

BEST VERSION OF YOU



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BEST VERSION OF YOU

What's this all about?

Life is full of ups and downs. Sometimes it's great, we're having loads of fun and feeling good and on top of things. At other times, life can be hard, tough and sad things can happen and we can feel like it's hard to cope and manage.

It can be helpful to have some ideas of what to do if you're struggling and finding things hard. This guide is here to help you with some of the issues that many young people experience from time to time.

Why is this important?

We all have mental health.

Your mental health is how you think and feel about yourself and the world around you. Our mental health affects how we cope with everyday life situations, as well as the thoughts and feelings that we experience.

Just like life, our mental health can be up and down, sometimes good and sometimes not so good. There are many things that can impact on our mental health and the way we cope. Stressful situations, relationships with other people, how much sleep we get, our physical health, and whether we have meaningful and enjoyable hobbies are just some of the factors that can impact on our mental health.

When our mental health is good we feel more positively about ourselves; we enjoy life, learn well, get along with others and can manage sad, worrying or angry feelings better.

We can all take steps to look after our mental health. Whatever happens in life, we all have responsibility for the things we say and how we behave. We have choices about what we can do and how we can help ourselves. We hope you will find this guide useful and inspiring.

How to use this guide:

This guide is about helping you to be the 'best version of you'. It's here to help you manage situations that might be new for you, or challenging by providing tips for you to try, as well as information on where to go if you need more support or help.

There is one topic per page with information about each topic, what you might experience and how you can help yourself. There are also pages with different coping strategies and things you can do to look after yourself on a daily basis.

Read through this guide so you know what's in it, then keep it somewhere safe. Even if you don't need it right now, life can be unpredictable and you never know when you might need extra help.



MY PERSONAL CRISIS AND COPING PLAN

WHEN I AM COPING THIS IS WHAT LIFE LOOKS LIKE FOR ME:

GOALS, DREAMS AND HOPES:

THE FOLLOWING ARE SIGNS THAT I AM STRUGGLING TO COPE:

THE FOLLOWING ARE SIGNS I AM NOT COPING/ AM IN CRISIS:

THINGS THAT KEEP ME WELL DAY TO DAY:

MY TRIGGERS FOR NOT COPING:

PLAN OF ACTION WHEN I AM STRUGGLING TO COPE:

PLAN OF ACTION WHEN I AM IN CRISIS:

SUPPORT I CAN ACCESS:

- [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk)
click the 'Help I am in crisis' button
- [StayingSafe.net](https://www.staying-safe.net)
- [TheCalmZone.net](https://www.thecalmzone.net)
- [Papyrus-Uk.org](https://www.papyrus-uk.org)
- [Harmless.org.uk](https://www.harmless.org.uk)
- YoungMinds Crisis Messenger;
text YM to **85258** free,
24hrs, 7 days a week
- Freephone Samaritans: **116 123**
24hrs, 7 days a week



Stay Alive



What's Up?



WellMind

SCHOOL STUFF

How to manage school life

What are we talking about?

School is a place to learn, have fun, try new things, make friends and develop yourself as a person.

Even though school should be a safe and supportive place, they can also be noisy and busy. There is also lots to remember and things to do which can become stressful and overwhelming at times.

What might it feel like if I am struggling at school?

- Problems with sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking up very early or having nightmares).
- Not wanting to be on your own and doing a lot of checking that everything will be OK with an adult.
- Having lots of “what if” thoughts (such as “what if something bad happens?”) which can mean you feel too worried to go to school.
- Having physical (body) feelings, such as a racing heart rate, quicker breathing, upset tummy, feeling sick, feeling dizzy or faint, sweaty hands.
- Struggling with concentration and motivation to do things.
- Comparing yourself negatively to other people (in things like appearance, academic success, sporting ability).
- Not sharing your opinions or preferences - not believing these are important or equal to others.
- May find it difficult to make and keep friendships.
- May struggle with making mistakes and worrying about failing or not being/doing good enough.
- Worry about letting other people down.

What to do:

- Get organised: pack your school bag the night before. Get your books, stationery and lunch ready. Check the school plan so you know where you’re meant to be and at what time.
- Write down or put reminders in your phone about deadlines or specific things you need to remember.
- Make sure your phone is charged and you have credit in case of emergencies, or there are problems getting to school or home.
- Check you know the school rules.
- Keep extra pens in your school bag/locker in case you forget your pencil case.
- Have a plan around homework; work out what are your priorities and leave enough time to do all the tasks you have.
- Ask for help if you don’t understand school or homework or you are stuck. No one expects you to know everything and teachers are there to help you. It’s OK to ask questions or to ask for help.
- Try not to compare yourself to other people; we’re all unique and have different strengths and interests. It’s OK not to like the same things as your friends.
- Make sure you get enough sleep on school nights.

Scan the QR code to listen to an school anxiety podcast.

Helping young people understand their anxieties about going to school and how they can manage those anxieties. Quick link: bit.ly/3EJnray



THINGS TO REMEMBER TO DO

School



NIGHT BEFORE

- SORT MY BAG
 - STATIONERY
 - BOOKS
 - HOMEWORK
 - LUNCH
 - P.E. KIT
 -
- GET UNIFORM/
CLOTHES READY
- CHARGE
PHONE
-

MORNING

- PACK MY BAG
 - WATER BOTTLE
 - LOCKER/HOME KEYS
 - LUNCH
 - MONEY
 - P.E. KIT
 -
- PHONE
-
-

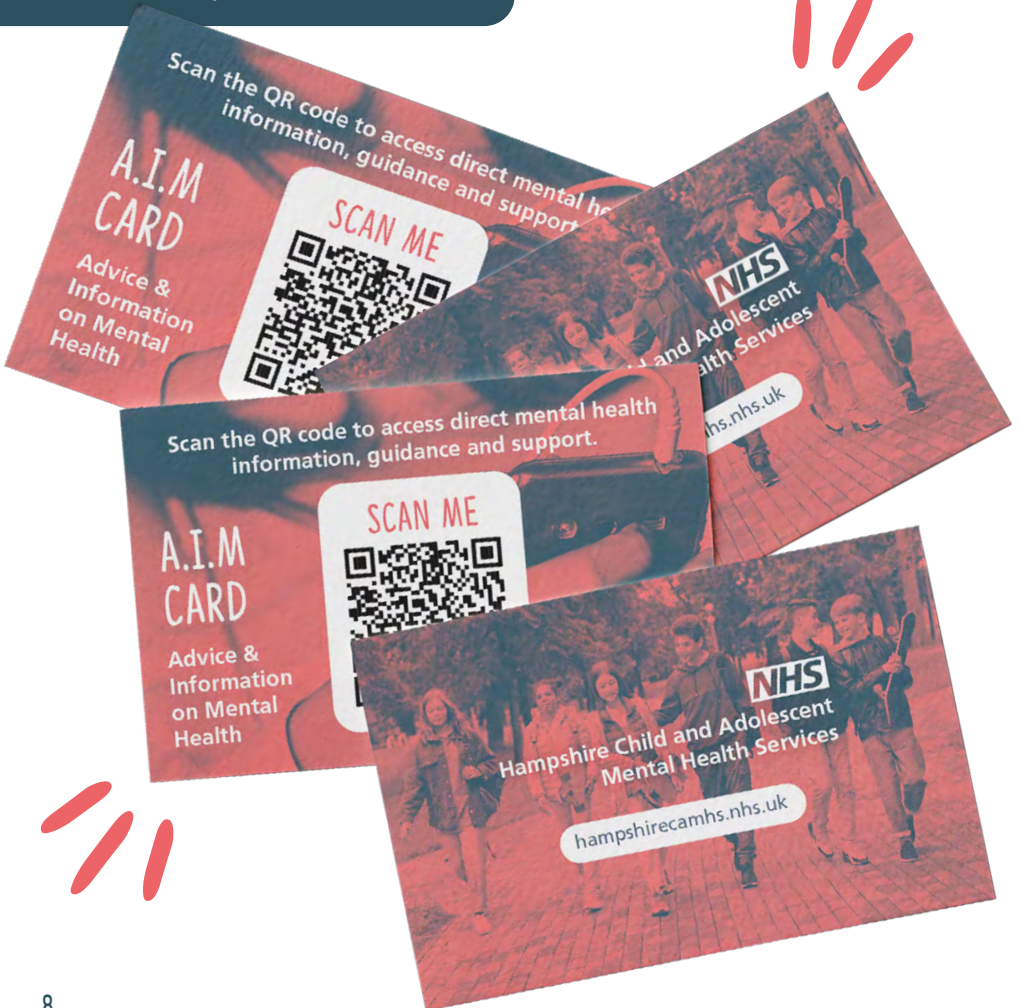
A.I.M CARD

Advice and information on mental health



Scan the QR code to view A.I.M card information.

Quick link: bit.ly/46nWdSB



SAFE CARD

You can ask your school for a copy of this card to put in your bag/wallet:



**Hampshire Child and Adolescent
Mental Health Services**

The Samaritans

116 123

Email: Jo@samaritans.org
24 hours, 7 days a week

**SAFE
CARD**

SUICIDE AWARENESS FOR EVERYONE

HOPELINE247

Call: **0800 068 41 41**

Text: **07860 039967**

9am-10pm (Mon-Fri)
2pm-10pm (weekends & bank holidays)

YoungMinds

Parents Helpline:

0808 802 55 44

9:30am-4pm (Mon-Fri)

Email: parents@youngminds.org.uk

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger:

Text YM to **85258** (open 24/7)

Useful self help apps:



Stay Alive



Calm Harm



Clear Fear



What's Up?

Unless stated otherwise, apps are not supplied by the NHS and the NHS is not liable for their use.

Useful self help websites:

hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk

thecalmzone.net

papyrus-uk.org



EXAM STRESS

How to manage exam stress

What are we talking about?

Lots of people will struggle with a school issue at some point and most people feel worried and stressed about tests and exams. You are not alone.

If you notice that you're feeling worried a lot of the time, or that your worries are getting in the way of everyday life (such as going to school, seeing friends or doing activities you enjoy) this is probably a sign you need to tell someone how you are feeling and get some help.

What might exam stress look like?

- Problems with sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking up very early in the morning or having nightmares).
- Avoidance of anything to do with school, studying or exams, OR overworking; spending long periods of time revising, not wanting to take breaks or do other activities, especially hobbies.
- Comparing yourself to others and worrying about not doing as much or achieving as much as other people.
- Having lots of "what if" thoughts (such as "what if I fail and don't get into college/university?") which can mean you feel too worried to try things.
- Becoming more easily upset.
- Feeling tired and as though you have no energy.
- Struggling with concentration and motivation; feeling hopeless ('what is the point?').
- Having physical (body) feelings such as a racing heart rate, quicker breathing, upset tummy, feeling sick, feeling dizzy or faint, sweaty hands.
- Not looking after yourself (not eating enough/ eating too much, not showering or washing regularly, not being physically active).

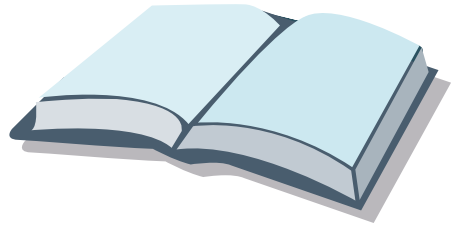
What to do:

- Tell someone how you are feeling no matter what your worries are. There will be someone who will listen and try to support you.
- Although worrying feels horrible, remember these feelings will pass and the physical sensations cannot harm you. Remind yourself that you have been anxious before, that those feelings passed, that you coped and were OK. If you need to, use activities, such as watching TV, spending time with friends, reading, making things and listening to music, to help manage until you feel a bit better.
- Look after your physical, mental and emotional health by:
 - Eating and drinking regularly
 - Getting enough sleep
 - Being organised; planning and pacing work
 - Taking regular breaks from revision and studying, including having study free days.
 - Have down time; do hobbies and spend time with friends and family.
 - Taking part in regular physical activity.
 - There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/school-college-exams](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/school-college-exams)

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a technique used to focus your awareness on the present moment, while acknowledging and accepting your feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.

- To be 'mindful' means to pay attention to the moment; to focus on the here and now, and be more aware of how the here and now is affecting the 'whole' you.
- This has real benefits as the present moment is often a lot less stressful than the fears and worries you have about the past or the future.
- Mindfulness practice doesn't try to 'do' anything to you, or force you to believe anything.
- Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally, with kindness and curiosity.
- The great thing is that learning mindfulness is simple! It can be practiced by anyone, anytime, anywhere.
- For further information on practicing the principles of mindfulness, see the resources on this page:



Websites:

- MindfulnessForTeens.com
- SmilingMind.com.au

Books:

- The Art of Mindfulness for children
- Sitting like a frog

Apps:



Smiling mind



Headspace



MyLife Meditation: Mindfulness



Mindfulness Daily

Unless stated otherwise, apps are not supplied by the NHS and the NHS is not liable for their use.



Scan the QR code
to watch a mindful
body scan video.

Quick link: bit.ly/3EXv61Y

FRIENDS

How to manage the ups and downs of friendships

What are we talking about?

Friends and friendships are great when things are going well but life can feel pretty miserable and stressful if you're struggling to make friends or when there are arguments and fallings out.

Lots of people have difficulties with friends from time to time so you're not alone if you're having a hard time. Friendships take time and effort with both people responsible for how they talk and behave.

What it can feel like to experience friendship difficulties:

- Feeling a range of emotions (e.g. sad, worried, irritable, upset, confused).
- Having lots of "what" thoughts (such as "what do other people think about me?")
- Struggling with concentration and motivation to do things. You might notice it's harder to do home/school work.
- Preferring to be by yourself - not wanting to speak to or spend time with other people, OR not wanting to be by yourself and wanting to be close to people you feel comfortable with.
- Problems with sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking very early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep).
- Not enjoying activities you usually like.

What to do:

- Treat others the way you'd like to be treated. If you wouldn't want a picture posted or comment made online or face to face, then think twice about posting or saying anything that might embarrass, upset or annoy someone else.
- It's OK to have a difference of opinion but treat each other with respect and dignity when talking about differences.
- If you have said or done something which has caused offence or upset, even if you didn't mean to, start with an apology. We all make mistakes from time to time, so forgive yourself then ask for forgiveness from the person who is upset.
- Friendships take effort to build and maintain on both parts. Make time for the people you care about. Try to connect with friends face to face rather than always on social media. Let your friends know that you are there for them and you care about them.
- Don't be afraid to find new friends. You don't always have to keep the same friends that you had in primary school and you can have more than one group of friends.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/friendships/](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/friendships/)



BATTLING BULLYING

What to do if you or someone else is being bullied

What are we talking about?

Bullying is a word used to describe deliberate behaviour that causes upset and hurt to another person.

There are many forms of bullying which can include 'teasing', 'banter', as well as online bullying. Online bullying includes being bullied via mobile phone, email, messaging services and social media.

Although bullying can be common in schools, colleges and online, this does not mean that it is OK. If you or someone else you know is being bullied you must let someone know.

What might it feel like being bullied?

- Having low self-esteem and lacking in confidence; feeling not good enough or not as good as anyone else.
- Believing what bullies tell you.
- Feeling worried and panicking.
- Having physical (body) feelings such as a racing heart rate, quicker breathing, upset tummy, feeling sick, feeling dizzy or faint, sweaty hands.
- Having lots of "what if" thoughts (such as "what if something bad happens?") which can mean you feel too worried to go into school.
- Feeling angry towards bullies and other people (this might mean you might behave in an angry way; being irritable, shouting or being physically aggressive).
- Difficulties concentrating and struggling with motivation; you may notice you're not doing as well in your work at school.
- You may not feel like hanging out with your friends or doing sociable things.
- You might not enjoy your hobbies and interests as much as you once did.
- Problems with sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, nightmares).
- For some young people they may wet the bed at night (this is often a sign of unhappiness and stress).
- You may have thoughts about harming yourself.

What to do:

- Tell someone. Many young people worry about telling an adult as they don't want the bullying to get worse and also worry about being believed. Although these worries are understandable, it's important that you tell a trusted adult so that you can have the help and support you need.
- Some forms of bullying are illegal (violence, theft, harassment or intimidation, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages) and should be reported to the Police.
- Remember: If you are being bullied, it is not your fault and you do not deserve to be abused or made to feel any less of a person.
- Block, unfriend, mute and delete. If social media is a problem, delete the apps or your account. Turn your phone off at night.
- Find hobbies and activities that will boost your self-esteem and confidence. Joining new groups or clubs will give you the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.
- There is a lot more information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/bullying-yp/](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/bullying-yp/)
- If you're in crisis; call **111** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) to speak to a qualified mental health professional.

KINDNESS AND COMPASSION

WHAT DOES KINDNESS MEAN TO ME...



Behaving kindly and compassionately towards others is good for us, and for other people. Treating other people how we would like to be treated ourselves is important to hold in mind. Respect, honesty and kindness are qualities and values that we can expect from other people, and give to others in return.

Even though we would hope others would show kindness and compassion towards us, we should behave kindly and compassionately to everyone, even if they are not always kind to us.

Just because someone might seem happy and confident, you never know what challenges or difficulties they may be experiencing, so it's important to be kind.

There are many ways of showing people you care, and different people will have different preferences in terms of how they show others that they care about them. Watch this short film about the Five Languages of Love to think more about your own preferences for giving and receiving love and care;
youtu.be/2F_neejm5Zw

BREAK UPS AND GOODBYES

Coping with loss and bereavement

What are we talking about?

Bereavement and loss of a loved one (such as a family member, friend or pet) can be really devastating. People may also feel a sense of loss when an important relationship ends (such as relationship break up or friendship break down). When you experience a bereavement or loss, it can be hard to understand, process or adjust. There is no right or wrong way to feel think or behave; everyone processes grief differently. Some days you may feel more able to cope than other days. It is important to be kind to yourself.

What might it look like?

- Everyone processes grief differently. However, you may notice the following;
- A range of emotions from sadness, anger, fear, relief or even nothing at all.
- Difficulties accepting the loss.
- A sense of guilt, regret or responsibility.
- Difficulties concentrating and poor motivation; you may notice it's harder to do school or home work.
- Preferring to be by yourself - not wanting to speak to or spend time with other people OR not wanting to be by yourself and wanting to be close to people you feel comfortable with.
- Having worries that bad things might happen to you or other people you love and care about.
- Having thoughts or urges about wanting to end your own life to be with the loved one you have lost.
- Constant thoughts about what has happened to the loved one they have lost.
- Disinterest and loss of enjoyment in hobbies and interests.
- Difficulty sleeping (nightmares, difficulties getting to or staying asleep, early morning wakening).
- For some young people they may wet the bed at night (this is often a sign of unhappiness and stress).
- Loss of appetite or comfort eating.

What to do:

- It's important that you tell a trusted adult so that you can have the help and support you need.
- It's usual to feel a range of emotions from sadness, anger, fear, relief or even nothing at all. Some people find anniversaries and certain days (such as birthdays) harder to deal with.
- Try to keep normal routines going as much as possible.
- Keep doing activities you enjoy and spend time with friends and family. It's okay to feel happy, to laugh or to have fun. This does not mean that you don't care about the person you have lost.
- If you are finding it hard to talk about how you feel, you might find it easier to write a letter to someone who is supporting you, so they know what you are going through.
- Create a memory box full of pictures and items which remind you of good times you had with the person you have lost.
- Grieving takes a lot of energy. Make sure you eat, drink and rest regularly. Physical activity and getting outside for fresh air daily can help.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/bereavement-loss](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/bereavement-loss)

SELF-SOOTHE BOX

When we are feeling anxious, low or distressed we can get caught up in negative thoughts and how bad we are feeling. It can be helpful to have your very own self-soothe box, which you can fill with different things to distract you and help you to feel better in those moments.

The idea with this box is to include things which soothe all five of our senses, helping us to feel better in all sorts of ways and take us out of our head and how we are feeling.

STEP ONE:

Get an empty box from around the house (an old shoe box works well) or you can buy one from a craft shop.

TOP TIP: Ideally the box will fit under your bed or in a cupboard as a personal thing just for you.



STEP TWO:

Decorate the box inside and out with anything you like - it could be coloured, painted, decorated with wrapping paper, fabric or decoupage.

Make something that appeals to you!

TOP TIP: You can also put some tissue paper on the bottom, which can give it a nice comforting feel.

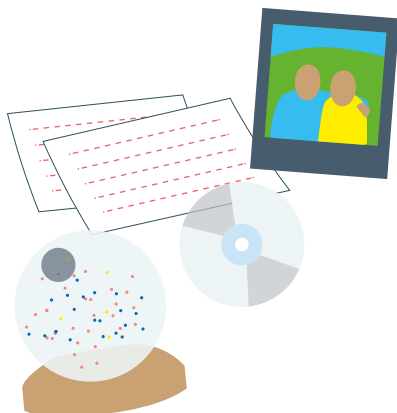
STEP THREE:

Collect items together that are meaningful to you, or you know will help you feel better. Remember these should be soothing for all five senses.

Here are some ideas:

SEE:

Photos of fun memories, snow globe, glitter jar, DVD's of your favourite films or TV shows, a reminder of funny or inspiring YouTube videos.





HEAR:

Your favourite music, songs that you know lift your mood, recordings of a friend's voice, audio book.

TOUCH:

Bubble wrap, a teddy bear, a pillow, soft woolly socks or blanket, nail varnish.

SMELL:

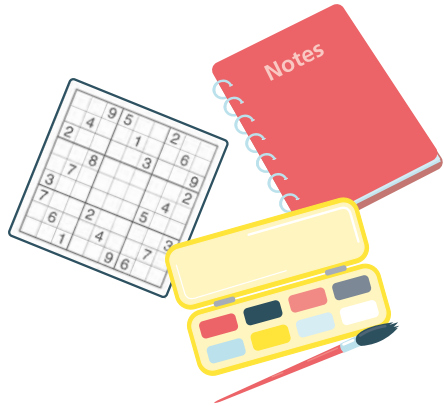
Favourite perfume or body spray, candles, a fruity bubble bath or soap.

TASTE:

Dried fruit or nuts, hot chocolate,

STEP FOUR:

Here are some other things that you can include to help, as a distraction or to keep you occupied: activity books (colouring, crosswords, wordsearch, sudoku), art and craft materials, notebook or diary and a pen.



STEP FIVE:

Try to think of anything else you can include which you know you enjoy or would help when you are struggling.

When you use these items, or if you choose to do something else that works, try to make sure you pay attention to your physical senses: see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

Look around you and notice what you see (colours, shapes, light or shadow, movement), what you hear (nature sounds, sounds in the room, near and far), what you smell or taste (including from the environment around you), and what you can touch right now wherever you are, as well as items from your self-soothe box.



Scan the QR code to watch a video on how to make your own self-soothe box.

Quick link: bit.ly/3PPrAQC



WEIGHED DOWN BY WORRIES

How to manage if you are feeling worried

What are we talking about?

It is normal to feel worried or stressed out from time to time, especially when you're doing something new or out of your comfort zone, such as starting a new school, taking a test or getting the bus/train on your own for the first time.

If you notice that you're feeling worried a lot of the time or that your worries are getting in the way of everyday life (such as going to school, seeing friends or doing things you enjoy) this is probably a sign you need to tell someone how you are feeling and get some help.

What might it look like?

- Problems with sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking up very early or having nightmares).
- Not wanting to be on your own and doing a lot of checking that everything will be OK with an adult.
- Having lots of "what if" thoughts (such as "what if something bad happens?") which can mean you feel too worried to try things.
- Getting upset if you have to face your fear or even when thinking about facing the fear.
- Having physical (body) feelings such as a racing heart rate, quicker breathing, upset tummy, feeling sick, feeling dizzy or faint, sweaty hands.

The types of worries that are most common but cause a lot of distress include:

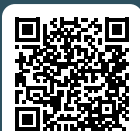
- Worries about what other people think of you, or worries about being judged negatively,
- Worries about bad things happening,
- Uncontrollable constant worry about lots of things (like school, the future, health, world events),
- Worries about your safety and health (including worries about germs and contamination),
- Feeling the need to complete certain routines, rituals or behaviours to stop bad things from happening.

What to do:

- Tell someone how you are feeling no matter what your worries are, even if you are worried about doing so. There will be someone who will listen and try to support you.
- Although worrying feels horrible, remember these feelings will pass and the physical sensations cannot harm you. Remind yourself that you have been anxious before, that those feelings passed, that you coped and were OK. If you need to, use activities, such as watching TV, spending time with friends, reading, making things and listening to music, to help manage until you feel a bit better.
- Try really hard not to avoid the things that make you worry; the more you avoid the things you worry about, the bigger, harder and more scary it becomes and the more worried you will feel. Instead, try to face your worries bit by bit - the more you face it, the easier things will become. You will also show yourself that nothing bad happens and that you can cope.
- Break things down into smaller steps and do these as often as possible.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk)

Scan the QR code for
mindful body scan video

Quick link: bit.ly/3LApyS1



A TO Z OF COPING STRATEGIES



Here's a list of 26 ideas, strategies and techniques that might help you if you are feeling worried or stressed.

Not all things work for all people but you won't know until you try. You'll also need to practice and use these.



ACTIVITY:
Do something that you enjoy!

BREATH:
Take deep breaths in and long slow breaths out

CREATE:
Find creative ways to express yourself, for example paint, draw, dance or sing

DISTRACT:
Keep yourself busy

EXERCISE:
Get moving through physical exercise and sport

FRIENDS AND FAMILY (AND PETS):
Spend time with loved ones

GOALS:
Break things down into small steps and focus on one thing at a time

HELPLINE:
Call for confidential help, advice and support (see the back of this leaflet)

ICE:
Cool down, have a shower, lower your temperature to help calm things down

JOIN IN:
Do not isolate yourself; connect with those around you

KEEP THINGS SIMPLE:
Prioritise what you need to do and let go of the rest

LOOK FOR LESS HARMFUL ALTERNATIVES:
What else can you do? Write a list of other options

MUSIC
Listen to your favourite tunes

NURTURE AND NOURISH:
Look after yourself by eating and drinking

OUTSIDE:
Get some fresh air to clear your mind. Go for a walk

PROBLEM SOLVE:
Can challenges or barriers be overcome? Who or what can help you with this?

QUIET TIME:
Keep things calm and peaceful around you

RELAX:
Chill out; remind yourself that it won't always be this hard

SUPPORT:
Who's around you that you can lean on for more support?

TEXT:
Contact a mate or someone you trust

USE YOUR TALENTS AND STRENGTHS
Focus on what you do well and do more of it

VISUALISE:
Imagine a calm or happy place

WRITE IT DOWN:
Keep a diary, write a letter or a blog. Get it out of your mind and onto paper

XBOX OR OTHER GUILTY PLEASURES:
It's OK to have downtime

YOU CAN DO IT:
You can cope, you will get through this. Believe in yourself!

ZZZZZ:
Sleep on it. Don't make any sudden decisions





MANAGING PANIC ATTACKS

Calming the inner storm

What are we talking about?

Panic attacks are a type of anxiety response and are associated with intense physical sensations which escalate quickly. This can be overwhelming and frightening. Panic attacks usually last between 5 and 20 minutes although the young person may remain highly anxious and stressed following a panic attack for some time. Whilst the physiological symptoms of a panic attack are unpleasant, they cannot cause long-term lasting harm.

What might it look like?

- A racing heart
- Feeling faint or dizzy
- Feeling very hot or very cold
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Pain in your chest
- Struggling to breathe or feeling like you are choking
- Feeling shaky and unsteady on your feet
- Feeling disconnected
- Difficulties communicating
- Racing thoughts particularly that something awful is happening such as that you are having a heart attack or are dying.

What to do:

Normalise that anxiety is a natural emotion, the physical sensations of anxiety can be unpleasant but it will pass and won't cause any harm.

Tell someone how you are feeling. There will be someone who will listen and try to support you.

Don't avoid; the more you avoid, the harder it becomes and the more anxious you will become. Seek to face your fear- the more you face it, the easier it will become.

Break things down into steps and do these as often as possible

If you're breathing quickly during a panic attack, doing a breathing exercise can ease your other symptoms. Try this:

- Breathe in as slowly, deeply and gently as you can, through your nose
- Breathe out slowly, deeply and gently through your mouth
- Some people find it helpful to count steadily from 1 to 5 on each in-breath and each out-breath
- Close your eyes and focus on your breathing
- You should start to feel better in a few minutes. You may feel tired afterwards.

There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk)



IT'S OK NOT TO BE OK

How to cope when you're feeling sad and down

What are we talking about?

Life can be stressful and sad things can happen so it is understandable that we may feel sad from time to time - this is normal.

People often say "I'm so depressed" when they're having a bad day or week, but depression is different from feeling sad, down or 'can't be bothered'. People with depression can feel a range of emotions including sadness, stress, hopelessness, loneliness, irritability (anger), emptiness or numbness. People with depression often have negative thoughts about themselves, other people, the future or life in general.

What might it look like?

- Feeling tired and not having much energy.
- Struggling with concentration and motivation to do things.
- Preferring to be by yourself - not wanting to speak to or spend time with friends or family, OR not wanting to be by yourself and wanting to be close to a trusted adult.
- Problems with sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking very early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep).
- Not enjoying activities you usually like.
- Not caring about or having the energy to wash or change clothes regularly.
- Feeling a range of emotions (e.g. irritable, upset, confused).
- Feeling hopeless about the future (thinking 'what's the point?')
- Difficulties identifying goals or hopes for the future.
- Thoughts, urges or plans to harm yourself or some thoughts to end your life.

What to do:

- It is important to tell someone how you are feeling. You could talk to a parent/carer, teacher, health professional (school nurse or your GP). This is important if you are having thoughts or urges to harm yourself or end your life.
- Follow a basic daily routine. Make sure that you still do the activities you need to do, and do some of the activities you used to enjoy but perhaps stopped doing because you are feeling low and unmotivated. Plan activities for the morning, afternoon and evening and try to stick to these even if you do not feel like it. Avoiding or withdrawing from doing things is known to lower mood so make sure that you see friends, go to school, do things you enjoy (or used to) even if it's hard and you don't feel like it.
- Break things down into small steps and do one at a time so tasks do not seem so overwhelming.
- Look after yourself; eat well, sleep, get some fresh air daily, do exercise or physical activity often.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/depression-yp/
- If you're in crisis; call **111** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) to speak to a qualified mental health professional.








Scan the QR code
for a grounding
techniques video
(6 mins)

Quick link: bit.ly/46mqjEU



IDENTIFY AND RATE YOUR EMOTION

0/10 = no emotion 10/10 = maximum intensity of emotion

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 SAD							
 ANGRY							
 WORRIED							
 EMPTY							
 TIRED							
 HAPPY							
 CALM							

Our emotions can change regularly so it can be useful to keep a track on how you are feeling and how strong these feelings are. This is so that you can see how your moods change throughout the day and week. When we are feeling sad or worried we can sometimes think that we will always feel this way but by tracking our mood you will be able to see how it can vary. If you notice that you are feeling sad, worried or angry regularly this might be a good time to ask for help and talk to someone about how you are feeling.

PUBERTY

Just the facts

Puberty happens to everyone.

It's one thing we all have in common. Just like the weather – your body changes and the changes can be very unpredictable.

Puberty usually happens between the ages of 8-16. Not everyone goes through it at the same time though as we're all different, so don't worry if your friends have started to change and you haven't, or if you have begun changing but your friends haven't; we all get there in the end.

During puberty, your body will grow faster than any other time in your life. Your brain releases hormones that tell your body it's time to change. This happens gradually over a few years, not overnight so you might not even notice the changes happening straight away.

7 changes everyone will experience through puberty:

Here are some changes that everyone will experience:

1. Start to grow taller. This may happen slowly and steadily – or in growth spurts; it might feel like you are literally growing out of your clothes and shoes overnight.
2. Start to have hair in different places. It can feel like hair is suddenly sprouting everywhere! – under your arms, on your genitals and, if you are male, on your face and chest. Some people choose to shape or remove this hair by shaving, waxing, or threading, while others prefer to just go natural. It's your body and your choice.
3. Start to sweat more. Sweating can lead to body odour (B.O.), and no one wants to smell bad! You might find you need to wash more often than before, and you should be having a shower or bath every day. You can also start to use deodorant; it might take a few trials to find a product that works for your body and that smells good.
4. Have Greasier skin. You might even start to get a few spots resist the temptation to squeeze them as it'll only make them worse. There are lots of products available to help you manage greasy skin. These include over-the-counter gels or creams (topical treatments) that contain benzoyl peroxide – again you might need to try a few before you find the one that suits you. The best way to help is to keep your face clean. If things are more serious, see your doctor as they may be able to prescribe more medicated products.
5. Get greasier hair. You might find you need to start to wash your hair more often if it is becoming greasier.
6. Have an interest in exploring relationships and sexuality. This is a natural part of growing up, but it can be bewildering.
7. Experience the 'Puberty Brain' Mixed up feelings and mood swings are all part of puberty. It's normal to go through a rollercoaster of emotions- happy, sad, grumpy, tearful, angry, fed up, confused and excited- all within a short space of time! The teenage brain is a work in progress, as the part called the 'prefrontal cortex' grows and develops. This area of the brain is involved with controlling, planning, working memory.

FEELING 'MEH'

How to cope when you're feeling bored

What are we talking about?

Boredom is a word to describe feeling restless, unsettled or dissatisfied often due to lack of interest in what is happening or due to not much happening.

What does it feel like being bored?

- Feeling tired and not having much energy.
- Struggling with concentration and motivation to do things.
- Preferring to be by yourself - not wanting to speak to or spend time with friends or family, **OR** not wanting to be by yourself and wanting to be close to a trusted adult.
- Problems with sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking very early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep).
- Not enjoying activities you usually like.
- Not caring about or having the energy to wash or change clothes regularly.
- Difficulties identifying goals or hopes for the future.

What to do:

- Boredom is often linked to a lack of connection, so communicate. Speak face to face or on the phone with someone. Connecting with someone can often break the boredom cycle.
- Have a routine; getting up at the same time, eating meals and going to bed at the same time can help you to plan your days. Try to have at least one thing planned a day.
- Keep a to-do list; a mix of things you need/should do (e.g. tidy your room, do school work) and things you'd like to do (e.g. see friends, play games, listen to music). Pick two from the 'need/should' list and two from the 'like to do' list. You might be able to combine the two - e.g. listening to music whilst you tidy your room.
- Offer to help someone do something or invite someone to do something with you.
- Set yourself goals of things you want to achieve and break these goals down into smaller steps to help you get there.
- Look after yourself; eat well, sleep, get some fresh air daily, do exercise/physical activity often.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/



Scan the QR code
activity and boredom
jar video (4 mins)

Quick link: bit.ly/3RwjePj





DIAL UP, DIAL DOWN


Tick the activity that you tried and write 'H' if it helped you to manage the feelings you experienced

DIAL UP MY ENERGY



 H TAKE A COLD SHOWER


 H DANCE



 H SING



 H RUN


 H TRAMPOLINE


 H JUMP


 H SKIP


 H BIKE RIDE


 H SCOOTER


 H LISTEN TO LOUD/
FAST MUSIC


 H HULA HOOPING


DIAL DOWN MY ENERGY


 H COOK OR BAKE



 H READ


 H ARTS & CRAFTS


 H MINDFULNESS OR MEDITATION


 H WATCH A FILM/TV


 H LISTEN TO CALM MUSIC


 H WALK


 H GARDENING

SWEET DREAMS

Getting a good sleep

What are we talking about?

Lots of people find getting to sleep, staying asleep or waking up a real problem. Disrupted, broken or not enough sleep can really impact on your mood and coping with daily life.

Sleep is important for growth and development. Teenagers aged 13-18 years should regularly sleep 8-11 hours per 24 hours.

If you are experiencing regular problems with your sleep, it might be time to ask for some help.

Things that make sleep harder: What to do:

Here are some of the most common factors which effect sleep:

- Your bedroom may be too noisy, messy, too hot or too cold.
- Your bed may be uncomfortable.
- You don't have a regular sleep routine.
- You aren't getting enough physical activity/exercise.
- You may be eating too late and finding it hard to get off to sleep because you're full.
- You're going to bed hungry and wake up too early because you're hungry.
- Drinks containing caffeine, such as tea, coffee and energy drinks.
- Illness, pain, or a high temperature.
- Feeling worried or low in mood.
- Overthinking and having a busy brain.
- Physical problems – illness or disability which mean you experience pain.
- Medications that affect sleep.

- Create a calming and peaceful environment. Rooms that are dark and cool are best for sleep.
- Aim to have a regular bedtime routine and sleep pattern - this includes going to bed and getting up at the same time every day.
- If at all possible, avoid using your bed for studying, reading or listening to music. Your bed should be used for sleeping.
- Try not to nap during the day.
- Avoid drinking caffeinated drinks (tea, coffee, energy drinks) before bed.
- Try not to drink too much before bed and go to the toilet as part of your routine.
- Avoid exercising right before you go to bed.
- Exercise during the day.
- Make sure you're as organised as you can be for the day ahead so that you are not worrying or thinking about what you have to do or what you might need.
- Talk to someone you trust about anything that's bothering you that might be keeping you awake.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: **[HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/sleep/](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/sleep/)**



Scan the QR code for a video on getting good sleep (6 mins)

Quick link: bit.ly/3ZxBz0j

MUSCLE RELAXATION

When we are feeling worried, stressed or angry our muscles can tense up. Relaxing our muscles can help us calm down. Work from the bottom of your body to the top:

TENSE UP ALL
THE MUSCLES IN
YOUR FEET

HOLD FOR FIVE SECONDS

THEN LET
THEM RELAX

X3
DO THIS
THREE TIMES

TENSE UP ALL
THE MUSCLES IN
YOUR LEGS

HOLD FOR FIVE SECONDS

THEN LET
THEM RELAX

X3
DO THIS
THREE TIMES

TENSE UP ALL
THE MUSCLES IN
YOUR STOMACH

HOLD FOR FIVE SECONDS

THEN LET
THEM RELAX

X3
DO THIS
THREE TIMES

TENSE UP ALL
THE MUSCLES IN
YOUR CHEST

HOLD FOR FIVE SECONDS

THEN LET
THEM RELAX

X3
DO THIS
THREE TIMES

TENSE UP ALL
THE MUSCLES IN
YOUR ARMS

HOLD FOR FIVE SECONDS

THEN LET
THEM RELAX

X3
DO THIS
THREE TIMES

TENSE UP ALL
THE MUSCLES IN
YOUR HANDS

HOLD FOR FIVE SECONDS

THEN LET
THEM RELAX

X3
DO THIS
THREE TIMES

TENSE UP ALL
THE MUSCLES IN
YOUR FACE

HOLD FOR FIVE SECONDS

THEN LET
THEM RELAX

X3
DO THIS
THREE TIMES

LOOKING GOOD, FEELING FINE

How to boost your body image

What are we talking about?

Body image is the term used to describe the way that we see ourselves. It's how we think and feel about our appearance and the relationship we have with our bodies. Most people from time to time feel unsure or lack confidence in their image and appearance, such as having thoughts about wanting to be a bit taller or worrying about what our hair or skin might look like. For a lot of people they worry about the size and shape of their body. Boys and girls can worry about their body image and appearance and these worries can have a really big impact on daily life.

What does poor body image look like?

- Worrying about what you look like and being unhappy with certain features of your body or face.
- Comparing yourself to other people and finding fault with your own body.
- Spending a lot of time getting ready; this might make you late for or miss things, such as the school bus.
- Putting a lot of focus and importance on your weight and shape; weighing self regularly.
- Body checking behaviour e.g. pinching self and checking reflection in the mirror regularly.
- Wanting to or trying to diet by 'eating healthily' or following food movements such as the 'clean eating', 'raw food', 'vegan'.
- Increase in activity/exercise to try to change your size and shape.
- Trying to change your weight by taking laxatives, diuretics, or self-induced vomiting.
- Feeling worried about being seen by others, and eating in public/in front of others.
- May struggle to identify positive qualities or characteristics.
- May struggle to make friends or struggle at school.
- May refuse or find excuses to engage in PE lessons.

What to do:

- You are more than the way you look. Weight does not equal worth. Things that are more important than appearance include: your personality, characteristics, morals, values, ethics, behaviour, skills, effort, passion, goals, ambition, friendships, hobbies and interests.
- Your body allows you to do some amazing things. In order for your mind and body to work as well as it can, you need to fuel it by eating and drinking regularly.
- Speak to yourself kindly - like you would to your best friend.
- Practice safe-social media use: think carefully about what you look at online and only follow accounts that are positive. Block, unfriend, mute and delete anything or anyone that doesn't make you feel good. Turn your phone off at night.
- Remind yourself that we are all different and have strengths in different areas.
- Having fun and trying things is important; you don't always have to do things perfectly or be the best.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website; [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/body-image-self-esteem-young-people/](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/body-image-self-esteem-young-people/)

MY BODY IS BRILLIANT BECAUSE...

Our bodies are amazing, they let us do a whole number of things, from singing and dancing, running and jumping, thinking and remembering, speaking and learning, drawing and making, taking part in sports and activities and giving big hugs!

TRY AND LIST SOME OF THE WAYS IN WHICH YOUR BODY IS BRILLIANT...





PROUD TO BE ME

How to boost your self-esteem and confidence

What are we talking about?

Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves in general. People with good self-esteem are generally confident and accepting of themselves; they are able to see their positive qualities and experience feelings, such as pride in themselves. Those with low self-esteem may experience thoughts or beliefs about not being good enough or as good as other people and may struggle to identify positive qualities or characteristics in themselves. Most people will feel unsure or lack confidence in themselves from time to time, especially when trying something new.

What does low self-esteem look like

- Comparing yourself negatively to other people (in things like appearance, academic success, sporting ability).
- Being self-critical and struggling to identify or accept personal positive qualities, traits, characteristics or successes.
- Dismissing or discounting positive feedback from others.
- Believing that others do not have genuine positive intentions towards you (e.g. they are only speaking to you to get something from you/to be polite/because they have to not because they genuinely want to).
- Not sharing your opinions or preferences - not believing these are important or equal to others.
- Believing that bad things happened to you because you deserve it or are a bad person.
- Taking personal responsibility for things beyond your control.
- May be worried to try new things.
- Feeling sad.
- May find it difficult to make and keep friendships.
- May struggle with making mistakes and worrying about failing or not being/doing good enough.
- Worry about letting other people down.

What to do:

- Focus on all the things that are unique and special about you - your individuality, personality, morals, values, behaviour, skills, effort, passion, goals, ambition, friendships, hobbies and interests. There is only one of you; be proud of who you are.
- Be kind to yourself as you would be to others.
- Your voice matters; it's important to voice your ideas and opinions. It's OK when people disagree, so long as this is done respectfully. We all see things differently and have different perspectives.
- Remember it's OK to make mistakes. Keep trying new things regardless of the outcome - you don't have to be right or do things perfectly all the time. By trying new things you might discover a new talent or have fun trying.
- You can discover and develop your talents by joining clubs, groups and different activities.
- When you say "I can't do it" add in 'yet', so it becomes "I can't do it yet". It takes time and practice to learn new skills.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website; [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/body-image-self-esteem-young-people/](https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/body-image-self-esteem-young-people/)

Scan the QR code for a positive affirmation video. Quick link: bit.ly/459FGkl



FIVE FINGER POSITIVITY CHALLENGE

Every day, practice identifying and saying out loud five strengths and positive qualities that you possess.

You could adapt this and think of different things each day; five qualities that make you a good friend, five of your life goals, five things you enjoy doing, five things you are proud of, five things that make you unique etc.



Scan the QR code
for a 3 minute video
on body positivity.

Quick link: bit.ly/46bIkaM

LOVE IS LOVE

Figuring out sexual orientation

What are we talking about?

Sexual orientation is about who you are romantically or sexually attracted to. For some people, they know and feel certain about their sexuality whereas for others it may not be as clear. It can take time to fully understand thoughts and feelings. For others it will be clear but may still cause worry or stress. Most teenagers will be curious or question their sexuality at some point.

What might it feel like to struggle with your sexuality?

- Preferring to be by yourself and not spend as much time with family or friends. Not wanting to do things or interact with other people.
- Feeling alone.
- Problems with sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking very early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep).
- Worrying about what others might say or do if they found out.
- Feeling hopeless and struggling to see a future.
- Feeling anxious and having lots of “what if” thoughts (such as “what if something bad happens?”).
- Thoughts, urges or plans to harm yourself or some thoughts to end your life.
- Low self-esteem and confidence.
- Difficulties with concentration and motivation - you might find that you’re not doing as well in your school work.
- Misusing substances such as drugs or alcohol.

What to do:

- Not all young people will be certain about their sexuality/sexual orientation. It’s OK not to be sure or to be curious. You don’t have to be certain or make a decision, you can take the time you need.
- There is no right or wrong way to feel or think. We’re all unique and there is only one you.
- It can be helpful to share how you are feeling with someone you trust.
- There is a lot more information and support available from The Proud Trust: TheProudTrust.org
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website: HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/sexuality-and-gender-identity/
- If you’re in crisis; call **111** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) to speak to a qualified mental health professional.



THE NHS RAINBOW BADGE



We know that young people who identify as LGBTQ+ are more at risk of developing mental health difficulties so it is important to us that our young people know they will be listened to, respected and accepted. Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is also proud to be a part of the NHS Rainbow Badge Scheme.

The Rainbow Badge initiative gives healthcare staff a way to show that their place of work offers open, non-judgemental and inclusive care for all who identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and the + simply means inclusive of all identities, regardless of how people define themselves).

When you see one of our staff members wearing a Rainbow NHS Badge, this means that they have completed specialist training in LGBTQ+ suicide and self-harm prevention.

The Rainbow Badge is a visual symbol identifying its wearer as someone who any LGBTQ+ person can feel comfortable talking to about issues relating to sexuality or gender identity. It shows that the wearer is there to listen without judgement and signpost to further support if needed.

HE/SHE/THEY

Figuring out gender identity

What is gender identity?

Gender identity refers to our sense of who we are and how we see and describe ourselves.

Most people identify as “male” or “female”. These are sometimes called “binary” identities. But some people feel their gender identity is different from their biological sex.

For example, some people may have male genitals and facial hair but do not identify as a male or feel masculine.

Some may have female genitals and breasts but do not identify as a female or feel feminine.

Some people do not define themselves as having a “binary” identity. For them the concept of gender is not relevant to their identity.

They may use different terms, such as agender, gender diverse, gender non-conforming, to describe their identity. However, as a group, they are often called “non-binary”.

Gender dysphoria and gender identity

Many people with gender dysphoria have a strong, lasting desire to live a life that “matches” or expresses their gender identity.

They do this by changing the way they look and behave.

Some people with gender dysphoria, but not all, may want to use hormones and sometimes surgery to express their gender identity.

Gender dysphoria is not a mental illness, but some people may develop mental health problems because of gender dysphoria.





Children and gender identity

Children may show an interest in clothes or toys that society tells us are more often associated with the opposite gender. They may be unhappy with their physical sex characteristics.

However, this type of behaviour is reasonably common in childhood and is part of growing up. It does not mean that all children behaving this way have gender dysphoria or other gender identity issues.

A small number of children may feel lasting and severe distress, which gets worse as they get older. This often happens around puberty, when young people might feel that their physical appearance does not match their gender identity.

This feeling can continue into adulthood with some people having a strong desire to change parts of their physical appearance, such as facial hair or breasts.



Who can help me?

- If you're experiencing discomfort or uncertainty about your gender identity, and it's causing you distress, it's important to talk to an adult you can trust.
- You might want to talk to a parent or family member, or someone at your school or college.
- Schools and colleges are now much more aware of trans and gender identity issues, are keen to support young people, and have a duty to support you.
- If you do not feel able to talk to someone you already know, there are charities and local gender support groups you can talk to. Many have trained counsellors you can speak to in confidence.
- You can find charities and support groups on the [Tranzwiki page](#) on the [Gender Identity Research & Education website](#).

MUNCHING AND MOVING

Eating and exercising



What are we talking about?

The food that we eat and the activity that we do can have a big impact on both our physical and mental health.

Food is fuel for our mind and bodies. We need to eat regularly so that we can think, learn, grow and cope with everyday life. Food is also fun, pleasurable and social; it's something to be enjoyed.

Being active is also important for our minds and bodies. Being active can include exercising, playing sports or any way in which you are moving your body.

What might it feel like if I haven't got the balance quite right?

- Not having enough energy to do the things you want or need to do, feeling tired or weak.
- Finding it hard to concentrate and finding it hard to motivate yourself to do things such as school work or even things you enjoy.
- You may experience big or quick changes in your moods. You might notice that you feel more irritable and less tolerant of other people. This might impact on things such as relationships with other people - you might find you have more arguments.
- Not feeling physically well - having headaches, feeling sick, feeling dizzy or faint, feeling cold, aching muscles.
- Feeling hungry OR feeling very full.
- You may notice a change in your bowel habits, either becoming constipated or having diarrhoea.
- You may notice that your weight changes; either that you are losing or gaining weight.
- For girls, you may notice that your periods become irregular or stop altogether.

What to do:

- Eating breakfast is important; it gives your brain and body fuel to begin the day after you've been asleep.
- Eat regularly; aim for three meals as well as snacks. This is especially important if you are mentally or physically active (for example, revising for exams or taking part in sport).
- Avoid following any diet trends; these are often unhealthy and can potentially cause physical, mental and emotional difficulties.
- Make sure you stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. Aim for 6-8 glasses per day (water or milk) and avoid drinking too many sugary or caffeinated drinks.
- Exercising should be fun. Make sure you do activities you enjoy. Try not to worry about being the best or winning; taking part and having fun are the most important when being active.
- Being active doesn't have to mean hard core exercise or sport; you could just walk or ride your bike somewhere rather than get the bus or being driven, take the stairs rather than using the lift, or take part in activities such as yoga.
- If you are worried you haven't got the balance right, let someone know.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website; [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk)

Scan the QR code the our bodies video (4 mins)

Quick link:

bit.ly/3t5NExA



WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?

LIST THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE:

(Such as friends, family, pets, music, sports, education, hobbies etc.)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

NOW WRITE DOWN SOME ACTION POINTS ABOUT HOW YOU ARE GOING TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES AND MAKE TIME FOR THE THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU.

Try to make sure you do something each week for each of the things you have listed as being important to you (for example, if friends are important to you, you might try to ensure that you meet up with a friend on the weekend or after school).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

LIST THE VALUES THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU:

Values; these are the traits, characteristics, morals and ethics that we feel personally connected to and that are important to us (such as honesty, kindness, trying hard, persevering etc.).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

NOW WRITE DOWN SOME ACTION POINTS ABOUT HOW YOU ARE GOING TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES AND BEHAVE IN WAYS THAT ARE IN LINE WITH YOUR VALUES.

Try to think of an action point for each of the values you identify. For example if kindness is important to you, perhaps you might invite someone who is on their own to sit with you at lunch).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

GAMING

Using your phone and gaming safely

What are we talking about?

Lots of people like to spend time on their phones, play video or online games. Many people spend hours of their spare time on their phones or gaming. For lots of people this is OK and they are able to have other hobbies and interests, see friends and they can still get on with their everyday life. For others this love of gaming can tip into being unhelpful and impact on their life in a damaging way.

What does it look like if your phone or gaming is taking over?

- Constantly thinking about or wanting to play games or use social media platforms.
- Feeling irritable and restless (fidgety) when not playing.
- Not being honest with yourself or others about how much time you spend playing or playing in secret (such as in the middle of the night).
- Having stiffness, poor posture, aches, pain, numbness or eye strain.
- Tiredness and or headaches.
- Not wanting to pay attention to things like your personal hygiene (e.g. washing) or eating.
- Not seeing friends as often or doing other things you used to enjoy doing as all your time is spent gaming.
- Not wanting to go to school so that you can game.
- Feeling a range of emotions (e.g. irritable, anxious, sad).
- Struggling with concentration and motivation to do things. You might notice it's harder to do home/school work.
- Problems with sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking very early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep).
- Running up debts or spending money you don't have/that is not yours in order to pay for apps/gaming extras.

What to do:

- Practice safe gaming and social media use - only play games suitable for your age (age restrictions are there for a reason) and think carefully about what you look at online and only follow accounts that are positive. Block, unfriend, mute and delete anything or anyone that doesn't make you feel good.
- If you're worried about how much time you spend on your phone or gaming, aim to reduce the amount of time spent on your phone and gaming by five minutes each day.
- Make sure you take regular breaks to eat, drink, rest and be physically active.
- Where possible, keep your bedroom free of gaming devices and the internet. Turn your phone off at night.
- Try to identify things you miss out on by being on your phone or gaming. Find alternative hobbies and interests. Whilst these may not produce the same level of excitement or distraction, it is important to have a range of hobbies and interests.
- There is a lot of information on the Hampshire CAMHS website; [HampshireCamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/gaming-addiction](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/gaming-addiction)



THE VIRTUAL ACTIVITY PLANNER

Use this simple calculation to help you work out an activity to do!



Choose a number between 1 and 9



Multiply it by 3



Add 3



Multiply it by 3 again



Add the two digit number you get together



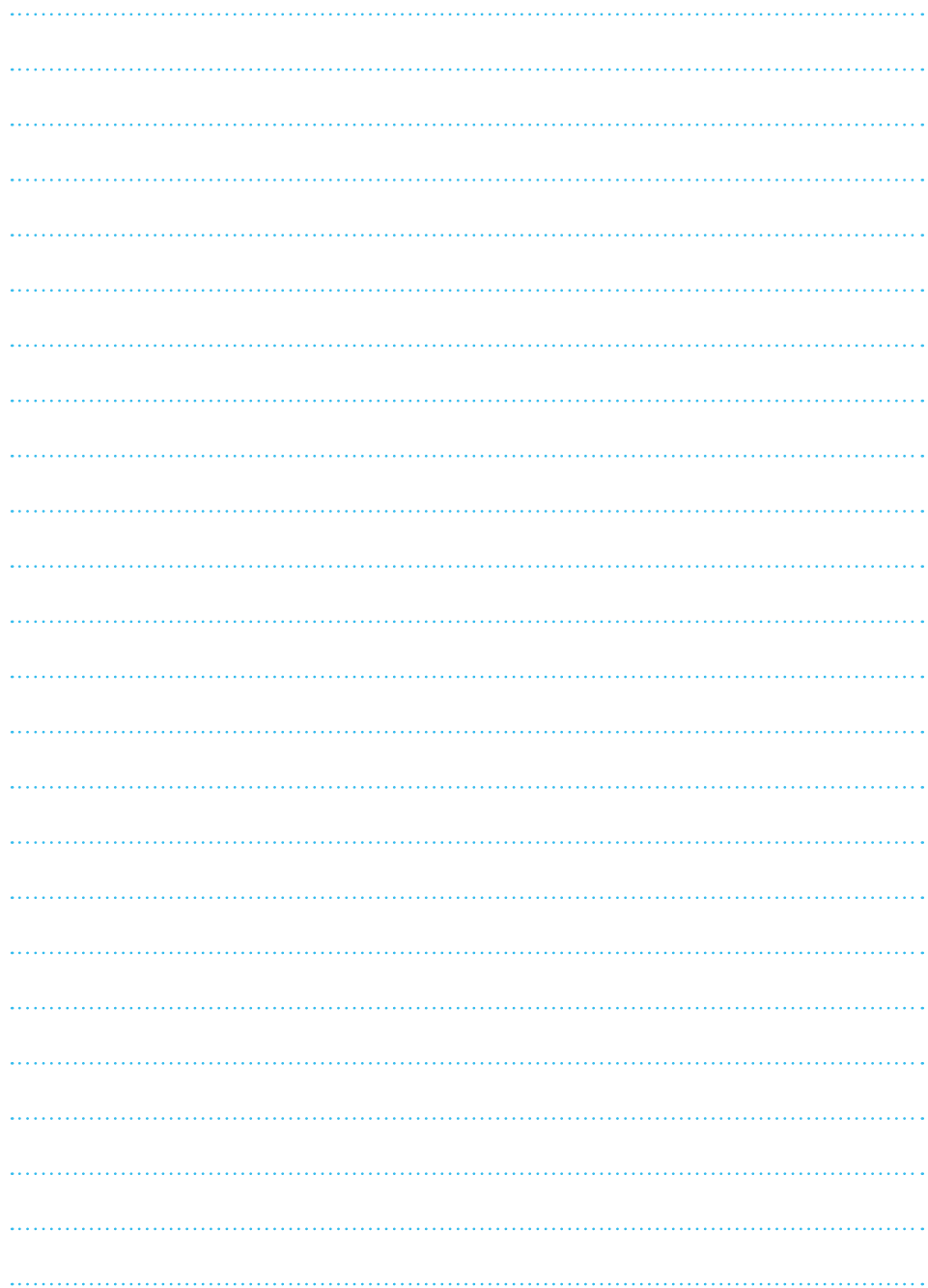
The number you get will be the activity you will be doing!



1. Try an online class
2. Write a letter to someone and post
3. Bake something
4. Listen to some new music
5. Play a game with family/household
6. Watch your favourite film
7. Start a diary/journal
8. Go for a long walk
9. Plant something/grow some herbs from seed
10. Read the book you have been meaning to read
11. Phone a friend for a chat
12. Try meditation
13. Cook something new
14. Try something artistic
15. Learn to juggle
16. Go and collect a bag of litter locally
17. Have a day without social media
18. Make a new playlist

NOTES:

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



NOTES:

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

With thanks to The Police and Crime Commissioners Youth Participation group, Nursling Primary School, pupils at The Westgate School and Swanmore College Hampshire, and to young people within Hampshire CAMHS participation group, for all their amazing ideas and contributions to this booklet.

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