

If you are in need of  
urgent assistance please call:

**CAMHS Crisis Team**  
NHS 111 (Option 2)

**Samaritans**  
116 123

# Give it a try

A guide to your positive  
mental health & wellbeing



95% of school staff have seen an **increase in anxiety levels** amongst children since the pandemic.

NAHT - School Leaders Union

5 children in a class of 30 are **likely to struggle** with their mental wellbeing.

The Children's Society

# Some facts...

Children who are struggling with their mental health are **twice as likely** to miss school days than children who aren't.

NHS Digital UK



The truth is that **mental health is a natural and integral part of being human, and experiencing challenges in this area is common and normal.**

It doesn't make anyone weak or flawed to seek help for mental health concerns. In fact, recognising and addressing mental health issues is a sign of strength and courage.

Let's continue to spread the message that mental health is not something to be embarrassed or ashamed about. It's part of being human, and seeking help and support is a positive step towards leading a fulfilling and healthy life.

Open conversations about mental health, encouraging empathy and fostering supportive environments where individuals can share their experiences without fear of judgment is needed within our society.

Together, we can contribute to a world where mental health is valued, understood and cared for just as much as physical health. This is why, alongside young people, we've created this booklet for you.

This booklet is for you to gain a greater insight into your wellbeing, what is working, what isn't working and for you to share your knowledge with others to help them through their life challenges.



This booklet is split into sections that talk about different aspects of your mental health. It would be good for you to read all of the sections to gain a better understanding of mental health. But feel free to jump to whichever section feels right for your situation right now. You can always read more later on.

The sections are -

Self-care

Low mood

Anxiety & Panic

Stress

Identity

Coping Strategies

Within the sections we'll help to explain each topic and how they impact you. We'll also give you some advice on ways you can manage your mental health, including strategies to help you stay in control and some activities you can try if things begin to feel out of control.

The activities have been split into four zones that represent how you're feeling at the time. Have a look at the chart opposite to help understand each of the emotional zones.



### Blue Zone

Tired Sad Sick  
Bored Feeling slow



### Green Zone

Calm Happy In control  
I'm focused Feeling okay

# What zone are YOU in?



### Yellow Zone

Anxious Excited Frustrated  
Nervous Worried Confused



### Red Zone

Angry Scared Want to yell  
Panic I'm not in control

# self care

and  
acceptance  
of  
yourself

In this section  
of the guide  
we'll explore

What self-care is.

Why it's  
important.

Provide you with  
some top tips &  
ideas for you to try  
to enhance your  
self-care.



It's a term you may have heard before and you're likely to have ideas of what self-care is. Put simply, self-care is **noticing and listening to your body clues** and taking actions that will support your mental health and wellbeing.

Self-care means taking care of yourself so that you can be **healthy and well**, and so you can do your job and help others. Self-care enables you to do all the things you need to and want to accomplish in a day.

# So what is Self-care?

It's important because it can improve your physical, emotional and mental health. By prioritising self-care you'll manage stress more effectively, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy levels.

Taking time for yourself enables you to deal with every day life stressors and **brings calm and joy to your day.**

The consequences of not practicing self-care may involve low energy, feelings of hopelessness, less patience, increased headaches, stomach aches and other physical symptoms of stress, difficulty falling and staying asleep and binge eating or an increase in unhealthy eating habits.

These can then lead to worsening mental health symptoms, burnout, difficulties concentrating, relationship challenges or strains, reduction in performance and less motivation to engage in social activities. Generally life is less happy by not prioritising self-care.

Now that you've considered why it's important to practice self-care it's time to ask yourself are you doing a good job of it?

Maybe consider the following questions to help in your reflection...

Are you putting your needs last?

Have you stopped doing things you enjoy and that make you feel better?

Do you lack clarity on what makes you feel happy/well?

Do you feel overwhelmed and lack headspace?

Following that thinking time do you believe you need to improve upon your self-care? If so, then we have some ideas to help you develop good self-care practices.

Sometimes it can be challenging to recognise when you need to take some time for self-care, particularly when you're busy helping others, you're likely to be focussing on their needs over your own.

You might compare yourself to others and feel you don't have the same problems as them, and therefore feel guilty about taking time for yourself. Whatever the barrier is to making self-care a priority, there are simple little changes you can make to practice more self-care.

If you would like to discover other ways to manage self-care scan the code and read top tips from other young people who are using our service at the minute.



When you want to make changes and develop a new habit it's important to start with one small change at a time. Perhaps build upon good things you're currently doing.

Here are some strategies you might want to try...

### Positive self-talk

Research suggests we experience 80% negative thoughts a day. No wonder positive self-talk is challenging! However, we also know that adopting positive self-talk will have positive impacts on performance, health and wellbeing. To adopt better thinking habits it's helpful to spot the negative thoughts and learn to challenge them. Here are some useful ways to create more positive thoughts:

Pause and take a breath.

Consider all perspectives. Are you being balanced in your thinking?

Consider what someone else would say to you in this situation. Are you being self-critical?

Acknowledge the negative thoughts.

### Learn something new

Learning new things can be a great way of improving confidence and giving us a sense of achievement.

### Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a technique you can use to notice what's happening in the present. Use your senses and surroundings to focus on what is happening within your body and around you in the moment. This practice enables you to accept without judgements and helps you to reach a state of calm. Practicing mindfulness can reduce stress, improve your wellbeing and mood.

Here are some ideas to help you be more mindful:

While out walking, use your senses and notice what you can see, hear, smell, touch and taste.

Consider how the soap/bubbles feel on your hands when washing.

Eat a raisin or Malteser and notice how it feels in your mouth.

Capture things of interest by taking photos.



## Gratitude

Gratitude is a positive emotion and involves focusing on what's good in our lives and being thankful for the things we have. Gratitude is so much more than saying thank you. When practiced it can change your perspective of your world.

Think about good things that have happened each day, small or big. Try to reflect on why those good things happened to you.

Try journaling. Take five minutes at the beginning or end of each day to write down three things you're grateful for, no matter how big or small. You could consider the weather, fun activities you did, the friends you saw, books you've read, movies you've watched.

## Balanced diet, exercise and sleep

Diet, exercise, and sleep are three pillars of a healthy life. Maintaining a balanced diet, alongside regular exercise and sleep can help boost your mood and improve your health. They're all equally important.

Self-care looks different for everyone, and it's important to find what **you need and enjoy**. Discover the things that work best for you and create your own self-care plan.



**Mind**  
Be creative  
& problem solve

**Body**  
Drink water

**Spirit**  
Mindfulness

**Heart**  
Cuddle my  
pets



**Mind**  
Read

**Body**  
Exercise &  
eat healthy

**Spirit**  
Nature

**Heart**  
Family



**Mind**  
Learn new things

**Body**  
Relaxation &  
deep breathing

**Spirit**  
Sing & dance

**Heart**  
Laugh with friends

# Activity ideas

Maybe create your own table of activity ideas for each zone of regulation to help you with your self-care.



## Blue Zone

Hug something—such as a weighted cushion, teddy, pet or a friend

Breathing exercise

Watch something

Look at photos

Visualise a safe space

Listen to music



## Yellow Zone

Go for a jog or walk

Scribble on paper

Throw tennis ball against a wall

Sit in a safe space

Scream into a cushion

Progressive muscle relaxation

## Green Zone



Complete a Jigsaw

Journal

Build with Lego

Read a book

Meditate

Do something creative

## Red Zone



Play with a fidget toy

Yoga

Shake a snow globe/calm jar and watch glitter settle

Grounding technique

Wash hands and watch the water & bubbles

Bath or shower