

## What is good mental health?

Looking after your mental health is not something we should just do if we are struggling, or feeling low, anxious or stressed. It's actually something we should think about all the time and really invest in, just like with our physical health.

Staying on top of our mental wellbeing is good for us now but also helps us deal manage difficult times in the future. Over time, it can also reduce our risk of physical health problems.

There are lots of things we can do to look after our mental health and wellbeing every day – make a start with the [5 Ways to Wellbeing](#).

Wellbeing



Your time,  
your words,  
your presence



TALK & LISTEN,  
BE THERE,  
FEEL CONNECTED



Brayton Academy



EMBRACE NEW  
EXPERIENCES,  
SEE OPPORTUNITIES,  
SURPRISE YOURSELF



REMEMBER  
THE SIMPLE  
THINGS THAT  
GIVE YOU JOY



DO WHAT YOU CAN,  
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,  
MOVE YOUR MOOD



# Low Mood

## What is Low Mood ?

Everyone feels low or down from time to time. It does not always mean something is wrong. Feeling low is common after distressing events or major life changes, but sometimes periods of low mood happen for no obvious reason.

You may feel tired, lacking confidence, frustrated, angry and worried. But a low mood will often pass after a couple of days or weeks – and there are some easy things you can try and small changes you can make that will usually help improve your mood.

## Top tips to improve your mood



### Challenge unhelpful thoughts

The way we think affects the way we feel. Watch the video to learn how to challenge unhelpful thoughts.

[Video: Reframing unhelpful thoughts](#)



### Talk to someone

Trusted friends, family and colleagues, or contacting a helpline, can help us when we are struggling. Watch the video for more ideas.

[Video: Social connection](#)



### Get better sleep

Low moods can make us feel tired. Tiredness can also have a bad impact on our mood. Watch the video on tips to improve your sleep.

[Video: Tips for sleeping better](#)



### Increase helpful activity

Low mood can stop us doing important or enjoyable activities. Try listing these things and doing some each day. Start with easier ones and, as you progress, your mood should improve.



### Boost your mood with music

Music can be a powerful way to change our feelings. See if you can create a playlist to listen to when feeling low – start with slower choices and gradually move to faster, uplifting songs. This can help your mood to gradually lift too.



### A little activity every day

If you can, doing little things every day to be more active – like taking the stairs instead of a lift, or standing up to stretch your legs every so often when sitting down for long periods – can really lift your mood.

[Better Health: Get active](#)

If you're having thoughts that life's not worth living, or you're self-harming or thinking about doing so, it's important to tell someone. You do not have to struggle alone – [urgent help and support](#) is available right now if you need it, or ring **0800 051 6171**

# Anxiety

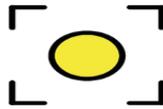
## What is Anxiety ?

Anxiety is something everyone experiences at times and feeling anxious is a perfectly natural reaction to some situations.

But sometimes feelings of anxiety can be constant, overwhelming or out of proportion to the situation and this can affect your daily life.

The good news is there are plenty of things you can try to help cope with anxiety.

## Top tips to cope with anxiety



### Shift your focus

Some people find relaxation, mindfulness or breathing exercises helpful. They reduce tension and focus our awareness on the present moment.

[Try NHS-recommended relaxation exercises](#)



### Challenge your anxious thoughts

Tackling unhelpful thoughts is one of the best things we can do to feel less anxious. Watch the video to find out more.

[Video: Reframing unhelpful thoughts](#)



### Make time for worries

If your worry feels overwhelming and takes over your day, setting specific "worry time" to go through your concerns each day can help you to focus on other things.

Watch the video for more advice.

[Video: Tackle your worries](#)



### Understand your anxiety

Try keeping a diary of what you are doing and how you feel at different times to help identify what's affecting you and what you need to take action on.



### Face the things you want to avoid

It's easy to avoid situations, or rely on habits that make us feel safer, but these can keep anxiety going. By slowly building up time in worrying situations, anxious feelings will gradually reduce and you will see these situations are OK.



### Look at the bigger picture

If we feel anxious about a situation, we might get stuck on the details and stop seeing things rationally. Thinking about your problem or situation from someone else's view can make it easier to come up with a plan. What advice would you give to a friend or family member?

# Self-Harm

## Ways to help avoid self-harm

Finding ways to prevent or distract yourself from self-harm may help you get through a difficult moment. Many people who self-harm will eventually stop on their own. However, support and treatment is available if you need it to help address the underlying cause. It can feel like a big step to speak to someone you do not know about your feelings or experiences. But with support it may feel easier to make changes that help reduce or stop your self-harm.

- try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member, trained volunteer or health professional. You could contact [Samaritans](#), call: 116 123 or email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) if you need someone to talk to.
- try working out if feeling a certain way leads to your self-harm – for example, when you're feeling sad or anxious you could try expressing that emotion in a safer way
- try waiting before you consider self-harm – distract yourself by going out for a walk, listening to music, or doing something else harmless that interests you; the need to self-harm may begin to pass over time
- try [calming breathing exercises](#) or other things you find relaxing to reduce feelings of anxiety
- write down your feelings – no one else needs to see it
- read about [mental health and wellbeing](#) – including help for common feelings such as stress, anxiety and depression
- if you struggle with suicidal thoughts, it may help to make a safety plan to use if you need it – the [Staying Safe website](#) has a guide on how to make a safety plan
- search and download [mental health apps](#) from the NHS apps library – the free [distrACT app](#) gives you easy, quick and discreet access to information and advice about self-harm and suicidal thoughts

## Recommended websites

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

[www.thesite.org/mental-health/self-harm](http://www.thesite.org/mental-health/self-harm)

[www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Self-harm](http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Self-harm)

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)



# Self-esteem

## Raising low self-esteem

### What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is the opinion we have of ourselves. When we have healthy self-esteem, we tend to feel positive about ourselves and about life in general. It makes us better able to deal with life's ups and downs. When our self-esteem is low, we tend to see ourselves and our life in a more negative and critical light. We also feel less able to take on the challenges that life throws at us.

### What causes low self-esteem?

Low self-esteem often begins in childhood. Our teachers, friends, siblings, parents, and even the media send us positive and negative messages about ourselves.

For some reason, the message that you are not good enough is the one that stays with you. Perhaps you found it difficult to live up to other people's expectations of you, or to your own expectations. Stress and difficult life events, such as serious illness or a bereavement, can have a negative effect on self-esteem.

Personality can also play a part. Some people are just more prone to negative thinking, while others set impossibly high standards for themselves.

### Recognise what you're good at

We tend to enjoy doing the things we're good at, which can help boost your mood.

### Start saying "no"

People with low self-esteem often feel they have to say yes to other people, even when they do not really want to.

The risk is that you become overburdened, resentful, angry and depressed.

### Be kind to yourself

Being kind to yourself means being gentle to yourself at times when you feel like being self-critical.

### Give yourself a challenge

We all feel nervous or afraid to do things at times. But people with healthy self-esteem do not let these feelings stop them trying new things or taking on challenges. Set yourself a goal, such as joining an exercise class or going to a social occasion. Achieving your goals will help to increase your self-esteem

### Build positive relationships

Try to build relationships with people who are positive and who appreciate you.

### Learn to be assertive

One trick is to look at other people who act assertively and copy what they do. It's not about pretending you're someone you're not. It's picking up hints and tips from people you admire and letting the real you come out.



**Stress** can cause many different symptoms. It might affect how you feel physically, mentally and also how you behave. It's not always easy to recognise when stress is the reason you're feeling or acting differently.

## Top tips to deal with stress and burnout

# Stress



### Split up big tasks

If a task seems overwhelming and difficult to start, try breaking it down into easier chunks, and give yourself credit for completing them.



### Allow yourself some positivity

Take time to think about the good things in your life. Each day, consider what went well and try to list 3 things you're thankful for.



### Challenge your thoughts

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[Video: Reframing unhelpful thoughts](#)



### Talk to someone

Trusted friends, family and colleagues, or contacting a helpline, can help us when we are struggling. Watch our video for more ideas.

[Video: Social connection](#)



### Be more active

Being active can help you to burn off nervous energy. It will not make your stress disappear, but it can make it less intense.

[Better Health: Home workout videos](#)



### Plan ahead

Planning out any upcoming stressful days or events – a to-do list, the journey you need to do, things you need to take – can really help.



# Sleep

**Sleep** benefits the brain and promotes attention, memory, and analytical thought. It makes thinking sharper, recognizing the most important information to consolidate learning. Sleep also facilitates [expansive thinking](#)<sup>2</sup> that can [spur creativity](#)<sup>3</sup>. Whether it's studying for a test, learning an instrument, or acquiring job skills, [sleep is essential for teens](#)<sup>4</sup>.

Given the importance of sleep for brain function, it's easy to see why teens who don't get enough sleep tend to suffer from [excessive drowsiness and lack of attention](#)<sup>5</sup> that can [harm their academic performance](#)<sup>6</sup>.

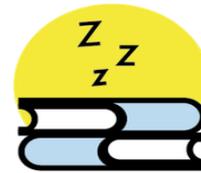
<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/teens-and-sleep>.

## Top tips to get to sleep and sleep better



### Keep regular sleep hours

Going to bed when you feel tired and getting up at roughly the same time helps teach your body to sleep better. Try to avoid napping where possible.



### Confront sleeplessness

If you are lying awake unable to sleep, do not force it. Get up and do something relaxing for a bit, and return to bed when you feel sleepier.



### Create a restful environment

Dark, quiet and cool environments generally make it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep. Watch our video for tips on how to sleep better.



### Write down your worries

If you often lie awake worrying about tomorrow, set aside time before bed to make a list for the next day. This can help put your mind at rest.

[Video: Tips for sleeping better](#)

[Video: Tackle your worries](#)



### Move more, sleep better

Being active can help you sleep better. These videos can get you going, but remember to avoid vigorous activity near bedtime if it affects your sleep.



### Put down the pick-me-ups

Caffeine and energy drinks can stop you falling asleep and prevent deep sleep. Try to cut out caffeine close to bedtime.

[Better Health: Home workout videos](#)

# The Wellbeing in Mind Team



## Wellbeing in Mind Team

### Who we are

We are a team of NHS staff, working in schools to offer support to students experiencing common emotional wellbeing difficulties.

### What we do

We provide care and interventions for young people including support for difficulties including:

- low mood
- anxiety w

We also provide advice and training on mental wellbeing issues to school staff, helping them to support you.

We also work closely with other services so that those with more complex problems can get the right help, from the right people, more quickly.

### Why we do it

Difficulties you experience in your child and teenage years can affect things like your work, friendships and home life.

Having the right support available when and where you need it can help to lessen the impact difficulties like stress or anxiety have on you; both now and in the future.

### Who's who

The wellbeing in mind team is made up of NHS professionals including Senior Clinicians and Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs).



**Sue Louth**  
Senior Clinician



**Amy Flint**  
Senior Clinician



**Millie Draper**  
EMHP



**Penny Crowe**  
EMHP



**Elizabeth Raynor**  
Trainee EMHP

