

NHS

THE
LITTLE
BLUE BOOK
OF

SUNSHINE

LIFE CAN BE TOUGH!

Everyone has mental health. Everyone you know will sometimes feel down, worried or anxious.

If school is pants, you're trying to figure out who you are and parents are stressing you out... then why wouldn't you feel down on the world?

But that's rubbish if it means you feel bad about yourself, lose confidence or can't bounce back.

There's good news though. No matter how difficult life can feel at times, there are loads of things you can do right now to feel better.

We all need to look after our mental health, and know who to turn to if things feel too much.

So read this book whenever you're feeling blue and try out some of the ideas.



MENTAL HEALTH

It's natural to feel down, anxious or stressed out at times.

It doesn't automatically mean that you've got a mental illness, or that you're at risk of one in future.

Some people break a leg or need their appendix taken out. Some people will get a mental illness during their life.

It happens, no one is to blame.

It can be difficult to talk about though...

TRY TO REMEMBER

- Most people who fall ill with mental health problems will recover
- Talking to people you trust can make a big difference
- Help is always out there.

THINGS THAT AFFECT ME

Is there anything in the list below that's making you worried about your mental health?

- Problems at home
- Worrying a lot
- Problems at school / college
- Physical illness
- Peer pressure
- Relationships
- Changes to my body
- My sexuality
- Sexting
- My internet history
- Exams / fear of failure
- Eating problems
- Trouble sleeping
- Drug or alcohol use
- Self-harm
- Abuse

What else is there? Write it down...



It's not always obvious what things affect our mental health. If that feels scary, talk to your teacher or another trusted adult and ask for help as soon as possible.

TALKING TO PEOPLE

If you think you need to talk about how you're feeling, then it's a good idea to do that.

Talk with a trusted adult at school, at home, or any clubs you're involved with. If you're not sure whether to say something, ask yourself:

- Am I less happy about the stuff I normally like to do, such as seeing friends, playing sport or reading?
- Has my ability to do day-to-day things changed recently?
- Am I having trouble with eating or sleeping?

If any of these sound a bit like you, then it's a good idea to ask for help. Write your thoughts down so it's easier to explain things.

You could even get yourself along to your GP surgery. Did you know you can visit your doctor on your own about any issue to do with your physical or mental health?

THINGS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL... BLEURGH

STRESS



Everyone gets stressed at some point in their life, though it affects people differently.

A little stress can be a good thing as it can provide the motivation to get something done.

Stress becomes a problem when it feels greater than your ability to cope. You might feel sad or tearful, anxious or worried, angry or unable to concentrate.

Sometimes stress makes it hard to eat or sleep properly. You might even get physical pains.

Being stressed for a long time is bad for your health.

See page 12 for top tips on dealing with stress

ANGER



Getting angry is part of being human. We all do it and, just like stress, a little bit of it can be good for us.

Anger can defend you from danger, help get an important point across, or motivate you to make a change.

Anger isn't good if it harms you or the people around you. If you're shouting, throwing stuff, hurting others (or yourself) then that's harmful behaviour.

Anger can contribute to mental health problems, and make existing problems worse.

Visit:
www.youngminds.org.uk
to find out more

S%#!

Depression



We all have times when our mood is low and we're feeling sad or miserable. Usually these feelings pass after a short time.

If a low mood lasts for a long time and affects your everyday life, then it could be a sign that you're experiencing depression.

Symptoms include:

- Feeling numb or worthless
- Frequently irritable and annoyed
- Overwhelming feelings of sadness, guilt, anger or hopelessness
- Becoming more self-critical
- Blaming yourself for everything.

If you think you're experiencing depression then it's important to talk to a trusted adult.

Read more about depression in young people:
www.amh.org.uk/news/depression-in-young-people

ANXIETY



Things like exams, leaving school, job interviews or even changes at home can make you feel anxious. It's a normal biological reaction.

Signs of anxiety include feeling fearful, finding it hard to concentrate or make decisions, being restless or edgy, or even going to the loo a lot.

You might even find it hard to sleep, eat or concentrate for a little while, but the worries should stop.

For some people, anxiety doesn't go away so easily. They might experience panic attacks or feel that they're worrying all the time about everything.

Talk to your teacher or GP if your anxiety feels overwhelming.



BODY IMAGE AND EATING PROBLEMS



It can be hard to be body confident when our bodies are changing and it feels like everyone is obsessed about people's appearance.

Swiping through Instagram just shows you images that have been Photoshopped, filtered and posed.

But take a look around, there's no 'right' way of looking; we're all different shapes, sizes and colours.

Sometimes worry, stress or a negative body image can result in unhealthy behaviour towards exercise or food.

The following things can be a sign of a serious eating problem that could put your health at risk.

- Over (or under) eating, or making yourself sick after a meal
- Using laxatives or steroids that haven't been prescribed
- Only eating a very narrow group of foods, or being preoccupied with food or exercise.

Relationships



Relationships should make us feel cherished and safe. Some relationships are better for us than others.

A healthy relationship...

shows mutual respect, honesty, trust and emotional support.

An unhealthy relationship...

doesn't make you feel good about yourself or makes you unhappy.

An abusive relationship...

Might involve physical, emotional or sexual abuse – it can happen online, on your phone or in person.

Abusive relationships can make you feel controlled, violated, or forced to do something you don't want to do.

Bullying, stalking and sexting are all abusive.

If you're worried about an abusive relationship then call Childline in confidence on 0800 1111

DEALING WITH...

STRESS

My name is...

Say hello to the things that are stressing you out. Write them down, crossing out anything that's unlikely to happen.

A problem shared...

Have a rant, have a cry, thump a cushion. Message a friend or talk to an adult you trust.

Go slow...

Take a walk in the park, load a playlist, or pick up a book.

Make a list...

List the top 5 most important things you need to do today. Tick them off as you complete each one.

Get breathless...

You might not feel like it but exercise and sport make a big difference to your wellbeing.

Smile...

Smiling makes other people feel better and changes our own mood too.

Things that are stressing me out

Top 5 things to achieve today

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

There's lots more to find out about managing stress at www.mind.org.uk/stress



DEALING WITH...

ANGER

Look inside yourself...

Knot in your stomach? Heart beating fast? Clenching your jaw? Knowing the early warning signs of anger means you can do something about it.

Walk away...

Take yourself out of the situation you are in and walk away.

Distract yourself...

Calming music, exercise, or doodling are all good ways to distract yourself from your thoughts. You could even try a cold shower!

Safe energy...

Don't damage your things, hurt yourself or others. Get rid of some energy by thumping a pillow instead, or tearing up a magazine.

Anywhere but here...

Where is your happy place? What do you like about it? Close your eyes and imagine you're there.

Aaaaand relax...

Breathe slowly by inhaling through one nostril, then out the other. Repeat slowly until you feel calmer.

Ever seen *Die Hard*? Try making fists with your toes!

Mindfulness can be a good way to control anger. Find out about this at www.bemindful.co.uk



TOP TIPS:

ANXIETY AND **Depression**

MANAGING ANXIETY

All of the above...

Many of the tips in this booklet for dealing with anger and stress will also help you to manage your anxiety.

Time to talk...

Talking to a trusted adult or a friend who is a good listener can really help. They might have had the same worries, or know of someone else who did.

Read a self-help book...

Self-help books help a lot of people with their anxiety. *Overcoming Anxiety* by Helen Kennerley is a good one.

Sometimes it's easier to text someone to say how you're feeling, even if they're in the next room!

Managing Depression

Make a gratitude jar...

Write down the things that make you happy and place them in the jar ready to read whenever you're feeling low.

Listen to Dr Chris...

Try out this short audio guide from NHS Moodzone if you're feeling down or depressed – www.bit.ly/lbbos_depression

Other things you can do...

Regular sleep, exercise and keeping to a healthy diet can help you feel more in control and more able to cope.

Self-help books can be really helpful too. You can borrow *Am I Depressed?* by Shirley Reynolds and Monika Parkinson from your local library.

When to seek help immediately

If you feel like your life isn't worth living, or that you want to harm yourself, ask for help straight away. Organisations like Childline and the Samaritans are there to help you, not judge.

Call the Samaritans for free on 116 123



TOP TIPS:

BODY IMAGE, EATING **AND relationships**

BODY IMAGE AND EATING RIGHT

Mirror, mirror...

Love and accept your body. Look in the mirror, what are the three things you like?

Listen to your body...

Your body wants to be exercised, and nourished. Exercise for fun, not beauty and aim for three main meals a day and three nutritious snacks.

The right role models...

Try not to be influenced by other people skipping meals or commenting on weight. Be careful about the websites you visit and the people you follow.

If you're worried about your eating or exercise habits, or feel that you need to keep them secret, then it's a good idea to talk to someone you trust.

Top tips for relationships

Other people's reactions are not about us, they are about them. Aim to be the best you can be in your relationships by being honest, inclusive and open.

- It's healthy to have time apart from your boyfriend or girlfriend. Spend time with your family and friends too.
- Just because you're 16 doesn't mean that you have to have (or should expect) sex. Never send, share, or ask for naked selfies. Visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk to find out why.
- Sometimes breaking up is right. Losing someone who doesn't respect or appreciate you is a gain, not a loss.
- No one has the right to bully you. Try to ignore the bully and report the incident to a trusted adult, or call the police on 101.

In an abusive relationship?

Abusive or controlling relationships are never OK. See page 22 for loads of useful links, or call Childline for advice at any time on 0800 1111

OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO...

- Breathing exercises can really help a lot of situations. Try the one on page 15.
- Eating healthily means limiting high sugar and high fat foods. Make sure you're getting a balanced diet of proteins and carbs - porridge for breakfast is a great start to the day!
- Did you know you can Google your local library to see which self-help books they have available?
- Take time out from social media, it's not always good for our mental health. Go for a walk without your phone, and plan some screen-free time every week.
- It's tempting to share personal feelings on social media, but you can't know how that will be used. Text or talk to someone you trust instead. If they don't respond try someone else!

If you can bounce back from the ups and downs of life then you're more likely to seek out new experiences and opportunities.

Things that help you bounce back aren't always just to do with you...

Make a difference to others

Look out for a friend, join a club or volunteer your time. It builds your self-esteem and expands the network of people looking out for you.

Say no to negativity

Challenge that internal monologue. A poor report doesn't mean that you're rubbish. The image in the mirror is uniquely you... loads of people think that you're fabulous!

Find that trusted adult

There are people who love you and want to help. It's OK if it's not easy or possible to talk to one of your parents. Who are the other adults in your family, community or school who could step in and support you instead?

**There is always someone there to help...
Just ask.**



USEFUL RESOURCES

Check out the back page of this booklet for helpful organisations right here in Berkshire. Other trusted sources of information include:

General information

- www.nhs.uk/Livewell/youth-mental-health
- www.youngminds.org.uk

Useful apps

- www.moodpanda.com
- www.sam-app.org.uk
- www.bit.ly/lbbos_apps

Advice

- www.healthtalk.org/young-peoples-experiences
- www.respectyourself.org.uk

Anxiety

- www.anxietyuk.org.uk/young-people-and-anxiety

Bullying

- www.bullying.co.uk

Drugs and alcohol advice

- www.talktofrank.com

Eating problems

- www.anorexiabulimiare.org.uk

Staying safe online

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- www.safestories.org

Got naked online already?

- www.bit.ly/lbbos_gotnaked

Self-harm

- www.harmless.org.uk

Suicide prevention

- www.papyrus-uk.org

WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND?

Have you got a friend who might be experiencing a mental health problem? You can be there for them by listening to them and keeping in touch.

Reminding your friend about the things you like about them helps a lot. And keep on inviting them to stuff, even if they don't want to come or let you down.

Looking out for your friends is important, but don't forget to look out for yourself too! **Do you think your friend is in danger?** It's very important that they get help from a trusted adult. The back page of this booklet explains what to do in a crisis.

#littlebluebookofsunshine

LOCAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Reading area

No.5 – youth counselling

www.no5.org.uk | 0118 901 5668

Time To Talk

www.timetotalk.adviza.org.uk | 0118 903 5151

Wokingham area

ARC - youth counselling

www.arcweb.org.uk | 0118 977 6710

West Berkshire

Time to Talk - youth counselling

www.t2twb.org | 01635 760331

West Berkshire Emotional Health Academy

http://bit.ly/lbbos_aha

Berkshire-wide

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs

In a crisis or emergency

Call 0300 365 0300 if you have urgent concerns about a mental health problem. **Call 999** if you are worried about your immediate safety, or go straight to the nearest A&E department.