

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, BY YOUNG PEOPLE

# MENTAL HEALTH

## SELF HELP TOOL KIT



Be seen, Be heard, Be supported

# YOUR MENTAL HEALTH IS OUR PRIORITY

Mental health is becoming a bigger concern for young people, and it's often stigmatised. Sometimes, signs of mental health problems aren't obvious, so it's crucial to raise awareness. Even if someone seems happy on the outside, they might be struggling with mental health challenges.

## TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

“

“Mental health refers to a person's overall emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how individuals think, feel, and act, influencing how they handle stress, relate to others, and make choices” – Young person

We are Asvithan, Salma, Fariha, and Lisa, a group of young people aged 16 to 19, and we've designed this health campaign at Bromley-by-Bow Health.

Our goal is to EMPOWER young people to better understand and manage mental health challenges. We conducted in-depth research and gathered feedback from 120 young people, which directly informed the topics covered in this brochure.

If you're interested in getting involved in something similar, feel free to contact Bromley-by-Bow Health for more information about opportunities like the Summer Placement program.

It's natural to struggle with your mental health, but it can become harmful if you isolate yourself and avoid seeking help. Don't be afraid to reach out – there is always someone willing to listen and support you.



# YOUNG PEOPLES EXPERIENCES

We asked 120 young people about cultural perceptions of mental health. Here's what they said...

**"We are 'young' so we don't have much to care about"**

Young people are increasingly facing mental health problems as a result of increased pressure to succeed academically, financially and socially.



**"Many people don't believe it is real because it's not a visible illness"**

Mental Health problems are as real and can be as disabling as physical health conditions.



**"In my culture it's not addressed, for men its said that they have to suck it up"**

Men also experience mental health problems, but are less likely to speak out and ask for help due to stigma. It does not make you less manly to open up.



# CHALLENGING THE STIGMA

## EDUCATE YOURSELF

Many people casually use terms like "depressed," "psycho," and "autistic" without understanding their meaning.

Misusing these words can increase stigma and stop others from seeking the support they need.

Taking time to educate yourself on these terms allows you to choose your words more thoughtfully, creating a more supportive and understanding environment.

## SEEK SUPPORT

Just as you would see a doctor for physical health concerns, it's equally important to speak to a professional if you're struggling with your mental health.

By treating mental health as a natural part of your overall well-being, we can help remove the stigma and any feelings of shame or embarrassment. Your GP is experienced in supporting others through similar challenges, so there's no need to feel awkward or ashamed when reaching out for help.

**Did you know that 1 in 4 young people aged 16 to 24 experience mental health conditions?**



“

Unfortunately, mental health is seen as a sign of weakness and abnormality – “crazy”, “lazy” or “attention seeking”. Slowly things are changing and people are recognizing that these issues are real and common, but there is still a lot of progress to be made

– YOUNG PERSON

## SHOW POSIVITY

Someone struggling with their mental health may also be facing other challenges, so it's important to remember that there's always a bigger picture.

By offering positivity, you create a space where others feel comfortable to open up and seek support. Always be mindful of confidentiality, and respect others' privacy when it is safe to do so.



# ACADEMIC STRESS AND PRESSURE

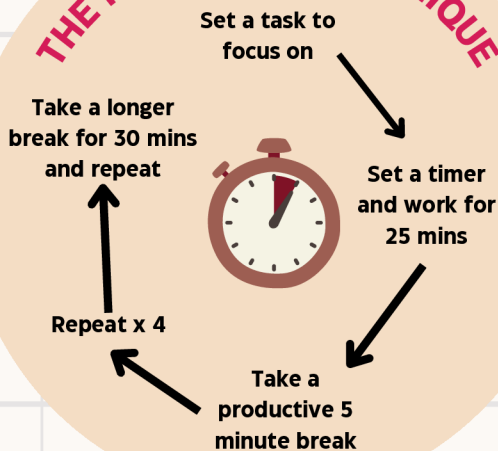
It is common to experience stress and anxiety during exam seasons.

When we asked young people about the factors negatively impacting their mental health, one of the two main responses was 'academic stress and pressure.'

While some pressure can encourage you to work harder, too much can cause burnout. This is where you become emotionally and physically exhausted, which may cause you to lose motivation to finish tasks.

## STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL STUDY:

### THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE



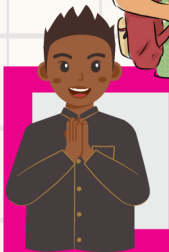
Take regular breaks to avoid burnout. Try the pomodoro technique.



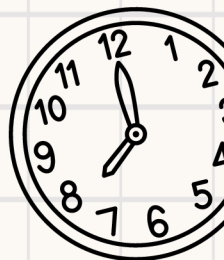
An organised environment with minimum distractions allows you to maintain focus and concentration.



Start early and break tasks into manageable chunk. Don't cram the night before.



Speak to your friends, family or teachers for further support.



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE



“

Domestic violence and abuse isn't only physical, it can also be emotional. You don't need bruises and scars for it to be classified as abuse such as, relationships where someone is controlling, frightening or isolating. This is also abuse and is not normal in any relationship. Abuse can also sometimes come from our loved ones.

**DOMESTIC ABUSE IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE, AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH IT ALONE.**



**You are not responsible for, or to be blamed for the actions of others.**

**We recognise that speaking out can be scary, but remember, there is always someone ready to listen when you're ready to talk.**

**Here are some steps that might make it easier:**

- **When finding someone to speak to, choose a person you trust dearly or a healthcare professional (such as your GP).**
- **Your situation is not your fault. You should know that you are not alone and that there are others in similar situations.**
- **You shouldn't feel pressured to say anything other than what YOU are comfortable sharing, take the conversation at the pace you need.**



# DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION

While drugs and alcohol may seem like a quick fix for stress, they often lead to regret, creating more problems than they solve. Saying no can be tough, but remember, the temporary relief they provide is far outweighed by the long-term risks to your health and well-being.

The good news is that you have the strength to choose a different path.

There are healthier ways to feel better, and it's okay to ask for help in finding them. Instead of turning to substances, consider adopting positive habits like exercise. Research shows that exercise boosts dopamine levels in your brain, reducing anxiety and improving your mood. By choosing this healthier path, you're investing in a brighter, more positive future for yourself.



**Socially, using these substances can push you away from friends and family, leaving you feeling more isolated.**



**It can be expensive to maintain addictions, leading to financial stress which traps you in a cycle of using substances to cope.**



**Biologically, long-term use can harm your brain, liver, and lungs, making it harder to live a healthy, happy life.**

## THE SCIENCE

Alcohol affects the part of your brain responsible for inhibition, particularly the cerebral cortex. This area plays a key role in memory, emotions, and learning.

When alcohol impairs the cerebral cortex, it can lead to poor judgment and impaired decision-making.



# BULLYING



Bullying can be subtle, such as friends making hurtful remarks disguised as 'friendly banter' or excluding someone from activities.

Remember, our words and actions can have a deep impact on others. If you've been bullied, know that it's not your fault, and you deserve to be treated with respect and kindness.

If you've ever bullied others, take a moment to reflect on how your actions might hurt someone. You have the power to change and make a positive difference. By choosing empathy and kindness, you can make a difference to others lives.

“There’s a culture of people bottling things up and not sharing their problems for fear of being judged and seen as weak or abnormal. This causes things to escalate.”

- YOUNG PERSON

## TYPES OF BULLYING:

- **Cyberbullying:** Uses technology, like social media or messaging apps, to threaten, harass, or target someone.
- **Physical Bullying:** Involves using an object or body to cause harm or scare others.
- **Verbal Bullying:** Uses words to hurt or intimidate someone.
- **Social Bullying:** Damages personal relationships or reputations through exclusion or spreading rumors.

## TIPS:

1. **If you feel safe enough: speak to the person who is bullying you**
2. **Don't see yourself as the problem**
3. **Never go through it in silence**
4. **Is it a crime? Report it.**
5. **Even when you want to, don't isolate yourself**
6. **Seek professional support**

SOURCE: DITCH THE LABEL





# COMPETITIVE SOCIAL MEDIA CULTURE

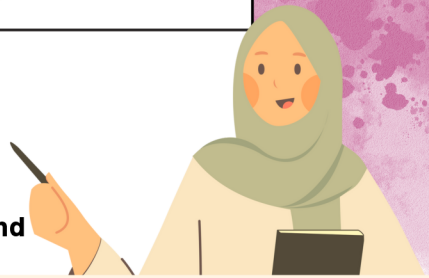
“Social media makes us have unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others, leading to poor mental health, when we make intentional and unintentional comparisons”

- Young person

 Tell me about social media 

Social media can offer benefits. However, it's crucial to be aware of the content we consume. People only post their best and most filtered moments that look good to others. This isn't an accurate or realistic portrayal of their lives behind the screen.

This can make us feel dissatisfied with our own lives, leading to insecurities and poor self-esteem. By staying mindful of what we engage with online, we can better maintain a healthy self-image and find genuine fulfillment.



## REGULAR DETOXES

- Schedule a screen time reminder
- Turn on Do Not Disturb
- Limit notifications
- Be mindful of your contacts

## OWN THE ALGORITHM

- Engage with motivating content to program your algorithm
- Unfollow or mute irrelevant accounts that make you feel anxious, jealous or sad.

**YOU ARE WORTH MORE  
THAN YOUR LIKES.**

## PRIORITISE YOU

Log off when you feel overwhelmed - you do not owe anyone your online presence! It is healthy to take breaks for your well-being. If needed temporarily deactivate your account.



# COPING MECHANISMS

## 4-3-2-1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

An easy way to manage anxiety and feel more relaxed, no matter where you are.

Many coping techniques can be easily implemented in your daily life to help you better manage anxiety and stress.



**SPOT**

4 things you can see



**TOUCH**

3 things around you



**LISTEN**

to 2 things you can hear



**NOTICE**

1 thing you can smell or taste

## AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations might feel awkward at first, but they can help calm your mind and boost your confidence. It's important to remember that it's possible to experience conflicting emotions at the same time. For example, you might feel both "I am confident I will pass" and "I am anxious about the exam." Acknowledging and accepting these mixed emotions can help you understand and manage your feelings more effectively.

Examples :

- "I am enough just as I am, and I strive for progress, not perfection."
- "Mistakes are opportunities for learning and growth."
- "I am worthy of love, and I choose to be happy"

**POSITIVE**  
*mind*

## BREATHING TECHNIQUES:

The 4-7-8 breathing technique involves breathing in for 4 seconds, holding the breath for 7 seconds, and exhaling for 8 seconds. This breathing pattern aims to reduce anxiety or help people get to sleep.



# HOW TO BE SUPPORTIVE FRIEND

Having conversations about mental health can be challenging and scary. Here are some ways to start:

## LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT:

Let them speak without interrupting, being heard can be a great relief.

## VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS:

Acknowledge their feelings by saying things like 'that sounds tough', 'it is okay to feel that way'.

## OFFER SUPPORT, NOT SOLUTIONS

Remember your own limits, you do not have to have all the answers but can ask 'how can I support you?'

## RESPECT THEIR BOUNDARIES:

If they are not ready to talk. let them know that you are available when they are ready

## ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL HELP:

Offer to help them find resources and accompany them to appointments if they would find it helpful

"I'VE NOTICED YOU'VE SEEMED A BIT OFF LATELY. DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT WHAT GOING ON?"

"HOW HAVE YOU BEEN FEELING? I'M HERE FOR YOU NO MATTER WHAT."

"IS THERE ANYTHING ON YOUR MIND?"

"YOU DON'T SEEM LIKE YOURSELF. WANT TO CHAT?"

## AVOID

- Minimising their feelings e.g., 'It's not a big deal'
- Taking on their problems as your own
- Giving unsolicited advice - what works for them might not work for you
- Spreading information

# Reminder



Remember, just like on a plane, you need to **put on your own oxygen mask before helping others**. If you're feeling overwhelmed, prioritize your well-being by reaching out to someone you trust or a counselor. Taking care of yourself first ensures you're in the best position to support others effectively.

# WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Your mental health matters. There are many services tailored to our community, accommodating young people of all ages, religions and cultural backgrounds.

**childline**

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME



For Children and Young  
People Under 19

---



PREVENTION  
OF YOUNG SUICIDE



**PAPYRUS -**  
Suicide Prevention Support for People  
Under 35

---



**MUSLIM YOUTH HELPLINE -**  
Anonymous, Faith and Culturally Sensitive

---



**HEALTH SPOT @ SPOTLIGHT -**  
Free GP Service for Young People in Tower  
Hamlets

---



DOCKLANDS OUTREACH



**DOCKLANDS OUTREACH -**  
Practical and Therapeutic Support to 3-25  
Years Olds Living in Tower Hamlets

---



**STEP FORWARD -**  
One-to-One Support and Counselling

---

**kooth**



**KOOTH-**  
Online Free, Anonymous Mental Health  
Support, Including Counseling and  
Community Support Forums

**NHS**

Talking Therapies



**TOWER HAMLETS TALKING  
THERAPIES (NHS IAPT) -**  
Psychological Therapies