

# Mental Health Ambassadors Toolkit

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**VOLUNTEERING**  **MATTERS**

SUPPORTED BY  
**MAYOR OF LONDON**

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# Foreword

Welcome to the Mental Health Ambassadors Toolkit!

This toolkit has been funded by the Mayor of London to support young Londoners' mental health, which has been designed by Volunteering Matters and young people from across London who are championing positive mental health.

We'd like to thank all the schools and young people that have contributed to this toolkit: Northwold Community Centre, Abingdon House School, St Catherine's Catholic School For Girls, Garratt Park School & Mulberry School for Girls.

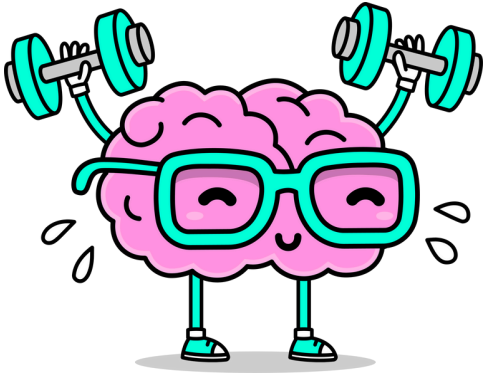
In this toolkit you will find mental health tips, activities, and links to further resources that aim to help support young people's wellbeing. You'll be part of a growing movement to champion mental health and create new mental health initiatives, so that more young people get the support they need.

We hope you will find it useful and helpful!

The Mental Health Ambassadors team  
at Volunteering Matters.



# What is Mental Health?



“Mental health” describes how you feel and how you are able to cope with everyday stresses and challenges of life.

It affects ability to learn, work well and relationships with family & friends.

It refers to the health of your mind, but there is a direct link between mental health, physical health and general wellbeing!

## Is mental health “real” and how is it affected?

What happens in your mind can be as powerful and as impactful as what happens in the “real world” environment around us.



Think about a time you have imagined or smelt a delicious meal when you are hungry. The physical feeling is very real, the stomach growls are very real and our minds created that including the physical hunger pangs!! Crazy right?



# How you feel is important!

Emotions and feelings come in waves, and sometimes it's difficult to control them, but we can control how we respond.

## We Can Feel...



When you feel happy and excited ...



Share it  
with  
others

Write it  
down



Celebrate  
it

When you feel sad, worried, angry ...

Talk to a  
trusted  
adult



Go for a  
walk

Take a  
deep  
breath



Write  
down my  
thoughts

# Feelings Check in





Right now, I'm feeling...



I feel this way because ...

Something that might help is ...  
e.g. Speak to a teacher

If you need urgent  
support contact:

-  Call 999
-  Text shout to 85258
-  Childline on 0800 1111
-  Samaritans on 116 123

# Daily Reminders for Mental Well-being

## Exercise



An hour of exercise everyday is recommended for good mental health.

## Food



Eating fruits and vegetables, and drinking lots of water helps physically and mentally.

## Sleep



Avoid electronics and caffeine before bed and keep a regular sleep schedule to get enough quality sleep & rest.

## Technology



Limit the time you spend on phones and social media.

## Nature



Spend time in nature, it helps reduce stress.

## Friends & Family



Spend time with friends/family. It's important to stay connected to your loved ones.

# What Mental Health means to young people in London



From the young people at Northworld Community Centre



**From the young people at  
Northworld Community Centre &  
St Catherine's Catholic School for Girls**



From the young people at  
**St Catherine's Catholic School for Girls**



# Having Compassion



**What is compassion?**



**Being sensitive to your own feelings and/or the feelings of others with the effort to try and help relieve it.**

**How can we connect and support each other's mental health?**

**[Connections - a short film by messages of hope](#)**



# Being supportive of one another's mental health

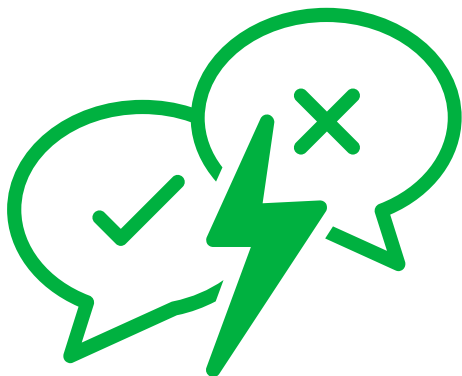


When communicating with others, it helps to keep in mind not only what you are experiencing (thoughts, feelings, behaviours), but also what they might be experiencing. This might be similar, different, or completely opposite to your experience (and anywhere in between!).

Just because you believe they're thinking something about you, that doesn't necessarily make it true – our minds are continually trying to make sense of our world, but our minds do not always get it right.



Our thoughts and emotions can get in the way of effective communication, and we can end up making things worse and messing things up





Having an awareness of our own reactions, and understanding and recognising how the other person might be reacting (their thoughts, feelings and responses), can give us important knowledge and help us to respond in a more helpful and effective way.

It is so easy to get things wrong, misunderstand what the other person is saying, we react to what we think they mean, they react to what they think we mean....and so it goes on.

We can learn to be more effective in communicating what we really want to say, without upsetting the other person, and reduce misunderstandings on both sides.



**What would your message of hope be for someone else?**



1

Start a conversation by asking how they are.

“Hi, how are you doing?”



2

Find something in common.  
A class, a teacher, activity, music etc.

“I think we are in the same music class”.



3

Compliment them

“I really like your trainers”.



4

Listen

Show that you’re listening by not interrupting them, nodding, making eye contact and respecting their point of view.



6

How to support them  
Helping shouldn’t just be one conversation; try to speak to them more; invite them to join an activity with other peers, ask to chat again tomorrow



5

Make them feel comfortable

Acknowledge their feelings and let them know they’re not alone. “That sounds really tough”, or “ I’m here for you”.

# Conversation Tips

To check in with your peers



1

Plan what you want to say

You can write some notes in advance to help you explain how you are feeling.



2

Find a private space to talk

Find a private and safe space away from distractions. Try taking a walk together.



3

Explain as clearly as you can

Be clear about what you are feeling, take deep breaths and pause when needed.



4

Discuss next steps

This could be looking online, or contacting organisations for further support and advice. For example, Young Minds.



5

Continue the conversation

Continue talking about how you feel. Maintain an open and honest communication line.



6

Options to consider if they are not supportive

Talk to another trusted adult. This can be a teacher, youth worker, social worker, family member or friend.

# Conversation Tips

To chat to parents / carers



# Techniques & Tips



This section includes some tips for soothing your mind when you, or a friend, are feeling overwhelmed.

There are many reasons children and teens may feel overwhelmed. A lack of sleep; exam pressures; problems with friends at school; peer pressure; which can make you feel overwhelmed, anxious, tense and fidgety.

Like adults, it's normal for young people to worry from time to time. But during these anxious moments, you can ease your mind by doing some calming exercises.

These calming exercises take only a few minutes to complete.

Try to empty your mind of all thoughts and follow the steps at your own pace.





# Seated Soothing Rhythmic Breathing



1

Place your feet flat on the floor and find a comfortable position

2

Close or lower your eyes

3

Allow yourself to have a gentle facial expression

4

Focus on your breathing

5

Breathe the air in deeply until your chest is full

6

Find a breathing rhythm that feels soothing and calming

7

Allow the in-breath and out-breath to be smooth and even

8

Use your attention to explore your breathing, in your chest, nose and stomach

9

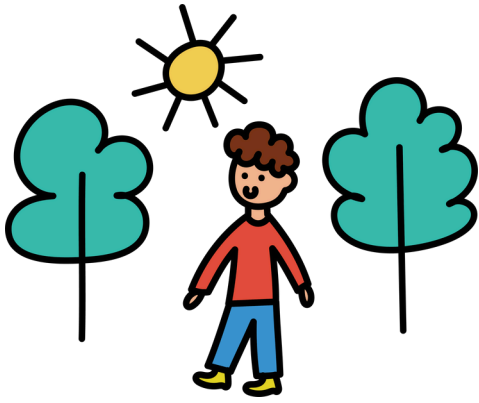
Feel your body grounded, resting on the seat or feet on the floor

!

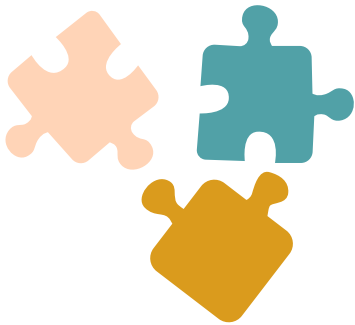
If you find your mind wandering, gently bring your attention back to your breathing



# Other Soothing Activities



- Find a smell you find calming (smells can help ease negative emotions very quickly)
- Physical activities can be very calming. Try and go for a walk, if you can do so safely
- Have a warm bath or shower
- Speak to a friend



- Do a calming activity, such as a puzzle, jigsaw, word search, painting, artwork or colouring
- Look at pictures or photographs that connect you to places, people or happy memories

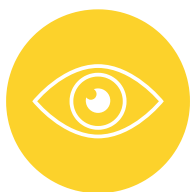


- Have a box or file containing ideas and materials for calming activities you can go to when you need them

# 54321 Grounding Exercise

The 54321 grounding technique uses the five senses: sight, touch, sound, smell, and taste.

You can practice it whenever you feel stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed.



**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**

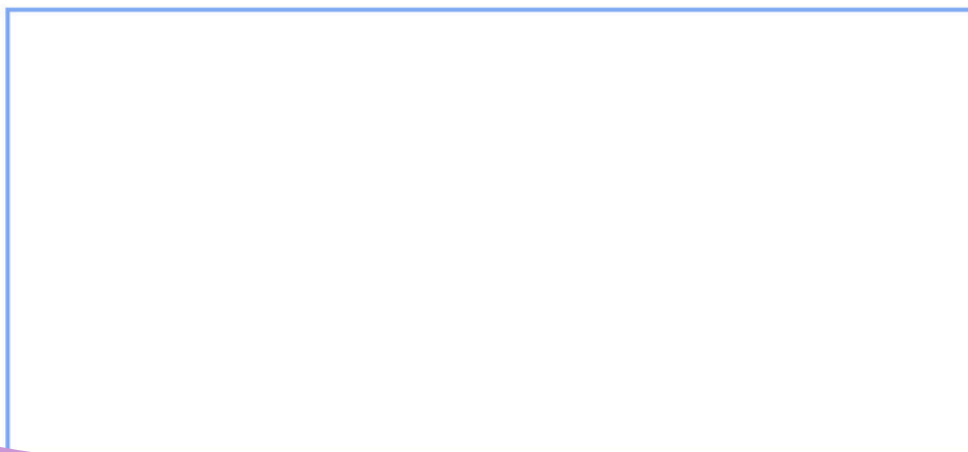
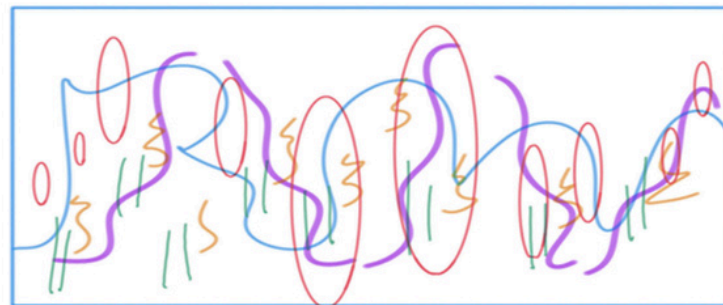
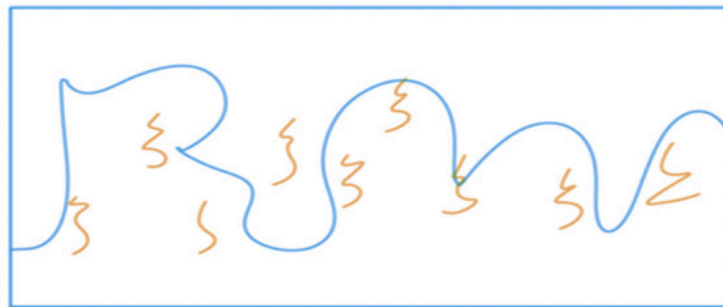
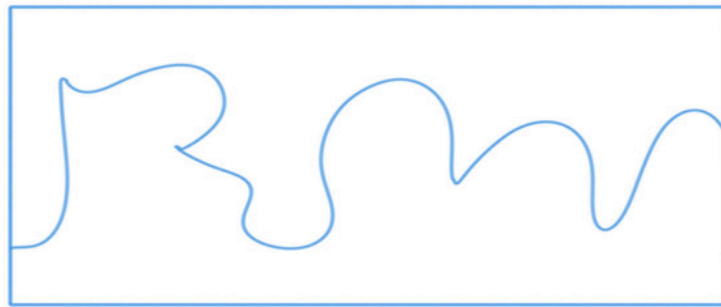


# Mindfulness Activity

Start this activity by listening to sounds around you, what can you hear? If these sounds were a shape, what would they be?

Start listening to the sounds in your environment and pick a shape or colour for each sound.

Below are some examples of visual sound timeline drawings to help you. Draw your own in the empty timeline space below.

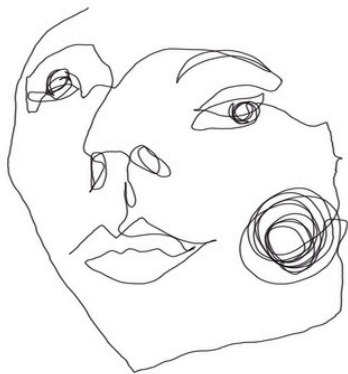


# Mindfulness Activity



You will need: Pencil and a mirror/photo of yourself. Take a few moments to observe your face in the mirror, or look at the photo of yourself.

Then, in the space below, without taking your pen off the page and without looking at your drawing, attempt to draw yourself!



How did your drawing come out? Write your thoughts here:

---

Try again on a blank page until you have a drawing you are happy with. Remember, there are no wrong drawings here! After you have finished, take a moment to think about what you are grateful for today and write down 3 things next to your portrait.

# Wellbeing Activity

Everyone has worries, it can help to write them out. Write your anxious thoughts and worries in the jar so that you can get them off your mind.





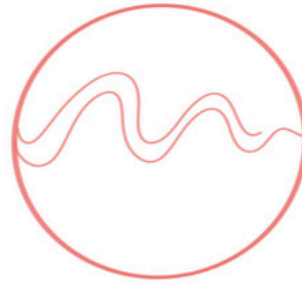
# Mindfulness Activity

Drawing can be a relaxing activity, follow the instructions below each circle to complete the patterns and have fun creating your own patterns!

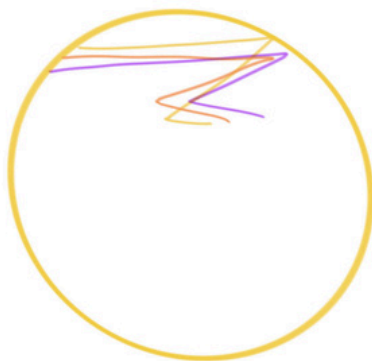
You will need: Coloured pencils



*Look at the pebble shapes, create your own with shades of blue*



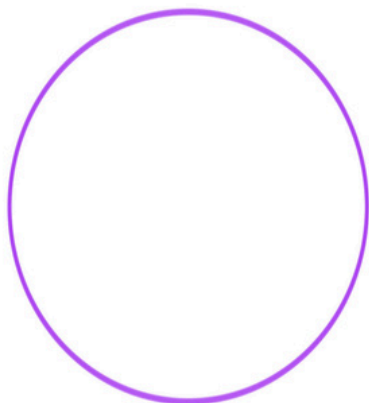
*Follow the wavy lines and add your own*



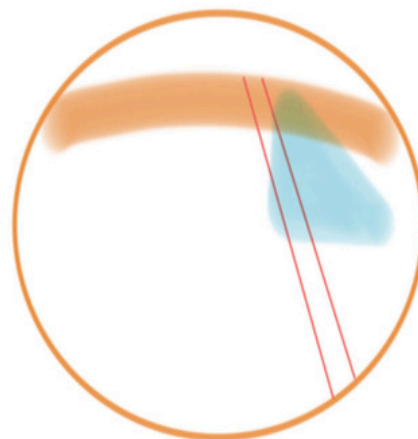
*Try holding 3 or more coloured pencils in your hand and finish the zig zag pattern*



*Finish this scribble, try scribbling without lifting your pencil from the page*



*Now create your own pattern by using any of the previous methods or create something completely new!*



*Fill this pattern by adding lines and shapes*



# THE BENEFITS OF

# journaling

**Journaling is a great tool to express yourself, in a safe way, and explore the world around you. Writing in a journal can help to process thoughts and feelings.**



Achieving goals



Reducing stress and relaxing you



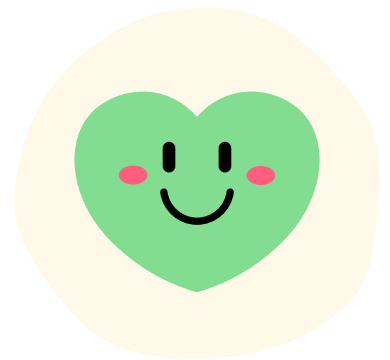
Boosts well-being



Increases creativity



Helps clear your mind



Releases emotions

### **Monday**

What are 5 of your unique superpowers?

### **Tuesday**

What are 10 things you are passionate about?

# **5 Days Of Journal Prompts**

### **Friday**

What are 3 things that bring you joy everyday?

### **Wednesday**

What are 10 words that describe your personality?

### **Thursday**

What is something that you did today that made you proud?

# Safe Space Imagery

We can learn to stimulate our 'soothing system' by using 'imagery / imagination' to create a safe place in our mind.

The place we create can be somewhere real or somewhere purely imaginary, or a combination of both. It is a place that brings a sense of contentment and which is safe from the things that threaten us.

**Take a look at the safe space imagery below!  
I feel calmer already.**



Imagery has been shown to be more emotionally powerful than verbal expressions.

Let's test that!

**Verbal:**

Vanilla and  
Chocolate cupcakes

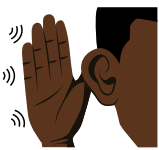
**Imaginal:**



# Here's how to practice safe space imagery!



Sight - colours, textures, the play of light



Sound - birdsong, laughter, a fire burning, music



Smell - the saltiness of the sea



Touch - the heat of sunshine or a soft fabric



Taste - the warmth of a hot drink

**What does your mental imagery of your safe space include?**

# Hear from Mental Health Ambassadors sharing tips to support Mental Health

Scan the QR code to hear young people Championing Positive Mental Health



## Good Thinking - Five ways to well-being

1

Connect



2

Move



3

Learn



4

Give



5

Focus



SCAN ME





# Feelings Check in





Right now, I'm feeling...



I feel this way because ...

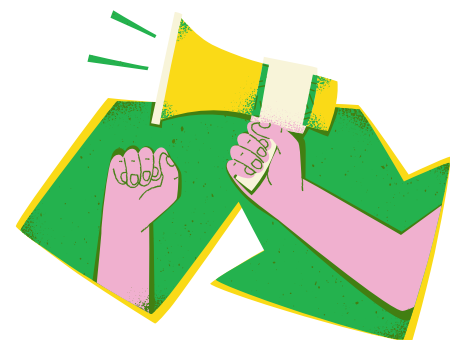
Something that might help is ...  
e.g. Speak to a teacher

If you need urgent  
support contact:

-  Call 999
-  Text shout to 85258
-  Childline on 0800 1111
-  Samaritans on 116 123



# A journey towards Mental Health Youth Social Action



# What is Youth Social Action?

Youth social action is young people taking action to bring change to others and the environment, on issues that are important to them. This can be in the form of campaigning, volunteering, or fundraising to make a difference in the community.



In this section you will be inspired by Young Londoners to create and lead change in your school and / or community.

## Be Inspired

Hear from Young Ambassador,  
Oscar, on the importance of  
youth social action



Scan me

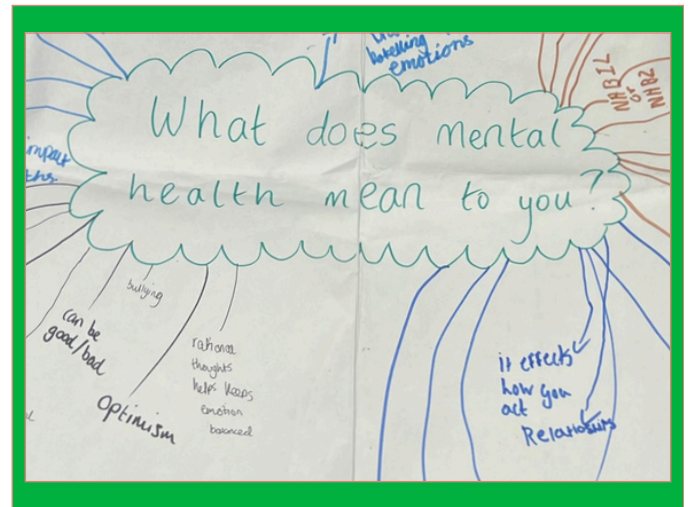
# How to get involved

Here are some steps on how to create your own mental health initiatives at your school / youth club

01

## Who do you want to help and why?

Think about what issue you are trying to solve. It is important to do some research and find out more about the issues in your community.



02

## What are you doing for your project?

- Podcasting
- Social media campaign
- Plan a petition
- Renovate an outdoor space
- Plan mental health events



03

## How will it make a difference?

Think about how it will improve and make a positive difference to people's lives and communities.



04

## Who is going to be involved?

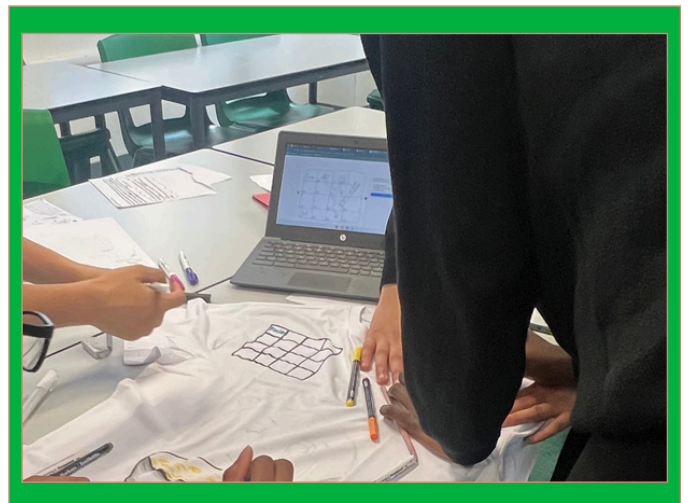
Identify who is going to support your project. This can be other young people, teachers, community leaders, family members.



05

## Review your project

It is important to know what worked well or what didn't, so you can make it better for next time.





# Examples of Mental Health Projects

## Podcasts

Young people have been recording podcasts to discuss their feelings and opinions on various issues.



Scan me

## Videos

Create your own video to raise awareness about youth mental health.



Scan me

## Make care packages



## Run a Mental Health Event



## Create a well-being area



# Support



There are different types of support available:

- Information
- Practical Support (including helplines, services and counsellors)
- Apps with mindfulness resources
- Support for specific groups (based on ethnicity, faith, sexuality and ability)
- School teacher, college counsellor, GP, Social Worker, Youth Worker



# Mental well-being support in a crisis



## Shout

Shout is a free , confidential, 24/7 text messaging service

- Text 85258



## Samaritans

- Online chat <https://webchat.samaritans.org/>
- Call 116 123



## Childline

- Helpline: 0800 1111, available 24/7 (+BSL Support)
- Provide practical coping tips, 1-2-1 online counselling, “Report Remove” for removal of inappropriate online images



## In a emergency call 999

- Always call 999 if you need help straightaway



## Get advise from 111

- Get advise from 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option  
<https://111.nhs.uk/triage/check-your-mental-health-symptoms>



# Mental well-being support



## Mind/ Local Minds

- Mind: General information and support available on website, Infoline: 0300 123 3393 (Mon - Fri, 1am - 6pm)
- Local Minds: localised mental health services, therapy and crisis helplines - check the Mind website to find your nearest Local Minds



## Good Thinking

- Good Thinking is an online service that helps Londoners look after their mental health and wellbeing in a way that works for them.
- [www.good-thinking.uk/youngpeople](http://www.good-thinking.uk/youngpeople)



## NHS Every Mind Matters

- Access to free mind plans to help with stress, anxiety and sleep
- Providing information and mental wellbeing tips
- Signposting to organisations that can provide support



## Young Minds

- Information and support available for young people, parents and teachers via their website
- Parental support helpline - 0808 802 5544 and online chat service (Mon - Fri, 9:30am - 4pm)



# Specialised Support

Anxiety UK

## Anxiety UK

- Helpline: 03444 775 774, Text Support: 07537 416 905 (Mon-Fri, 10:30-16:30)
- Deliver a range of services including therapy, courses, support groups information via their website, webinars and podcasts



## Beat Eating Disorders

- Provide information and signposting on mental health and eating disorders
- Useful for learning about mental health and different coping strategies
- Information available via their website



## Muslim Youth Helpline

- Helpline: 0808 808 2008 (4pm - 10pm)
- Email: [help@myh.org.uk](mailto:help@myh.org.uk)
- Text on WhatsApp 0808 808 2008



## Kidscape Help With Bullying

- [www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-young-people/](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-young-people/)



## Bayo - Support for the Black Community

- [www.bayo.uk/](http://www.bayo.uk/)



## Mind Out - LGBTQ Mental Health Service

- [www.mindout.org.uk/new-logo-with-border/](http://www.mindout.org.uk/new-logo-with-border/)



# Apps



Feeling Good

## Feeling Good

The Feeling Good Teens App uses short audio tracks to help let go of worry, improve sleep, develop self-esteem, resilience and goal focused motivation – access is free using the username: coboost and password: coboost during this period

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## Combined Minds

An app developed to help families and friends support young people with their mental health

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## Mindshift

A free app designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety

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CLEAR FEAR

## Clear Fear

Clear Fear is a free app developed to reduce anxiety using effective Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques.

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## Move Mood

Move Mood is a free app to help young people manage the behaviours associated with low mood or depression.

# Podcasts

Youth Voice



Benefits of healthy sleep pattern



Discrimination



Exam stress



Proud to be....



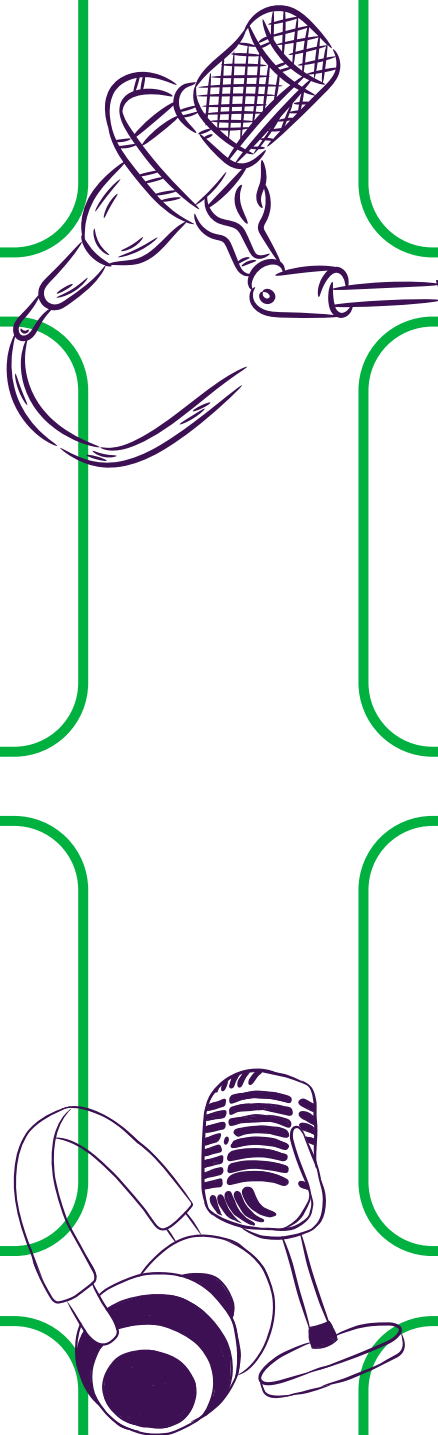
Anxiety



The e-wellbeing youth podcast



School



# Feelings Check in

Right now, I'm feeling...



I feel this way because ...

Something that might help is ...  
e.g. Speak to a teacher

If you need urgent  
support contact:

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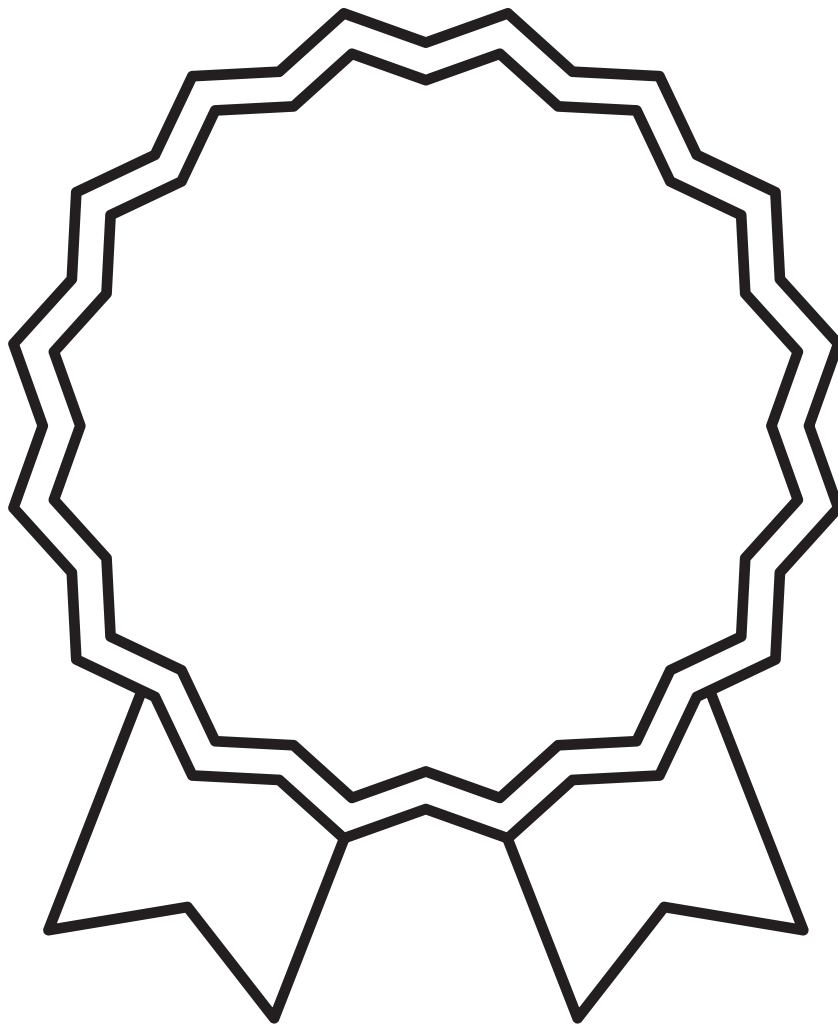
# Feedback

Tell us how much you have learnt through this toolkit by completing this form



# Well done on completing this toolkit

You have earned yourself the  
Mental Health  
Ambassadors Badge



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Find out more about London Young Ambassadors, and how  
to get involved here

