

Parent/Carer 5 Ways to Wellbeing Toolkit

A resource for parents & carers to explain the “Five Ways to Wellbeing” initiative and how this can benefit their child or young person

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About this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help parents and carers of young people who have a different range of challenges, including (but not exclusively) anxiety, stress, depression and low mood, low self esteem, ADHD, ASC and other communication/ social needs. It is also designed to help parents and carers who wish to improve and maintain the mental wellbeing of their young people. This toolkit will explain the “Five Ways to Wellbeing” initiative and detail how this can be incorporated into the life of a young person in a way which will improve their mental wellbeing.

At the back of the toolkit is a selection of resources that you may wish to complete with your young person. They will help explain the “Five Ways to Wellbeing” to them and help them find ways to fit these principles into their lives.



Make
YOUR mental
Health a
Priority

The Five Ways to Wellbeing

What are the “Five Ways to Wellbeing”?

The Five Ways to Wellbeing are a set of evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population.

They were developed by NEF as the result of a commission by Foresight, the UK government's futures think-tank, as part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing.

The five key principles within the “Five Ways to Wellbeing” are:

1. Connect with others
2. Be active
3. Take notice of your environment
4. Keep learning
5. Give back to others

At STEP we use the “5 Ways to Wellbeing” as a template for the 5 STEPs programme that many young people attend in the evening groups. We teach the young people about the five key principles and how to incorporate them into their daily lives.

You can use these steps at home, discuss what you have seen here with your young person, you can encourage them to look over this video with you as well (please see the link in the resources section of this toolkit). Encourage them to implement the 5 steps into their day to day activities and explain how these can improve their mental wellbeing.



Connecting with others

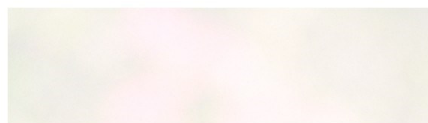
It has been proven that connecting with others greatly improves mental health and wellbeing. This can be done in a number of different ways and does not have to be face to face interaction.

Connecting with others can also help young people to expand and strengthen their personal support network and increase the number and variety of individuals they can go to for support when they need it. Ask your young person to think about the people in their support network, they may wish to complete either the **“Social support network”** worksheet (for older young people) or the **“Who can I count on”** worksheet (for children). Both of these can be found in the resources section of this toolkit.

There are lots of different ways that young people can connect with others, some examples include:

- Meeting with people in person either at somebody’s house or out in the community
- Speaking with other young people or staff while at school
- Telephone conversations with friends or family
- Video calls (Zoom, TEAMS etc)
- Social media (Snapchat, TikTok etc) - if your young person chooses to communicate in this way then please ensure they are aware of safety surrounding social media and are aware of where to find support with this if needed. Also please be aware that most social media platforms have age restrictions and younger children should not access these. More information about this can be found in the STEP parent toolkit “online safety”. There is also a link to the National online safety website in the resources section of this toolkit.

It is important for everyone to adhere to the Covid restrictions in place and do not break these while communicating with others e.g. not visiting other people’s houses if this is not allowed. Encourage your young person to communicate remotely with others when there are Covid restrictions in place.



Connecting with others is
rewarding; it makes us
feel like we’re not alone
in the world

Jonah Berger
PICTUREQUOTES.COM



PICTUREQUOTES

Be active

Physical activity is a fantastic way of improving mental health, raising energy levels, increasing self-esteem and boosting mood. It causes the brain to release “feel good hormones” and can improve the symptoms of anxiety, depression, ADHD, stress and other mental health challenges. Physical activity has a huge potential to enhance our wellbeing. Even a short burst of 10 minutes’ brisk walking increases our mental alertness, energy and positive mood.

What is physical activity?

At a very basic level, physical activity means any movement of your body that uses your muscles and expends energy. One of the great things about physical activity is that there are endless possibilities and there will be an activity to suit almost everyone! Physical activity does not have to be “exercise”, it can take the form of going for a walk (walking somewhere rather than going by car) or as active play in children.

Some examples of physical activities for children and young people

- Going for a walk or using walking as a form of transport
- Active play e.g. tag
- Skipping
- Trampolining
- Running
- Playing a sport e.g. football, tennis or basketball
- Skateboarding or scootering
- Yoga (“**Yoga instructions**” can be found in the resources section of this toolkit)
- Online exercise classes e.g. Joe Wicks (see links to the videos in the resources section)
- Playing at an outdoor playground
- Soft play

As mentioned before, please make sure that any physical activity complies with current Covid restrictions.



Take notice of your environment

Taking an active interest in our surroundings can also improve mental health and wellbeing. It can increase awareness and help with practicing mindfulness. It can improve self understanding and increase motivation.

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness means paying full attention to something. It means slowing down to really notice what you're doing. Being mindful is the opposite of rushing or multitasking. When you're mindful, you're taking your time. You're focusing in a relaxed, easy way. Included in the resources section is a set of **“Mindfulness activity cards”**. There are also some other **“Mindfulness activities”** included for you to try. These short activities are a good way for young people to begin to practice mindfulness. There are also some links to mindfulness and meditation videos included in the online sources of support section of this toolkit. Grounding techniques using the senses are also a good way to help the practice of mindfulness and take notice in our environment. They help bring focus back to the present and are a good way of taking notice of our physical state. There are some **“Grounding techniques”** in the resources section at the end of this toolkit.

Other ways to take notice of our environment

- Rearrange or redecorate a living space
- Grow a plant, take care of it and watch it change
- Look out of the window of the car and see what you can see
- Play “eye spy”
- Take note of the environment when travelling a route you travel frequently e.g. on the school run. Observe any changes that you see.
- Go for a nature walk and see how many different types of plants or animals you see
- Go on a bug hunt and see how many you can find
- Put up a bird feeder in the garden, watch it and see how many birds visit it
- Colouring can help focus the mind and keep it in the present. There is a **“colouring sheet”** included in the resources section of this toolkit that your young person may wish to use.



Keep learning

Learning a new skill is a fantastic way to improve self esteem. It provides a sense of achievement and accomplishment. It can be a great exercise in goal setting and can improve self discipline too. Learning improves the health of the brain, relieves boredom, increases adaptability and increases likability.

A new skill does not have to be something academic or related to school and a young person's education. It should be a skill related to something that interests them and something they are motivated to learn.

Even playing computer games involves learning, you learn how to use the controls and then how to complete different tasks to succeed and win the game.

Examples of new skills to learn

- An additional language
- Craft based skills e.g. sewing, knitting, crochet
- Art activities e.g. painting and clay
- Sports activities e.g. horse riding, skateboarding, roller skating or ice skating
- IT skills e.g. coding using platforms such as "Scratch"
- History projects about an event or time that interests them
- Life skills e.g. shoe laces and telling the time
- Learning how to ride a bike
- Cooking and baking skills



Stay curious, keep learning
and keep growing. And
always strive to be more
interested than interesting.

Jane Fonda

PICTUREQUOTES.COM



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Give back to others

Giving back to others is a great way of improving mental wellbeing. It strengthens a sense of community in the area in which we live and makes us feel needed and valued. The praise received will increase self esteem and a sense of self worth.

Giving back to others does not have to cost anything financially, we can help others by giving them our time and doing something nice to help out.

During the current situation it is more important than ever that we look after each other and give back. There has been an increase in mental health issues caused by both the government restrictions and anxieties around health. People are having to isolate and are struggling financially and so we should all help each other to manage this. Having said that it is also important that we look after our own health and follow restrictions ourselves. This could include things like wearing a face covering when delivering supplies to those who are shielding/ isolating and making sure we wash our hands.

Talk to your young person about different ways they can help others, there is a **“Ways to help others”** sheet in the resources section of this toolkit that you can use as a way to start the conversation.

Other ways young people can give back to others

- Go shopping for or help those who are elderly or socially shielding.
- Make time to talk to those who are alone at the moment to help reduce isolation.
- Help out at home e.g. offer to wash up, cook dinner or tidy up.
- Look after younger siblings and play with them to give your parents a break.
- Make someone a cup of tea.
- Hold a door open for someone.
- Give someone a smile!



Resources Section

In this section, you will find:

Useful worksheets

Yoga instructions

Mindfulness activities

Online support links

Support telephone numbers

Useful videos

Social Support Network Worksheet

Family/Relatives

Neighbors



Friends/Acquaintances

Name: _____
Date: _____

Co-workers/Classmates

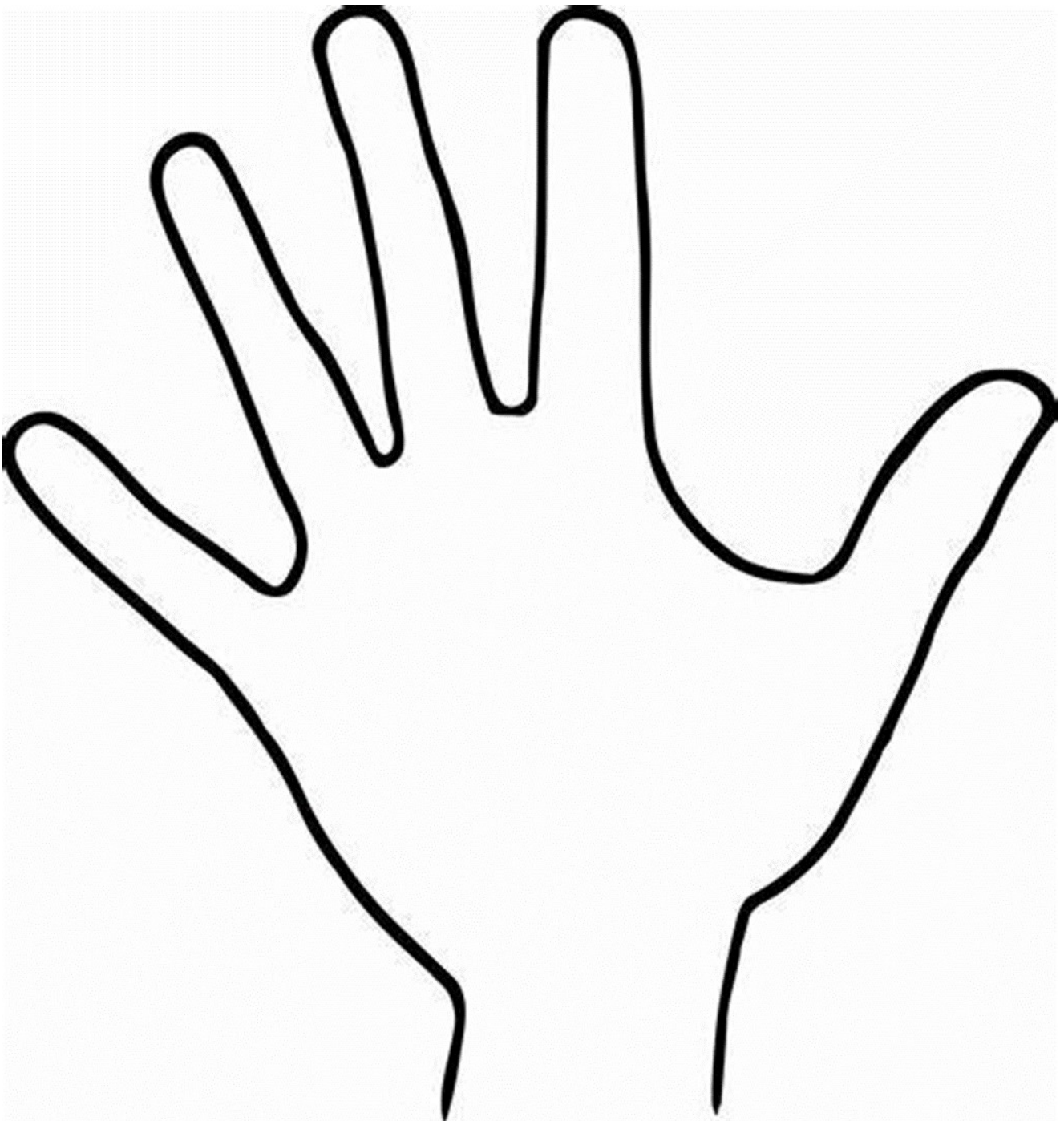
Staff/Professionals

My five biggest supporters are:

- 1. 4.
- 2. 5.
- 3.

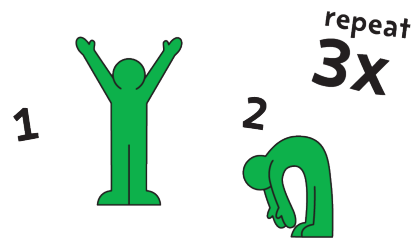
Who can I count on?

Below you will find a picture of a hand. On each finger I would like you to write the name of someone you can count on for help and support when you need it. Think about the trusted adults in your life (either at home or at school) and write their names on the fingers. When you're done with the names you can decorate the hand any way you like!



Yoga

1. Get warmed up by raising your arms and stretching up to the sky for a count of 10, then touch your toes for a count of 10. Repeat 3 times.



2. Now make the Butterfly pose by sitting and placing the soles of your feet against one another. Hold your feet for a count of 10. Repeat 3 times.



3. Next is the Camel pose! Kneel down, stretch your arms up over your head and reach back to your toes. Hold it for 10. Repeat 3 times.



4. Dolphin pose is next – from standing, bend over and rest your elbows on the ground, keeping your legs straight. Tuck your head in and hold for 10. Repeat 3 times.



5. Finally, it's the Tortoise pose. Sit in a kneeling position, fold your body over and on to the floor, arms stretched out over your head. Hold for 30 seconds. Now repeat the circuit for 10 minutes.



Mindfulness Activity
Card

Place your hand on your belly.
Take 10 deep breaths and
notice your hand moving up
and down as you breathe.

Mindfulness Activity
Card

Sit very still and notice one
thing that you can see, hear,
feel, taste and smell.

Mindfulness Activity
Card

Close your eyes and spend one
minute thinking about the
happiest day of your life. Try
to remember as much about
that day as you can.

Mindfulness Activity
Card

Close your eyes and think
about how you are feeling.
Happy? Sad? Mad? Scared?
Excited? Something else?
Think about how you know you
are feeling this way.

Mindfulness Activity
Card

Close your eyes and sit
quietly. Notice the way that
your clothes feel on your body.
Notice your shirt, pants and
shoes. Do you notice anything
you didn't notice before?

Mindfulness Activity
Card

Sit quietly and place a small
object in your hand. A pencil,
eraser, or something else.
Notice how heavy the object is.
Think about what it feels like
in your hand. Notice one new
thing about this object.

Mindfulness activity suggestions



Mindfulness colouring can help improve mood, reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. It can help focus the mind and allow an individual to practice concentrating on a task. Free, printable colouring sheets can be found online. We have included two colouring sheets in this toolkit but many others are available online.

Mindfulness jars (or bottles) are a great way to distract the mind from feelings of stress. They help an individual to learn to focus their mind as well. Making them is a fun activity too.



Body Scan Meditation

- 1 Set aside a time and place in your day where you can sit comfortably and you won't be distracted or disturbed.
- 2 Find a comfortable but attentive seated position, close your eyes, and bring your attention to your toes.
- 3 Working up from your toes, bring awareness to each body part in turn: your feet, ankles, calves, knees, etc. up to your head.

Health Benefits:

- Reduced stress
- Decreased muscle tension
- Increased pain tolerance

Why it works to reduce stress:
Body scan meditations encourage self-awareness of sensations we might otherwise be ignoring.

Practicing a body scan meditation can help reduce stress and calm the mind.

GOOD FOR YOU, MEDITATION IS.

Set a timer for 10 min.

Sit comfortably.

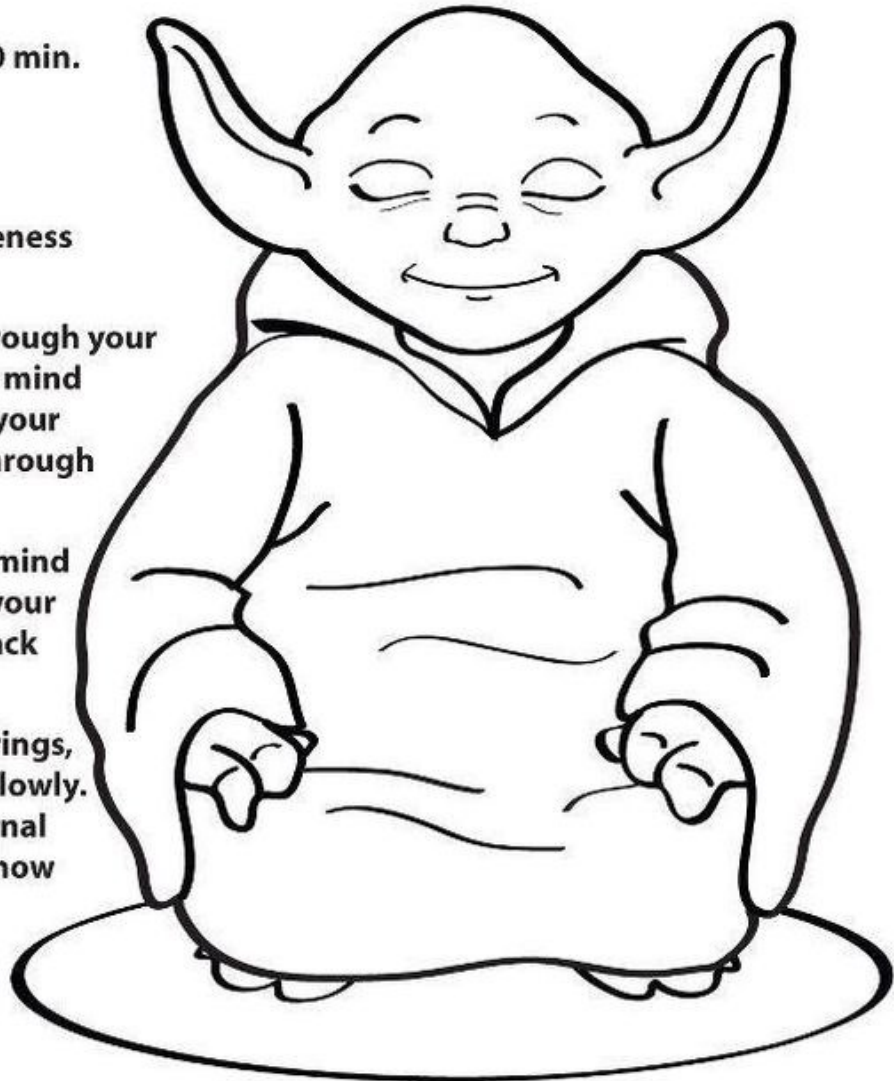
Close your eyes.

Bring your awareness
to your breath.

Slowly inhale through your
nose. Focus your mind
on the sound of your
breath. Exhale through
your nose.

Every time your mind
wanders, bring your
concentration back
to your breath.

When the timer rings,
open your eyes slowly.
Keep a daily journal
and write down how
meditation
makes you feel.



It might be challenging at first. But
don't give up! With steady practice,
you'll soon be able to meditate just
like Yoda!

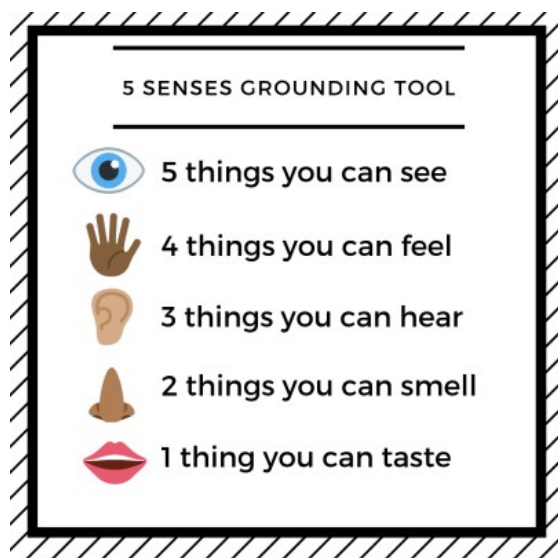
COLOR YODA!





Grounding techniques

A grounding technique is anything that helps us re focus in the present moment. Using the senses is a great way to do this and helps reduce stress and anxiety. It is also a good way to calm and focus the mind when someone is feeling hyperactive and distracted.



One useful technique that can help when you're feeling highly stressed or anxious is to focus on your senses and list in your mind:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

The more often this technique is practiced the easier it will be to do. Try practicing it when calm to make it easier to do when you need to.

Ways to help others



Hold a door open for someone



Cook dinner for your family



Help someone who is struggling with their work in class



Pick up rubbish if it's on the floor



Make someone a cup of tea or coffee



Lend someone a pen/pencil etc in class



Carry a heavy bag for someone



Tidy up for someone



Do laundry



Offer to wash up and actually do it!



Give food to a foodbank



Buy a homeless person a warm drink



Donate money to charity



Volunteer at an animal shelter



Give someone a smile

Sources of support

Online support—the following organisations can provide advice and guidance for children and young people, many offer advice to parents/ carers as well.

Five ways to wellbeing specific support

Five ways to wellbeing information from Mind -

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

NHS Five ways to wellbeing - 5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Swindon borough council -

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20024/health_and_wellbeing/214/mental_wellbeing

General support

- **Young minds** - The UK's leading charity fighting for children and young people's mental health
<https://youngminds.org.uk/>
- **Kooth** - Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people
<https://www.kooth.com/>
- **Rise above** - Online mental health support for young people
<https://riseabove.org.uk/topic/my-mind/>
- **Samaritans** - <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- **The dock** - The dock is a new and different way for young people to find out about services that are here to help them in Swindon.
<https://thedockswindon.co.uk/>
- **NHS every mind matters** - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>
- **The Mix** - Essential support for people under 25
<https://www.themix.org.uk/>
- **The Children's society** - Support for young people and their mental health
<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/young-peoples-mental-health>
- **Friends of STEP Facebook page**—Here you can find useful resources covering a variety of topics (including ADHD)
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfStep>
- **Online safety information** - <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

Useful telephone numbers

TaMHS (Targeted Mental Health in Schools Service) - work with children and young people with emotional and mental health needs such as: anxiety, trauma, emotional distress, low mood and self harm. Tel—01793 463177

CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) - Help children, young people and their families across Swindon, Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset who are experiencing more severe, complex and persistent mental health difficulties. Tel—01865 903422

Useful online videos

The Five Ways to Wellbeing — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF7Ou43Vj6c>

Headspace meditation - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_yXe_6mYTA

A beginner's guide to meditation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-kMJBWk9E0>

The social and emotional benefits of physical activity and exercise —

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNIOsNI-o60>

Joe Wicks exercise videos - <https://www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1>