

**Samaritans** and **Breathing Space** are places where there is someone who will listen when you need to talk. The websites give good advice on how to get started – and this can help when you talk to people you know about how you feel. They both give support to callers who are worried about someone else. Breathing Space also give telephone support on dealing with feelings and coping with problems.

#### **Samaritans**

Free phone line: 116 123 (24 hours)

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

#### **Breathing Space**

Free phone support: 0800 83 85 87

available evenings and weekends

[www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot)

**Mindfulness** is a mind-body approach to well-being that can help you change the way you think about experiences and reduce stress and anxiety. The Mental Health Foundation aims to make Mindfulness available to everyone.

[www.bemindful.co.uk](http://www.bemindful.co.uk)

**Mind** are a mental health charity with practical advice and support for people with mental health issues and the people close to them. They have specific advice for young people.

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

**Aye Mind** aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people by making better use of the internet, social media and mobile technologies. They have worked with young people aged 13 to 21 to create and share a wide range of Resources.

[www.ayemind.com](http://www.ayemind.com)

**Young Minds** is a website aimed at young people, offering advice and support on different issues.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>



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## Hints & Tips

# Mental Health and Wellbeing Tips for Teenagers

Welcome to our hints and tips for better mental health and wellbeing. When you're a teenager life can feel overwhelming – lots of changes are happening, you're making decisions about your future, and it can feel like there's a lot of pressure on you. Although lots of teenagers struggle with poor mental health, it can feel very isolating and it feels like no-one else could understand how you're feeling. We hope that these tips can help you through some of these bad times and give you some ideas and tools to help you improve your mental health or to make things easier when you're struggling.

1

### Make a playlist of songs that make you feel better

Think about the songs you like that make you feel happy or remind you of good memories and put them into a playlist that you can listen to when you're not feeling so good.

*"My daughter has different playlists for different moods. I know how she is feeling by the music I can hear."*

*"This is such a good idea - music can really lift your mood and get you active and thinking positively. But sometimes I just like to wallow in my thoughts and feelings and feel sad. Music helps me do this."*

2

### Go for a walk

Getting outside for a walk can help clear your head and it's an easy way to get some exercise. Whether you go alone or with a friend, regular walks can help you feel better day to day. You can walk around your neighbourhood or your local park, or even take a trip to the shops- just getting out.

*"When I'm feeling fed up I take the dog for a walk. It gives me a bit of space and time. The dog likes it and I have to think about other things."*



## Contact us

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3

## Write it down

Try keeping a journal or notebook where you can write down how you're feeling- you don't need to show it to anyone! Having a private space to vent can help if you're not feeling up to talking, and it's a good way to help your thoughts feel a bit clearer. It can also help give you some perspective on what you are feeling and understand it better than if you kept it all inside.

*"I use my journal to write down all the things I can't say to people but would like to. It means I get to have my say and have the last say about things."*

4

## Speak to someone

Talking about how you are feeling can be difficult and it can feel like no-one will understand, but you'd be surprised how many people will have been through similar things. Talking to people and sharing your experiences can make you feel much better- whether it's a friend, family member or someone else you trust, take the time to explain how you are feeling- sometimes writing a letter is easier and you can discuss it when you've both had time to think about things.

*"I find it hard to chat with friends about how I am feeling and how things are. I have to really trust them first. But when I have it has really helped me."*

5

## Find something you like to do

Find something you really enjoy doing that can fill your time when you're not feeling so great. Maybe you like watching films, or you fancy learning to sew. There are youtube tutorials showing you how to do almost anything, so why not have a look and see if anything inspires you? Having something to do that is just for you is a good way to focus on yourself and the things you enjoy.

*"In the winter especially, my mum and I have film days when we spend the day watching Netflix and chatting about what we are watching - we pretend we are on Gogglebox. I have started doing this with my friends too."*

6

## Find ways to cope

Finding different ways to channel how you're feeling can help you cope better. Some ways of coping, like self harm, can make you feel better in that moment but can be hard habits to break. If you do feel like self harming, there are some things you can try instead:

- If you're feeling frustrated or angry, try ripping up paper, shouting into a pillow, or going for a run.
- If you're feeling numb and disconnected, try having a cold shower or hold ice cubes or a frozen orange- this is helpful as the cold can help you

feel more connected and the orange scent is calming.

- If you're feeling sad, try spending time with a pet, watching one of your favourite films, phone a friend for a chat or try some breathing exercises.

Remember to be kind to yourself – sometimes trying to sit with your difficult feelings without acting on them can help- try to wait 5 minutes, then 10 minutes- the urge to self harm might lessen in this time. It can be tempting to keep these feelings to yourself and to feel embarrassed about self-harming, but talking about it can be a good step in getting help and feeling less alone.

*"I didn't want to tell anyone I was self harming because I didn't want to be called attention seeking or feel like I was being dramatic. It wasn't like that. Eventually my guidance teacher noticed but she was really nice about it and helped me look at different ways of doing things. Now I know I can go to her if I'm struggling and we can just have a chat and it takes my mind off things."*

7

## Think about what makes you feel better and worse

When you're experiencing a lot of strong feelings it can be overwhelming and confusing. It can be hard to deal with something when you don't understand why you're experiencing it. Often there can be patterns to our mental health that appear again and again, but when you're in the middle of these feelings it can be

hard to notice. Trying to identify when you're feeling bad again can be a helpful way to cope better when it happens, and having some tools and techniques you know make you feel better is a good way to prepare. You can also ask others to look out for behaviour that is a warning sign you're not doing so well, and to check in on you if this happens.

*"When I was feeling bad it was hard to focus at school, so I'd fall behind and feel even worse. My gran saw how stressed I was about it and helped me talk to the school so I could get a bit of extra support and not have to be so worried about being behind and how I was going to catch up. It's made things much easier to deal with."*

8

## Spend time with friends

When you feel bad it can feel easier to hide away and not see anyone, but this can make you feel much worse in the long run. Make plans to spend time with your friends- going out and doing something different or just staying in can be a good distraction from feeling bad. If you're not feeling up to lots of socialising something like watching a film together can be a good way to spend time with someone without feeling pressure to make lots of conversation.

*"I like having things to look forward to do. I like to be busy doing things. I don't like having too much spare time because then I start thinking and worrying about stuff. Schools days are OK but weekends and holidays can be boring."*