps to manage anxiety and releases some of the anxious energy in the body. YouTube has loads of workouts you can do at home, try the body coach, search for home workouts, home yoga or any home alternative to the exercise you enjoy!



### Support

If you have existing mental health problems reach out to your support network and professionals if you have one. If these feelings are new also reach out to people that you find supportive. Many people are feeling the same way and it will help you to feel less alone. You can share your own tips for staying calm and managing the situation. If you don't feel that you have support you can text SHOUT for free from most UK mobiles, check out their website "[giveusashout.org](https://giveusashout.org)" for more information.



# Simple practical steps to try out to get a good nights sleep

**Switch off technology**/phones at least one hour before bed to avoid stimulation from the blue-light emitting from technology.



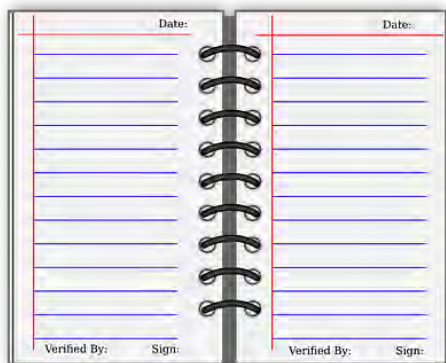
**Reading books**, a warm shower or bath, listening to relaxing music, have a warm beverage such as a non-caffeinated herbal tea

Setting up a **bedtime routine** to signal to your body that you are making your way to bedtime.



**Being consistent** with a sleep/wake routine. Getting sunlight within a few hours of waking helps to set your body clock, even if just for 15 minutes daily.

**Meditation.** Close your eyes for a few minutes each day and just focus on breathing. You don't need to do anything else but witness your thoughts and feelings.



**Write your feelings on paper.** Journal how the day went, self reflection and re-read them to see what kind of positive or negative state your mind is in will help ease stress and "get out of your head"



# Wellbeing action plan

A simple, ever-evolving resource to help you keep yourself well and take appropriate action if things start to go less well.

## Hello!

We hope you find this little booklet a useful starting point for trying to be kinder to yourself and keeping yourself well, especially at difficult times. It's based on a well-tested model called 'Wellness Recovery Action Planning' which is designed for people in recovery from mental illness.

We've simplified the idea and backed it up with advice and suggestions from young people to create this easy to use resource designed to help you promote your wellbeing, regardless of whether you've faced mental health issues or not.

We hope that completing this booklet will be both informative and fun and that it will help you to reflect on how you can best look after yourself and seek help if you ever need it. Keep it safe and return to it – feel free to scribble all over it or start again as you learn more about yourself and what works for you.

Throughout, we've included a range of ideas shared by young people to get you started and inspire you.

Good luck – be kind to yourself!

## My wellness toolbox

The first thing we need to do is to think about all the different things that help to make us or keep us well. These things make up our 'wellness toolbox' which can be a jumble of all sorts of different things. Nothing is too silly to put in your wellness toolbox – if it keeps you well or makes you smile, it should go in...



### Getting active

Get active and get your blood pumping; it's a great way to work out anger, frustration or worry and really takes your mind off things.



### Getting outside

Just being in outside space, camping and scouting, road trips, sunsets and sunrises, rollercoasters, walking the dog, taking a mindful walk.



### Connecting

Time with family, quality time with friends, looking after pets, group activities, team sports, counselling, talking to friends online, WhatsApp groups.



### Reaching out

Sometimes, if you can't really face being with people, you can still have a laugh with your mates online and it may help you feel better.



### Positivity journal

Write down one thing you feel grateful for each day. Some days it's hard to think of something, but you'll probably feel better when you do.



### Playlist of my life

Find songs to represent all the different things you are feeling and sing along. Try to allow yourself to feel a range of different things and end with something upbeat.



### Worry balloon

Write your worries on a balloon... then blow it up and let it go or pop it.



### Quiet time and relaxing

Enjoy your own space – sleeping in or taking a long bath. Immerse yourself in things that make you happy like reading books, playing video games, listening to music, watching your favourite TV shows and cooking.



### The healing power of tea

We decided that there is hardly anything that doesn't feel a bit better with tea! Seriously though... even when things are really bad, if you take time out to make a hot drink and sit down with it, it gives you time to be calm, focus and begin to plan your way out of a hole.



## Things that support my wellbeing

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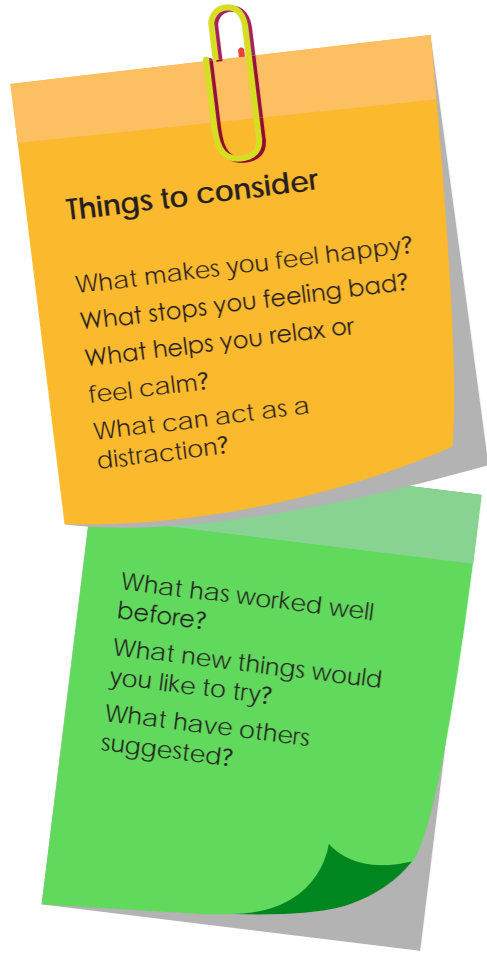
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### Things to consider

What makes you feel happy?  
What stops you feeling bad?  
What helps you relax or feel calm?  
What can act as a distraction?

What has worked well before?  
What new things would you like to try?  
What have others suggested?

## A plan for every day

Next we think about what things we should either try to do, or try to avoid each day in order to help ourselves feel as good as possible.

### Things to do

Focus on positives

Smile

Believe in yourself

Find a reason to get out of bed

Try new things

Exercise

Contacting friends and important people

Socialising

Make time for yourself

Shower

Chill out

Listen to music

Talking to people in a positive way

Get enough sleep

Putting on make-up

Give yourself space

Eat regular meals

Positive use of phones and social media

## Things to avoid

Being hard on yourself

Focusing on negatives

Feeling guilty about spending time alone or about going out

Taking things to heart

Staying in bed all day

Being alone all day

Being antisocial

Negative use of social media

Comparing yourself to other people

Worrying too much

Keeping things to yourself

Taking anger out on others

Hurting yourself

Smoking, drinking, drugs

## Daily maintenance plan

**Things I can do for myself every day to keep myself feeling as well as possible:**

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**Things I need to do, less often than every day, to keep my overall wellness and sense of wellbeing:**

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**Things that I know would make me feel well, but that I don't currently do or could do a lot more:**

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**Things I should actively avoid because they make me feel bad or worse:**

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## Managing triggers and challenges

Triggers are **things that happen to us or situations we face** that make it harder for us to stay well. Here we think about likely triggers and how we can manage them.

**My potential triggers and challenges:**

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### Things to consider

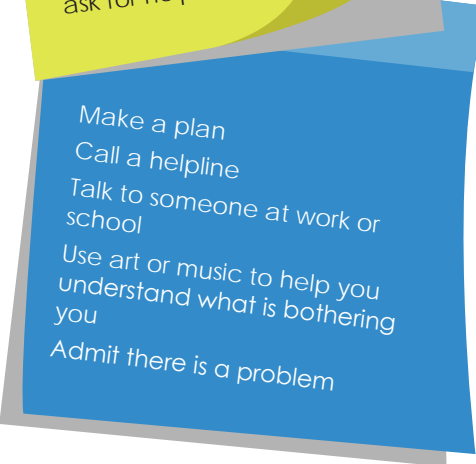
- Exams
- A break-up
- Friendship issues
- Moving to a new school or class
- Change

- Failure
- Difficulties at home
- Physical or mental illness
- Being bullied
- School holidays
- Not living up to expectations
- Comparing yourself with others



### Inspiration

Talk  
Let family support you  
Take time for yourself  
Research the thing that is bothering you so you feel more in control  
Use social media to ask for help



Make a plan  
Call a helpline  
Talk to someone at work or school  
Use art or music to help you understand what is bothering you  
Admit there is a problem



The most important thing is to say something to someone. As soon as you open up it's like a weight has been lifted from your shoulders.

### Things I can do to try and manage my triggers and challenges:

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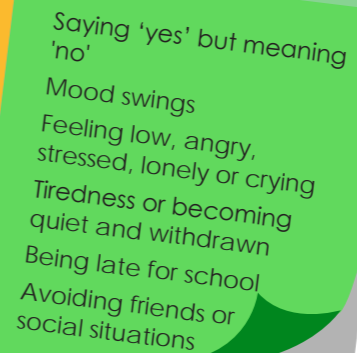
## Early warning signs

It's useful to learn to recognise the signs in our thoughts, feelings, appearance or behaviour which might help us or those who care about us to recognise when we need help. Thinking about this can also help us recognise when a friend might need our support too.



### Inspiration

Unusual behaviour – acting different from normal  
Changes in body language  
Losing interest in things  
Forgetting things  
Not listening or caring



Saying 'yes' but meaning 'no'  
Mood swings  
Feeling low, angry, stressed, lonely or crying  
Tiredness or becoming quiet and withdrawn  
Being late for school  
Avoiding friends or social situations



Changes in social media habits – shutting down, stopping social media, not answering the phone, uploading worrying photos or status updates  
Neglecting your appearance or cleanliness  
Self-harm  
Feeling unable to manage



You get pretty good at spotting the signs in your friends but it can be harder to see them in yourself, so you have to be a kind of little team looking out for each other and stepping in when one of you needs help.

**Warning signs that things are going less well for me or a friend:**

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## What next?

If you spot the warning signs that things are going less well for yourself or a friend, what should you do next? The young people we worked with had three main suggestions:




Write it down – if you're not ready to talk to someone, write down what's wrong and commit to a next step – it might be helpful showing someone what you've written.



Call a helpline or use a website if you're not ready to talk – for example the Samaritans: [samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org) | 116 123 | [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or Childline: [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk) | 0800 1111.



Talk to an adult you trust – maybe a parent, teacher or doctor.



**What would you advise a friend?**

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**What could you try yourself?**

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## Acknowledgements

Based on the Wellness Recovery Action Plan model by Dr Mary Ellen Copeland.

Written for CWMT by Dr Pooky Knightsmith.

A huge thanks to Jen Kenward, Paula Cruise and the 30 young adult carers and their supporters who were so giving of their time and ideas.



## Sources of support

[childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk) | 0800 1111 (free 24hr)  
confidential listening

[samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org) | 116 123 (free 24 hr) | [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)  
confidential listening

[studentsagainstdepression.org](https://www.studentsagainstdepression.org)  
resources to move away from depression

[youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
mental health info and guidance

[youthaccess.org.uk](https://www.youthaccess.org.uk)  
young people's info, advice and counselling

[themix.org.uk](https://www.themix.org.uk)  
essential support for under 25s

To order hard copies of this booklet, please email  
**admin@cwmt.org** or call **01635 869754**

If you have found this resource useful please consider donating  
to help us continue our work: **www.cwmt.org.uk**

**The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust**  
32 High Street, Thatcham, RG19 3JD  
Registered charity no.1109984



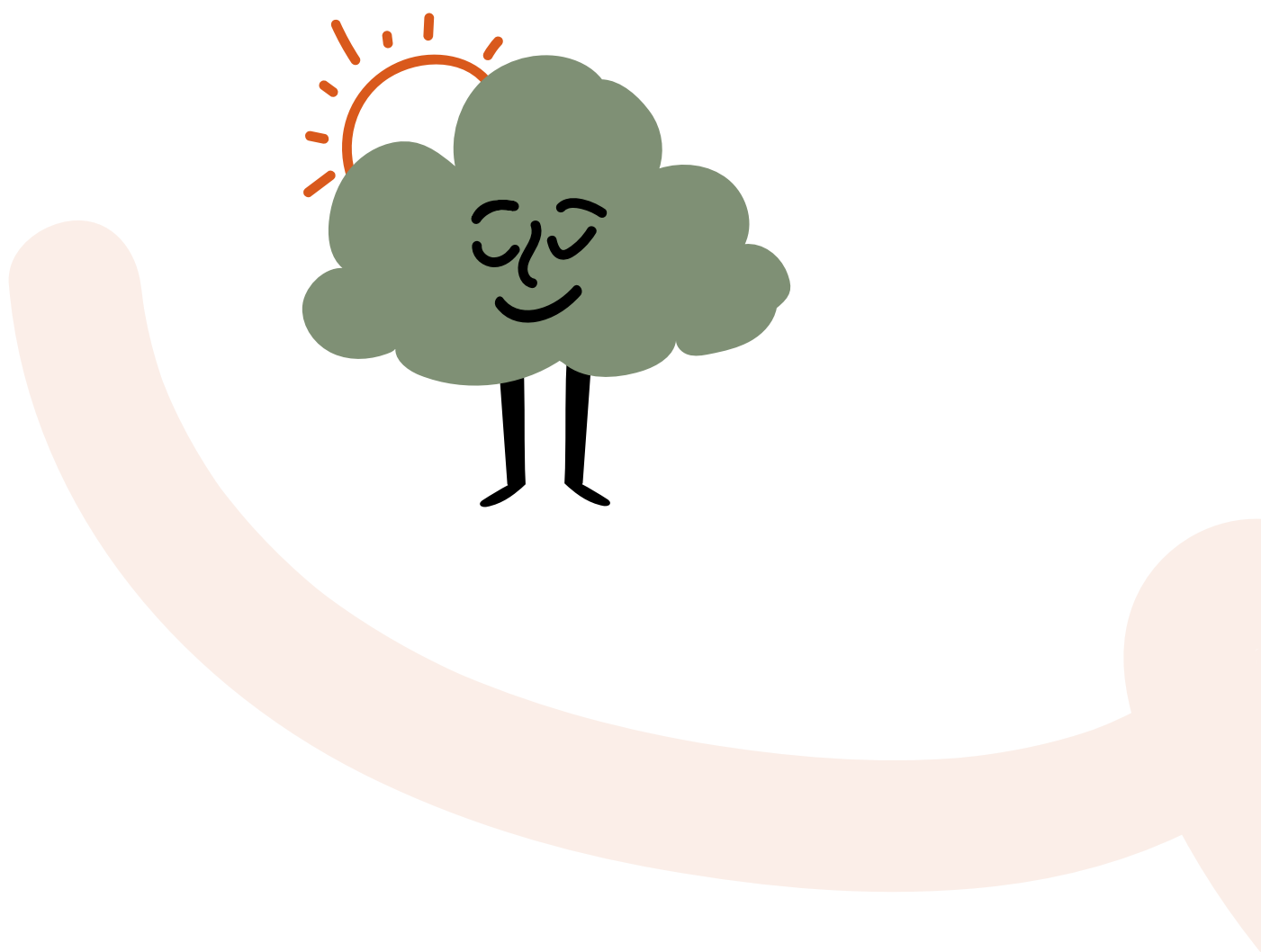
**The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust**  
**Depression – let's get talking**



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**  
*The MBE for volunteer groups*

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