



Mental Health First Aid Tool Kit



MHFA England



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- **A**sk, assess, act
- **L**isten non-judgementally
- **G**ive reassurance and information
- **E**nable the young person to get appropriate professional help
- **E**ncourage self help strategies

Areas of Mental Ill Health

- Depression and Anxiety
- Suicide and Pyschosis
- Self Harm and Eating Disorders

Useful questions to ask

- Who do you feel you can go to for support?
- Who do you feel comfortable and happy to talk to?
- What is your relationship like with your family?
- Is there anyone at home or anywhere else who hurts or upsets you sometimes?

Helpful resources

Organisations

YoungMinds

www.youngminds.org.uk

Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544

MindFull

www.mindfull.org

Every Child Matters

www.education.gov.uk

ChildLine

www.childline.org.uk

0800 1111 (available 24hrs a day)

Rethink Mental illness

www.rethink.org

0300 5000 927 (10am-1pm Mon-Fri)

advice@rethink.org

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

08457 90 90 90

Time to Change

www.time-to-change.org.uk

Mental Health Foundation

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mind

www.mind.org.uk

0300 123 3393 (9am-6pm Mon-Fri)

info@mind.org



Depression and Anxiety

Depression

A depressed young person may:

- Complain of tiredness even if they are sleeping more than usual.
- Withdraw from the family, spending a lot of time in their room
- Anger, antisocial behaviour, 'bad' behaviour, particularly in boys.
- Avoid discussing important future events
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Show a decline in grades at school
- Be absent or arrive late more often
- Engage less in classroom discussions or appear to struggle to understand or communicate
- Be more irritable or snappy with peers
- Avoid contact with peers and spend more time alone at lunch and breaks
- Risk taking behaviours, safety problems, alcohol or drug misuse.

Anxiety

An anxious young person may:

- Be tearful in the mornings and say they do not want to go to school
- Spend more time doing school work or express unnecessary concerns that the work is not good enough
- Complain of headaches and other physical symptoms (sometimes real, but sometimes an attempt to not go school.)
- Demand constant reassurances from parents
- Be irritable or snappy in interactions with family.
- Be extremely well-behaved and quiet, fearful of asking questions
- Regularly fail to hand in work on time, due to either procrastination or perfectionism tendencies
- Spend a lot of time on their own at lunch and breaks
- Be more irritable or snappy with peers
- Visibly appear to be anxious (sweating, agitated and rapid breathing.)

Useful questions to ask

- Who do you feel you can go to for support?
- Who do you feel comfortable and happy to talk to?
- What is your relationship like with your family?
- Is there anyone at home or anywhere else who hurts or upsets you sometimes?

Helpful resources

Organisations Depression

Depression Alliance

www.depressionalliance.org

0845 123 23 20

information@depressionalliance.org

Get Connected

www.getconnected.org.uk

0808 808 4994 Text 80849

Talk Don't Walk

[www.therelationshipcentre.co.uk/](http://www.therelationshipcentre.co.uk/talkdontwalk)

[talkdontwalk](http://www.therelationshipcentre.co.uk/talkdontwalk)

01925 246 910

Depression in teenagers

www.depressioninteenagers.co.uk

Youhealthtalk!

www.youhealthtalk.org

Youth2Youth (Y2Y)

www.youth2youth.co.uk

020 8896 3675 (6.30-9.30pm Mon or Thurs)

Organisations Anxiety

Anxiety UK

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

08444 775 774

No Panic

www.nopanic.org.uk

0808 138 8889 (10am-10pm daily)

OCD Action

www.ocdaction.org.uk

0845 390 6232

support@ocdaction.org.uk

OCD-UK

www.ocduk.org

www.ocduk.org/pdf/youngpeople.pdf

www.ocduk.org/pdf/children.pdf

www.ocduk.org/pdf/ParentsOCDGuide.pdf

CBT Online

www.getselfhelp.co.uk



Suicide and Psychosis

Suicide

Possible warning signs

• **Feelings:**

- Desperation, anger, guilt, worthlessness, loneliness, sadness, hopelessness, helplessness

• **Physical:**

- Lack of interest in appearance
- Disturbed sleep
- Change/loss of appetite, weight
- Physical health complaints

• **Behavioural:**

- Withdrawal (family, friends, school, work)
- Loss of interest in hobbies
- Abuse of alcohol, drugs
- Self harming behaviour
- Reckless behaviour
- Extreme behaviour changes
- Impulsivity
- Giving possessions away
- Secrecy

Psychosis

Common symptoms when a psychotic disorder is developing

• **Changes in emotion and thinking:**

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Suspiciousness
- Blunted, flat or inappropriate emotion
- Change in appetite
- Reduced energy or emotion
- Changes in thinking and perception
- Difficulties with concentration or attention
- Sense of alteration of self, others or the outside world
- Odd ideas
- Unusual perceptual experiences

• **Changes in behaviour:**

- Sleep disturbance
- Social isolation or withdrawal
- Reduced ability to carry out work and social roles

Useful questions to ask

- Who do you feel you can go to for support?
- Who do you feel comfortable and happy to talk to?
- What is your relationship like with your family?
- Is there anyone at home or anywhere else who hurts or upsets you sometimes?

Helpful resources

Organisations Suicide

Stamp Out Suicide

www.stampoutsuicide.org.uk

HOPELineUK

0808 068 41 41 (10am-5pm and 7pm-10pm Mon-Fri 2pm-5pm Sat-Sun)

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

www.uk-sobs.org.uk

0844 561 6855 (9am-9pm daily)

sobs.support@hotmail.com

Healthtalkonline

www.healthtalkonline.org

NHS Choices and Carer Direct

www.nhs.uk/carersdirect

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/156157/Sources-of-information-and-support-for-families.pdf.pdf

Organisations Psychosis

Iris

www.iris-initiative.org.uk

NICE

www.nice.org.uk

0808 808 4994 Text 80849

Rethink Mental Illness

www.rethink.org

0300 5000 927 (10am-1pm Mon-Fri)

advice@rethink.org

Sane/Saneline

www.sane.org.uk

0845 767 8000 (6pm-11pm daily)

Hearing Voices Network

www.hearing-voices.org

0114 271 8210

nhvn@hotmail.co.uk

Bipolar UK

www.bipolaruk.org.uk

020 7931 6480

info@bipolaruk.org.uk



Self-Harm and Eating Disorders

Self harming

Possible warning signs of self-harm

- Unexplained accidents or injuries of cuts, bruises or burns, on wrists arms, thighs and chest
- Keeping fully covered even in warm weather. Avoidance of situations where revealing clothing is expected
- Sharp objects or cutting instruments amongst a person's belongings. Blood stains on clothing, towels or bedding
- Relationships problems, changes in socialising, sleeping and eating patterns. A breakdown in typical communication
- Low self-esteem, isolation, irritability and mood changes
- Poor performance or results at school
- Loss of interest in favourite hobbies or sports

Eating disorders

A young person developing an eating disorder may:

- Avoid eating with friends, discard lunches or spend lunchtimes exercising
- Appear more lethargic or struggle to concentrate on their schoolwork
- Not want to be involved in PE classes or get changed in front of other people or may focus on PE to the point of obsession.
- Symptoms that indicate a medical emergency:
- Disordered thinking and not making any reasonable sense
- Disorientation; not knowing what day it is, where they are or who they are
- Being sick several times a day
- Fainting spells
- Collapsing or being too weak to walk
- Irregular heartbeat or low heart beat
- Cold or clammy skin indicating a low body temperature

Useful questions to ask

- Who do you feel you can go to for support?
- Who do you feel comfortable and happy to talk to?
- What is your relationship like with your family?
- Is there anyone at home or anywhere else who hurts or upsets you sometimes?

Helpful resources

Organisations Self-Harm

National Self-Harm Network

www.nshn.co.uk

0800 622 6000 (Thurs-Sat 6.10pm-10.30pm)

support@nshn.co.uk

Harmless

www.harmless.org.uk

0808 068 41 41 (10am-5pm and 7pm-10pm Mon-Fri 2pm-5pm Sat-Sun)

Self Harm

www.selfharm.co.uk

0844 561 6855 (9am-9pm daily)

sobs.support@hotmail.com

Organisations Eating Disorders

Anorexia and Bulimia Care

www.anorexiabulimiacare.org.uk

Boy Anorexia

www.boyanorexia.com

0808 808 4994 Text 80849

Rethink Mental Illness

www.rethink.org

0300 5000 927 (10am-1pm Mon-Fri)

advice@rethink.org

Sane/Saneline

www.sane.org.uk

0845 767 8000 (6pm-11pm daily)

Hearing Voices Network

www.hearing-voices.org

0114 271 8210

nhvn@hotmail.co.uk

Bipolar UK

www.bipolaruk.org.uk

020 7931 6480

info@bipolaruk.org.uk



Appendices

Non-judgmental listening

- Accept the person exactly as they are
- Genuinely make no moral judgement about their situation
- Empathetically try to get on their wavelength
- If you can do these things, you can now create the environment in which you can use listening skills.

Verbal skills

- Listen without interrupting
- Pay attention
- Ask appropriate questions to make sure that you are both clear on what is being said
- Listen to the words and the tone of voice and look at the body language—all will give clues to how the person is feeling
- Check your understanding of what is being said by restating what the person has said
- Summarise facts and feelings

Non verbal skills

- Be attentive
- Keep eye contact comfortable (do not stare or avoid eye contact)
- Keep an open body position
- Sitting down even when the other person is standing will make you seem less threatening
- Try not to sit exactly opposite and facing the other person as this seems like you are invading their space.

Useful questions to ask

- Who do you feel you can go to for support?
- Who do you feel comfortable and happy to talk to?
- What is your relationship like with your family?



Appendices

Resilience is... '...a complex and multifaceted construct, referring to a person's capacity to handle environmental difficulties, demands and high pressure without experiencing negative effects.' (Kinman and Grant, 2011)

Competence

- Helping children focus on individual strengths
- Focusing any identified mistakes on specific incidents
- Empowering children to make decisions

Confidence

- Focusing on the best in each child so that they can see that as well
- Recognising when they have done well
- Praising honestly about specific achievements
- Not pushing them to take on more that they can handle

Connection

- Building a sense of physical safety and emotional security
- Allow the expression of all emotions, so that they can reach out in difficult times
- Addressing conflict openly to resolve problems
- Fostering healthy relationships that will reinforce positive messages

Character

- Demonstrating how behaviours affects others
- Demonstrating the importance of community
- Avoiding hateful statements or stereotypes

Contribution

- Stressing the importance of serving others by modelling generosity
- Creating opportunities for them to contribute in a specific way
- Letting them know that many people in the world do not have what they need

Coping

- Modelling positive coping strategies
- Realising that telling them to stop the negative behaviour will not be effective
- Understanding that many risky behaviours are attempt to alleviate stress and pain

Control

- Understanding that life's events are not purely random and most are as result of another person's actions or choices
- Learning that discipline is about teaching, not punishing or controlling. Actions produce certain consequences

Useful questions to ask

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Appendices

- **Top tips for building resilience**

1. **Make connections**

Teach young people how to make friends, including the skill of empathy. Encourage them to be a friend to get friends. Build a strong family network to support the young person.

2. **Help them to help others**

Young people who may feel helpless can be empowered by helping others, by volunteer work or helping peers. Brainstorm with young people about ways they can help others.

3. **Maintain a daily routine.**

Sticking to a daily routine can be comforting to young people, especially if they crave structure in their lives. Encourage young people to develop their own routines.

4. **Take a break.**

Teach the young person how to focus on something other than what is worrying them. Build in unstructured time to allow students to be creative and allow them to take a break.

5. **Teach self care and concrete skills**

Teach the importance of making time to eat properly, exercise and rest. Schedule in 'downtime'. Having fun will help the young person stay balanced and deal better with stressful times.

6. **Move towards your goals**

Teach young people to set reasonable goals and move towards them one step at a time. Receiving praise for moving towards their goal, even a small amount, will focus them on what they have already accomplished.

7. **Nurture a positive self view, help them manage their emotions**

Help young people remember how they have successfully handled hardships in the past and how this has helped them build strength to handle the future challenges.

Emotional management is key in resilience. Teach them that all emotions are ok, including 'negative' emotions. It is ok to feel sad or angry, but teach them what they can do next.



Appendices

8. Avoid catastrophizing—keep perspective

Pay attention what is said directly to young people, avoid using catastrophizing language. Even when a young person is facing painful events, help them to look at the situation in a broader context. Help them see that there is a future beyond the current situation.

9. Let the young person make mistakes

Letting young people make mistakes is sometimes hard for adults but it helps the young people learn how to fix mistakes and make better decisions next time.

10. Accept that change is part of living

Change often can be frightening for young people. Help them see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable.

11. Don't accommodate every need

Whenever we try to provide certainty and comfort, we can get in the way of young people being able to develop their own problem solving and mastery.

12. Avoid eliminating all risk

We all want to keep young people safe, but eliminating all risk deprives young people of learning resilience. Allow appropriate risks and give age appropriate freedom to allow them to learn their own limits.

13. Teach problem solving

Engage the young person in working how they can handle challenges. Give them the opportunity to figure out what works and what doesn't.

14. Avoid 'why' questions

'Why' questions aren't helpful in promoting problem solving. As 'how' questions instead.

Useful questions to ask

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- What is your relationship like with your family?
- Is there anyone at home or anywhere else who hurts or upsets you sometimes?

Helpful resources

Organisations

Mental Health First Aid

www.mhfaengland.org

NHS Department of Health

www.dh.gov.uk

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

Mind

www.mind.org.uk

Other useful websites

www.bbc.co.uk/health

www.netdoctor.co.uk

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

www.mentalhealth.org

www.nimh.nih.gov

www.rcpsych.ac.uk

www.sdcmh.org.uk

Notes

