

How to support a child with

LOW MOOD & SELF-HARM

Useful Apps:

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



Stay Alive



MoodTools



What's Up?



Fabulous - Daily
Routine Planner



In Hand



WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE?

- Feeling tired or appearing lethargic and unmotivated and disinterested.
- Appearing withdrawn and less communicative.
- Disrupted sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking very early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep).
- Seeking reassurance or wanting to withdraw from social contact and communication.
- Resistance to doing things; appearing unmotivated and disinterested; avoidance of seeing friends or doing activities they ordinarily enjoy.
- Poor personal hygiene (not washing or changing clothes regularly).
- Frequent changes of emotion, more sensitive (e.g., irritable, upset, confused).

Mental health and wellbeing cards

<https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk>

SELF-HARM

Some young people may experience thoughts or urges to harm themselves about ending their life. This may result in some infrequent or superficial injuries (not requiring medical attention)

Please note that not all young people who engage in self-harm behaviour are depressed or suicidal. There are many reasons why a young person may engage in self-harm behaviour.

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD?

- Normalise that feeling sad or down is a natural emotion particularly in response to a sad, disappointing or difficult event.
- Encourage a young person to do a range of tasks and activities including one they need to do such as school work to fun things.
- Keep a routine and have nice things planned.
- Break things down into small steps and do one at a time so tasks do not seem so overwhelming.
- Validate how the young person is feeling.
- Share concerns with your child's school / college.
- Depending on the context and / or the origins of the anxiety being experienced, other services may be helpful e.g. family guidance if there is family breakdown or conflict.

WHEN SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

It is typical for everyone to have times of low mood, loss of energy and lose interest in things.

When to be concerned;

- If the degree to which a young person feels low appears out of context or disproportionate to the reason why they might be feeling low.
- If episodes are more frequent or prolonged and cause the young person distress.
- If it impacts on their ability to cope with everyday life such as going to school, seeing friends or taking part in leisure activities.

Below is information to share with a young person struggling with self harming thoughts:

See if you can identify and name the emotion that is leading to the urge to self harm.

Have a go at surfing the urge until it passes by:

- Doing other things to stop you over thinking - like activities and being with other people
- Doing some things that feel soothing to you - walking, catching a ball, moving around your room (dancing?)
- Connect with someone and do something with them - even if you share your urge don't make this the focus of the activity / conversation until the urge passes.
- Doing some things that help to solve the problem you are facing such as: listing lots of possible solutions, resolving conflict, taking a first step towards some positive goals.

It can be very upsetting supporting a child with low mood, remember to look after your own mental health.