

CYP Services

Young Person and their Parent/Carer Support Pack



Keep Safe Plan

This safety plan is for you to complete and keep in a safe place of your choosing. Then when you experience times when you feel unwell or are having challenging thoughts, your Keep Safe Plan is complete and ready for you to put into action. It is very important to ensure that you tell someone how you are feeling when you are struggling and consider who else may be able to help if they had a copy of this plan.

Signs that I need extra support:

What are my triggers for feeling this way?

People I can get support from include:

Adults that I trust to support me include:

What do I need from my parent or carer?

Ideas that I have used or I can try, include:

Contact information for support include:



Suggestions to support self-harm and/or suicidal thoughts

It is important to remember that everyone find's different things helpful, however here are some suggestions of things that your child/young person might find useful.

Distractions

For a full list of recommended distractions please visit www.nshn.co.uk/downloads, but below are a few examples to suggest to your child/young person:

Displacement:

- Drawing on yourself in red pen.
- Snapping an elastic band on your wrist.
- Squeezing ice cubes.
- Putting plasters or bandages where you want to self-harm.
- Take a hot shower and use a good exfoliating body wash with a sponge or glove.

Reinforcement:

- Setting a target and promising not to self-harm during that time such as 10 minutes or the length of a song. Then once this is achieved, repeat the promise.
- Use a glow stick. When you feel the urge to harm, snap the glow stick to start it glowing and tell yourself not to harm until it stops glowing. The glow will last for a few hours by which time the urges will hopefully have passed.

Creative:

- Writing journals, a letter or even stories
- Drawing
- Colouring
- Origami (paper modelling)
- Listing to music

Comforting:

- Playing with a pet
- Have a hand or foot massage

Physical:

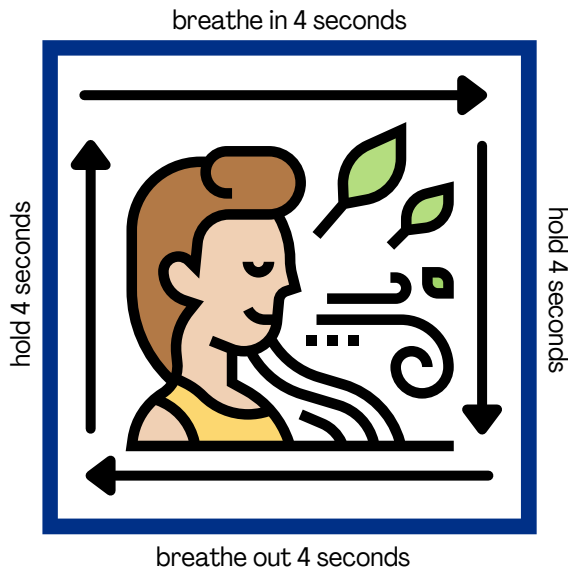
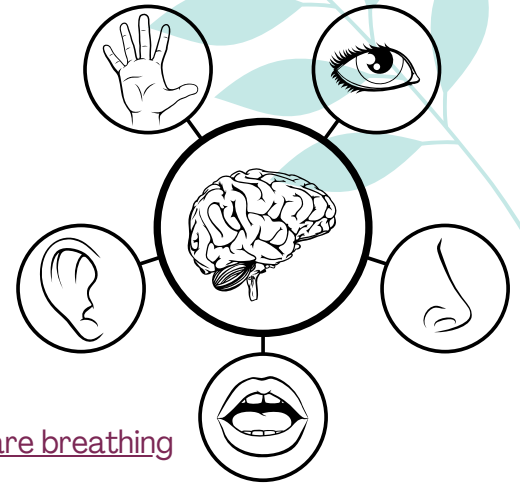
- Exercise
- Dancing
- Popping bubble wrap
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Rip up paper into tiny pieces
- Punch a pillow





Grounding and Breathing

When your mind wanders on to negative thoughts and worries, it can be helpful to re-focus by concentrating on each sense at a time, identifying what you can see, hear, smell, taste and touch. Sometimes you might need a parent or carer to complete this with you.



Square breathing

Step 1: Starting at the top left hand corner of the square, sit upright and inhale slowly and deeply through your nose to the count of four. Feel the air fill your lungs until your lungs are completely full and the air moves into your abdomen.

Step 2: Hold your breath for another slow count of four.

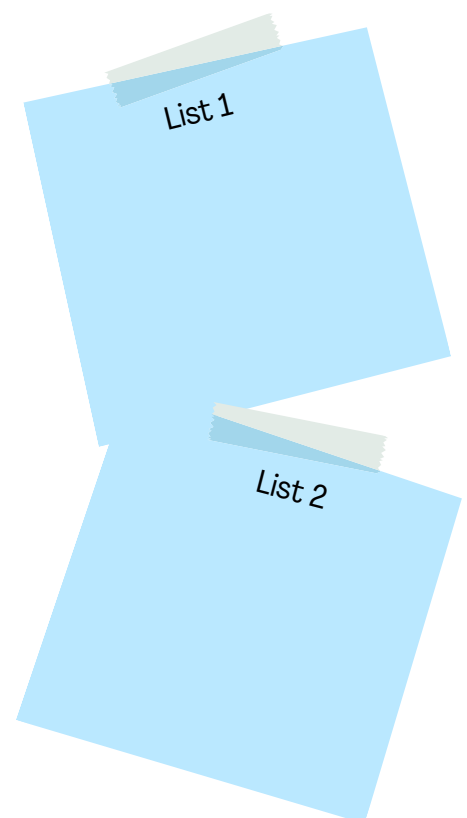
Step 3: Slowly exhale through your mouth for a slow count of four. Pay attention to the feeling of the air leaving your lungs.

Step 4: Hold your breath for the same slow count of four before repeating this process.

Social Media

Social media has become part of everyday life and something that we all use as second nature. However, sometimes social media can impact how we are feeling. Some people can find that spending time on social media causes them to be more sad or worried.

When you are feeling well, scroll through your social media for five minutes and write down five words that describe your feed. Then consider the 5 words you would like it to represent. Unfollow the accounts that relate to negative words on your list and instead find accounts that make you feel good and link to your second list.



Journaling

Just like learning any new skill, changing your responses to urges might take some practise. Use the space below to note down things that were helpful and unhelpful to allow you work out the best strategies for you when you have similar thoughts in the future.



A teal clipboard with a yellow clip is shown, holding a white page with horizontal lines. The page is designed for journaling, with a vertical line on the left side creating a margin. The page is blank, ready for writing.

You have been given this family Support Pack and Keep Safe Plan, as it has been identified that you/your child may be self-harming, experiencing thoughts of ending their life and/or experiencing significant levels of emotional distress.

We hope the information provided in this pack can help you begin to make sense of what these experiences/behaviours may mean for your child/young person, or simply support you to keep them safe as you work through this difficult time together.

Self-Harm

Self-harm is a symptom of emotional distress and there are many reasons why someone may harm themselves. Self-harm includes but is not limited to cutting, scratching, burning, squeezing it can also include banging the head against something hard, punching things or hair pulling. It can include self-poisoning with medication (often over-the counter medication or medication already kept at home). 1 in 12 young people in the UK deliberately self-harm (Young Minds, 2018) so if this is something your child or young person has experienced, they are not alone. We appreciate it can feel really scary and upsetting as a parent or carer to find out that your child has deliberately self-harmed but be assured there is lots of support available for them and for you.

Suicidal Thoughts

Many people feel suicidal at some point in their lives and it's important to know that there are lots of ways of dealing with these feelings. Your child/young person may be experiencing down or sad feelings, which at times can feel very deep and intense, sometimes leading to feelings or thoughts about wanting to end their life, and/or escape the current situation or the way they are currently feeling.

These feelings can get in the way of everything else and reduce enjoyment in daily activities. It can be distressing to hear that your child/young person is experiencing these thoughts but there is lots of support that you can all access.



Parent/Carer Keep Safe Plan

As a parent or carer, you play a key, protective role in ensuring your child/young person is safe during the periods where they need extra support or increased supervision, due to experiencing significant levels of distress. Any Keep Safe Plan is best produced together in collaboration with you, your child, and relevant professionals.

Signs that my child/young person needs extra support

What my child/young person can do to keep safe

What my child/young person wants me to do

What my child/young person wants me not to do (known triggers)

What I must do for my child/young person

What has worked well in the past for my child/young person?

Things I can do to help myself to support my own wellbeing

Relationship and Communication

When we talk about “ways to be” within your relationship with your child/young person, we are referring to the features within your relationship that contribute to positive parent/child interactions, and a child/young person’s healthy sense of self. We have detailed some skills below, that when demonstrated within a significant relationship with an adult, will provide the relational basis for a child/young person’s emotional, social, and neurological development.

Using this approach will be key in helping strengthen your relationship outside of any moments of crisis. However, we suggest that you use these skills especially during periods when your young person is struggling and needs support communicating their emotions or feelings. Be aware, this may feel strange at first, but this is typical of any change or new approach - the more you give it a try, the easier it will feel.

Attunement

Be alert to how young people are feeling, through demonstrating you are listening to their struggles by using facial expressions, body language and gestures.

Be alert to your child/young person’s experiences and validate their perspective / experience / feelings. Validation needs to happen before you move on to help them regulate their feelings or help them problem solve.

Validation

“It sounds as though you’re feeling....”

“What I hear you saying is...”

“It makes sense you’re frustrated.
This is a tough situation....”

Containment

Showing that you can understand and tolerate the intensity of your child/young person’s experience, without being overwhelmed yourself, is valuable. By not appearing overwhelmed by your child/young person’s feelings, you are showing them their deep distress, raging anger and painful sorrow can become a survivable experience. This can then allow you to support them to break the problems down together into manageable chunks. Nevertheless, we appreciate this is challenging and to enable you to contain your child/young person’s feelings, you may need some support to consider how you look after yourself and demonstrate self-care.

Soothing

Demonstrate emotional regulation by calming and soothing your child/young person’s distress (sometimes called ‘co-regulation’). This can simply involve ‘being with’ your child/young person and/or directing them to strategies you know can help soothe their distress levels. It’s often worth remembering that young people need to experience being calmed before they can calm themselves.



Set the emotional tone of your time together

Try to avoid being pulled into a feeling by the child/young person's distress state. As hard as it can be, if you can model talking in a calm manner about the situation, this will encourage your child/young person to stay calm.

Separate out the behaviour displayed, from your child/young as a person

When you are responding to the situation, continue positive actions towards them despite being hurt by their comments or behaviour. For example, explain that although you do not like the behaviour, you still love them and think they are a good person.

Why might someone self-harm?

Sometimes people are able to identify why they have self harmed, there may have been something that happened that triggered it. Sometimes young people might struggle to know why they have self harmed and may find it hard to identify triggers, particularly if they have social communication difficulties such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). There are no rules and everyone is different. Here are some reasons why people may self-harm.

Manage feelings

To help manage the feelings inside

Communication

To communicate how they are feeling inside

Punishment

To punish themselves for some perceived wrongdoing

Distraction

To take their mind off the emotional pain

Control

To feel in control of something when they may feel powerless

Frustration

To release internal frustration

Escape

To disconnect from reality



How to Help

Each child/young person is different and, as a parent or carer, it's important to remember that you know your child best. Nevertheless, we have included some of the following tips to support you to consider your responses in instances where your child/young person is self-harming and/or expressing that they need support to keep themselves safe.



DO

Take necessary steps to ensure that your child/young person is physically safe. This may include restricting or removing sharps or items that could be used to cause harm. If you're unsure about this, then please speak to a mental health practitioner.

Reduce shame and isolation for your child/young person by providing unconditional love and support.

Allow your child/young person to express their feelings but don't force them to if they are not ready. They may want to do this through text or letter rather than face to face.

Allow your child /young person to remain in control of decisions as much as possible, including whether they express their feelings.

Be curious about your child/young person's feeling and emotions to help them make sense of any contributing factors or emotions they may be finding difficult.

Stay calm if your child/young person comes to you when they have self-harmed. Ask if they would like to talk about it or need medical attention (you may not feel calm but try not to show it).

Be positive and try to focus on your child/young person's strengths.

Speak to your support network and seek support for yourself (see sources of support section).

Encourage general steps to well-being such as an appropriate amount of sleep, daily exercise and a balanced diet.

Offer ideas for
distraction (see page 3)



DON'T

Ask your child/young person to stop self harming 'for you' or make them promise to stop. This will only add more pressure and lead to guilt for any further self-harm.

Force your child/young person to talk about it, or ask too many questions.

Where possible, try not to restrain or restrict your child/young person, blame yourself or take it personally.

Assume every episode of self-harm is for the same reason.

Get angry with your child/young person, shout at them, or show shock after individual episodes of self-harm (you may feel this way but expressing it may cause more harm and make your child/young person feel more guilty).

Sources of Support for Children and Young People



LPFT Website

Our website has lots of useful information including self-help tips, guided relaxation, online workshops and more!

www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people

National Self-Harm Network

Here you can download lots of useful resources, such as advice leaflets and distractions.

<https://www.nshn.co.uk/downloads.html>

Lincolnshire's Emotional Wellbeing Pathway

This link provides a wide range of support from self- help, information and one to one support, available in Lincolnshire

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/emotionalwellbeing

KOOTH

An online support service that includes helpful articles, resources, and online chat service for young people who are struggling with their emotional wellbeing

www.kooth.com

(access 24/7, online chat Mon—Fri 12pm—10pm, Sat—Sun 6pm— 10pm)

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger

Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors. Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

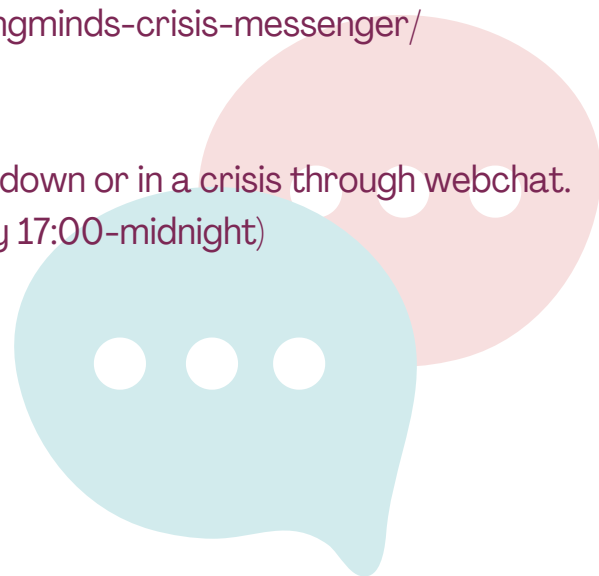
If you need urgent help text YM to 85258.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/get-urgent-help/youngminds-crisis-messenger/>

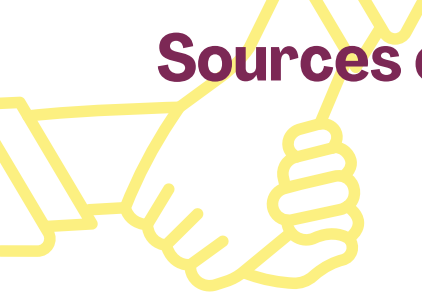
CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

Offers support to young men aged 15+ in the UK who are down or in a crisis through webchat. For their helpline contact: Freephone: 0800 58 58 58 (Daily 17:00-midnight)

<https://www.thecalmzone.net/>



Sources of Support for Children and Young People cont.



Samaritans

If you're in distress and need support, you can ring Samaritans for free at any time of the day or night.

Freephone (UK and Republic of Ireland): 116 123 (24 hours)

<http://www.samaritans.org/>

Childline

If you're under 19 you can confidentially speak to a counsellor online or on the phone from 9am – midnight.

0800 1111

<http://www.childline.org.uk/>

The Mix

If you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on their webchat. You can also use their phone counselling service, or get more information on support services you might need.

Freephone: 0808 808 4994 (13:00-23:00 daily)

<https://www.themix.org.uk/>

PAPYRUS

The national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. Papyrus offers confidential support to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide and/or anyone worried about a young person through the helpline HOPELINK.

For confidential suicide prevention advice contact: Freephone: 0800 068 4141

<https://papyrus-uk.org/>

Shout

A free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope
Text "SHOUT" to 85258 (24/7 text line)



Sources of Support for Parents/Carers



LPFT website

visit our website for information on how to support your child/young person
www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people

National Self-Harm Network

Here you can download lots of useful resources, such as advice leaflets and distractions
<https://www.nshn.co.uk/downloads.html>

Lincolnshire's Emotional Wellbeing Pathway

This link provides a wide range of support from self- help, information and one to one support, available in Lincolnshire
www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/emotionalwellbeing

MindEd

A free online training packages for parents
<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>

LPFT Mental Health Helpline

If you're feeling low, anxious or stressed and you think that talking to another person may help you cope you can call the new mental health helpline in Lincolnshire which is open 24/7.
Telephone: 0800 001 4331(open 27/7)

Carers First

Carers First provides information, advice, guidance, emotional support, training and activities, giving carers an opportunity to consider any extra help and support they need.
Telephone: 01522 782224
<https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/>

Young Minds Parent Helpline and Webchat

Young person's mental health charity offer different supports for parent/carers concerned about their child/young person's mental health
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-helpline-and-webchat/>



