

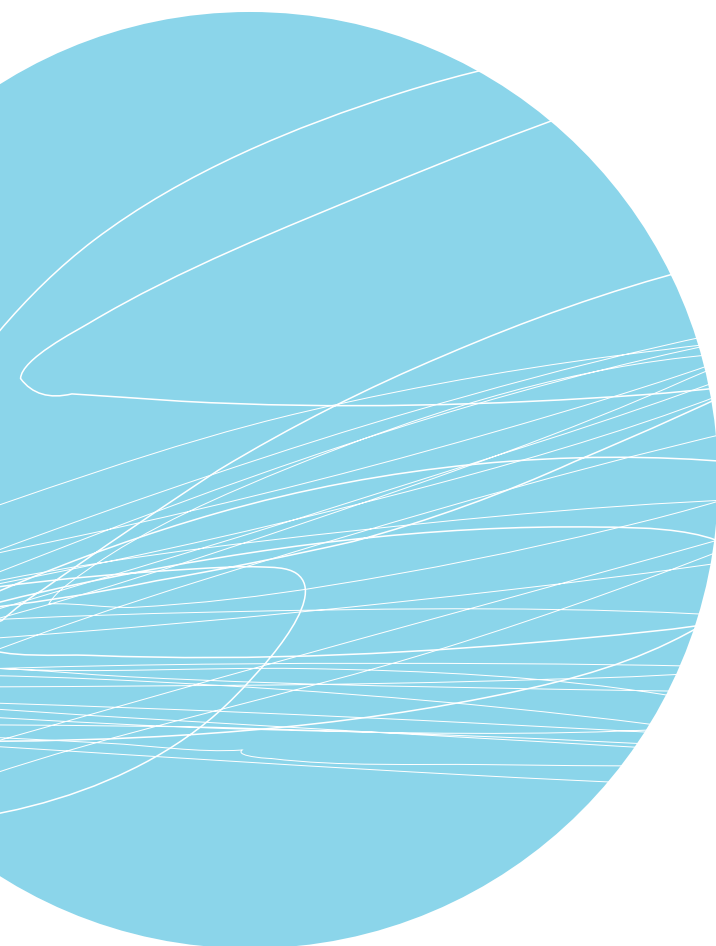
SOUND

Mind



## Support guide

For young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing



*Sound Mind* is a publication of the *Design for Living Partnership*, which comprises the Youth Council for Northern Ireland, Action Mental Health and the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland. The partnership was established to develop support for action on young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing. The project consists of two elements - a young person's resource and this support guide.

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# SOUND mind

As a result of research carried out by the *Design for Living Partnership*, the *Sound Mind* young person's resource has been developed specifically for 13-18 year olds. The resource is in the form of a small, credit card sized booklet, which highlights a number of tips for mental wellbeing.

The *Sound Mind* support guide reflects the subjects covered in the resource for young people and should be used alongside it. Once the booklets have been distributed to young people, this guide can be used to initiate discussion on the various aspects of mental health and wellbeing. If you would like further copies of the resources, please contact any member of the *Design for Living Partnership* - contact details are at the back of this guide.

## Who can use this resource?

The *Sound Mind* support guide is intended for use by a wide range of practitioners who come into contact with young people in the specified age range, eg teachers, health professionals and youth workers. It may also be a useful resource for peer education programmes.

## What's in the resource?

The guide covers aspects of mental health and wellbeing that have been identified as particularly relevant to young people in research carried out by the partnership. The key issues highlighted are:

- communication;
- friendships;
- family;
- bullying;
- body change;
- identity during the teenage years;
- self-esteem.

Given the vastness of this subject area, we have concentrated on tips, advice and contacts and have drawn together some useful ways to get young people talking. The important point is to raise the issue of how best to protect our mental health and wellbeing.

## How do I use the resources?

The resource for young people is meant simply to inform young people of opportunities for further support. This accompanying guide will enable you to look in more depth at the specific issues raised, and it recommends activities that may be appropriate for work with young people on an individual or group basis.

Throughout both *Sound Mind* resources, it is emphasised that in all circumstances that affect mental health and wellbeing **it's good to talk!** Adults sometimes think they know the best person for a young person to talk to, but young people may think differently. A young person may actually find it easier to talk to the guy who does odd jobs around the youth club than to talk to you. So ensure the people with whom you work, whether it be in a school or youth work setting, are equipped and able to talk to young people, or, if not, can refer them to someone who is able to provide them with the support they need.

## Finally...

...as stated in the *Sound Mind* resource for young people - remember that **you are not on your own**. Working with young people in the area of mental health and wellbeing can be difficult, often sensitive work. There are organisations and individuals that can support you in your work, by providing advice or further resources. Contact details are given at the back of this guide.

The *Design for Living Partnership* would like to offer special thanks to Hedley Abernethy for initial consultation and preparation of material for the *Sound Mind* resources.

*Design for Living Partnership*



# Mental health and wellbeing - what is it?

As part of our overall health, mental and emotional health or 'wellbeing' is a necessary condition to enable us to manage our lives successfully. It is the emotional and spiritual resilience that allows us to enjoy life and to survive pain, suffering and disappointment. It is a positive sense of wellbeing and an underlying belief in our own and others' dignity and worth.

**There are a number of things that support or influence our wellbeing. These include:**

- a stable and secure environment that ensures our needs are met. These needs include not only our basic physical needs such as food and warmth but also higher needs such as affectionate relationships, self-esteem, dignity and respect;
- the emotional skills to manage change, make and maintain relationships, cope with stress, survive difficulties in our lives, and both acknowledge and communicate how we feel;
- our self-esteem, coping and life skills, which help us to interpret events, have control in our lives and deal with stressful circumstances effectively.

**Mental and emotional wellbeing can be said to have a number of 'components':**

- a sense of **being**, the way we are and feel in ourselves;
- a sense of **belonging**, the way we relate to others, to our social and community contexts, to the physical environment and to our culture;
- a sense of **becoming**, where we are going in life and what we are doing with our lives.<sup>1</sup>



# Young people and mental health

Adolescents can be depressed for a variety of reasons. Problems only arise when the **depression** starts to affect everyday living and change behaviour. It is important that people close to the young person provide good support and try to get them to discuss their problems. Common symptoms are tiredness, loss of appetite, withdrawal from others and general lack of interest in anything. It is important to recognise the symptoms early and to address the problem.

Because of the many changes going on in a young person's life it can be difficult to distinguish between 'typical' adolescent behaviour and when someone actually needs help. If you think a young person you know has a problem, try to discuss it with them first. Early intervention is important to prevent problems from developing, but remember, there are good support and information networks there to help you.

## Raising the subject of mental health

The *Sound Mind* young person's resource begins by saying 'Looking after your mind is as important as looking after your body.' This exercise will enable you to get young people thinking about mental health and wellbeing.

# exercise one

## What do I think when I hear 'mental health'?

It may be appropriate to gather some opinions from the participants on how they would define mental health and to dispel some of the myths that surround the issue.

One method of doing this is the 'values continuum.' Participants are asked to imagine that one end of a room represents 'YES' while the other end represents 'NO.' (Sticking pieces of paper marked 'Yes' and 'No' at either end of the room will obviously make this easier.)

**The facilitator then reads one of a number of statements. For instance:**

- If I had to choose I would rather be mentally healthy than physically fit.
- If you are mentally healthy, you stand up for what you believe in even if it makes you unpopular.
- If you are mentally healthy, you can think clearly and solve your own problems.
- Parents and/or the home have such a strong influence on your mental health that there is not much anyone else can do to change things.
- Talking about your problems is a sign of weakness.
- Friends have no influence on your mental health.

Participants are asked to stand at the point on the continuum which best represents their response and then discuss their response with the person next to them or with the whole group.

At this stage, it is not necessary to give specific 'YES' or 'NO' responses to these statements. The object of the exercise is to initiate discussion about the nature of mental health, although opportunity may be given to shatter the myth that a mental health problem actually means being mentally ill.

### Follow up

At the end of this exercise, it may be useful to ask the young people to summarise how they would now think about mental health and wellbeing and how their perceptions have changed. You could also ask them to draw up a definition of mental health and wellbeing and to suggest ways they can achieve it.



# Who's talking? Who's listening?

If there is one area that is essential for good mental health, this is it! Talking and listening are the key ingredients to ensuring young people don't feel isolated when they have personal struggles. This doesn't apply only to young people - it's just as important for adults to appreciate the value in talking and listening.

It is important that young people are given an opportunity to talk about issues that affect their mental health and wellbeing. The difficulty in this is that the listener may feel obliged to 'fix' what they perceive to be a problem when in fact many people, including young people, have the capacity to reflect on an issue and come to a resolution of their own accord. Therefore, it is good practice to carry out exercises that deal with not only talking and sharing but also listening effectively.

# exercise two

## Listening in pairs



'Listening in pairs' is an effective exercise in talking and listening. Each participant is paired with another; one of the partners is labelled 'A', the other 'B'. They are told that they are going to take it in turns to talk to their partner about something that they like doing that makes them happy or about something that really annoys them. 'A' listens first and they are given the instructions below. These are not disclosed to partner 'B'. After three or four minutes, all the pairs return to the main group and the 'B's are allowed to discuss how it felt to be listened to.

The roles are then reversed with the 'B's then given an opportunity to listen to the 'A's, using the instructions for person 'B' below. Again, after three or four minutes the pairs are brought together and the 'A's asked how it felt to be listened to. In theory, their response should be different from that of the 'B's. (If you can, give the 'A's another opportunity to be listened to properly.)



## Person A

Please listen as well as you can. While the other person is talking, pay them your full attention. This will probably involve looking at them, leaning towards them and not fidgeting or looking around. Show that you are listening in whatever way is natural to you, perhaps by making 'interested noises' like 'uh-uh' or 'go on' or 'really', but make no lengthy interruptions.

## Person B

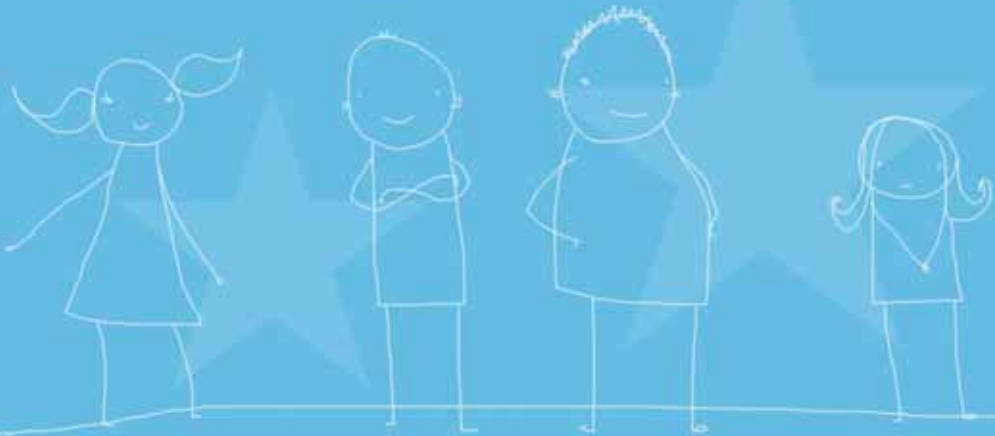
You are not going to listen very well at all! While the other person is talking, do some or all of the following: look around the room, try to overhear what other pairs are saying, hum softly, tie your shoelace, look in your bag. When the other person has talked for two minutes, interrupt them, tell them that what they are describing reminds you of the thing you really enjoy doing/get annoyed about and tell them about it again.

## Follow up

Brainstorm the following questions:

- How did it feel to talk 'out loud' about something that makes us happy or annoys us?
- How comfortable are we about talking about how we feel?
- Why is it important to talk about our feelings?
- How do we feel when we are listened to?
- How do we feel when we are not being listened to?
- What do we do to show that we are listening to someone attentively?
- What sort of behaviours make us feel that the other person is not really listening to us?

Reiterate the importance of talking if we have a problem and listening when someone is sharing with us.



# Friends

- they'll be there for you

This section deals with friendships and acknowledges that friendship circles are an intricate part of a young person's life. Yet, this can be a difficult area for young people.

The basis for this is that a true friend is someone who admires and respects you for who you are, who is pleased to see you happy and someone you can trust completely. A friend who competes with you, who pressurises you to do something you don't want to do or who enjoys it when things are not going right for you isn't a friend.<sup>2</sup>

# exercise three

## Friendship circles



One way to illustrate this is the use of friendship circles. This exercise can be used with groups or individuals.

The participants are asked to write down a selection of people with whom they have some form of relationship. This could be someone as close as a good friend through to someone they had a brief conversation with last year.

Participants are then asked to draw five concentric circles labelled as shown:



**Next, ask them to allocate each of the people they have listed to a circle and then consider the following questions:**

- Who is in your centre circle and why? How long have they been there?
- What do you expect of them as a friend?
- What can they expect of you as a friend?
- What is needed to maintain a friendship?
- Are there people who used to be closer to the centre circle but have moved outwards?
- Were you surprised at the positioning of some of the people and the circles in which you placed them?

This exercise will encourage discussion of the importance of friendships and the qualities and values we attach to those relationships.

### Follow up

The *Sound Mind* young person's resource lists some of the qualities of a friend. Have the participants think about the qualities of their friends and if they match those listed. Also, get them to think about their roles as a friend.

# Peer pressure?



It's a common debate - are young people pressurised by their peers or are they simply making informed decisions after being influenced by their peers? Many young people will experiment with drugs or other substances, smoking, drinking and sexual activity. In many cases, this will be the result of influence from peers and these activities tend to occur as a result of seeking a form of social recognition. Substance misuse particularly tends to be more symptomatic of other social factors. Take time to be with young people whom you think may be misusing drugs or alcohol, in case there is a more deep-rooted reason for the misuse.

Social recognition is important for young people, and going against the flow can be traumatic. Yet, going with the flow can also be equally difficult. Throughout our work, we should encourage young people to be able to express clearly their needs and desires and discuss ways in which we can help them improve their confidence.

# exercise four

## Refusal skills

Ask the participants to recall or imagine an occasion when they have been asked by a friend to do something they felt was wrong. Split the group into threes to role play this scenario, one taking the part of the 'trouble maker' one the person trying to stay out of trouble and the third an observer. The observer will comment on how each of the participants reacted, for example by looking at their body language and commenting on their responses.



### **Suggest the following actions for the person trying to stay out of trouble.**

1. Ask questions - "What are we going to do there?" "Why would we do that?" Ask questions until you know it's okay. If it's not okay..
2. Name the trouble - If there is a legal term for the intended actions, use it. For example, "That's stealing".
3. Identify the consequences - "If I did that..."
4. Suggest an alternative - "Instead, why don't we..."
5. Move away, inviting the other person to come along - remember that the person who moves has the power.

### **Follow up**

Ask the young people:

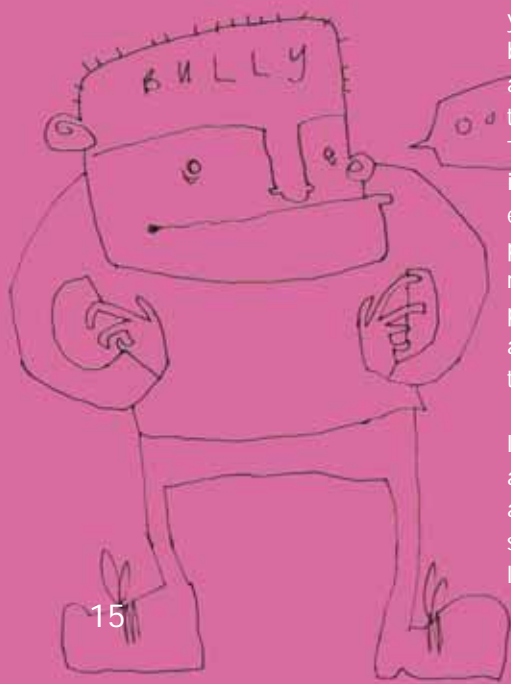
- How did you feel when you walked away from something you did not want to be involved in? How difficult is it to do this?
- What were some of the best ways to resist?
- What kinds of things were said?

# Bully off!

Bullying can be a major cause of poor mental health in young people. It can affect all aspects of a young person's life, including school and home. The first question we must ask ourselves is - how do we treat the young people with whom we come into contact? Do we treat them with the respect they deserve? It would be contradictory to seek to help a young person who is being bullied when we may also be guilty of it.

When working with young people who are subjected to bullying, we must be clear - keeping the bullying secret does not solve the problem. On many occasions, although a young person may disclose that they are being bullied, they may not wish us to take any action. The young person should be reassured that talking about it is a very positive step. Talking with young people about mental health issues should be seen as an opportunity to empower them to tackle the issue and suggest possible solutions rather than us taking on responsibility for the issue. Ask the young person what they see as the next step. Is there anything they would prefer you not to do? Is there any support you as an adult can provide?

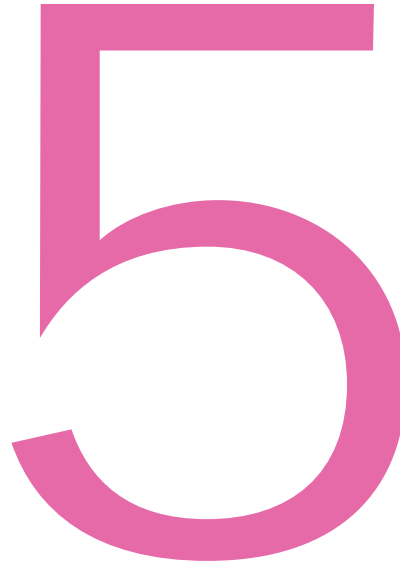
It may also be the case that the young person is actually the perpetrator of bullying. This is also a mental health issue and similar attitudes should be adopted, ie non-judgemental listening to the needs of the young person.



# exercise five

## What is a bully?

Divide the participants into small groups and have each group draw a picture of a bully. On the left side of the picture, write words that describe the bully, their personality traits and behaviours. On the right hand side of the picture, write words that describe how victims feel when they come face to face with a bully.



## Follow up


Discuss:

### Why do bullies bully?

- to display power/control over someone;
- to seek attention;
- to express anger;
- to feel like a 'big shot' in front of their friends;
- to act out learned violent behaviour (from TV, parents, siblings, other friends, etc).

### How can we face bullies?

- find other ways to give them attention;
- offer to be their friend;
- ask them how they are feeling, if they need someone to talk to.



'You can choose your  
friends,  
but you can't choose your  
family'

For many people, the most challenging relationships are those they have with their family. Yet a few simple techniques can be used to ensure that home life is harmonious. It is a commonly held perception that young people may feel they know everything about the world and that parents do not understand them or the world in which they live. Another perception is that parents continue to treat young people like children. In fact, many disputes arise simply because parents and children actually care for each other.

# exercise six

## What do you think of your family?



Brainstorm the following questions (you could use post-it notes stuck onto a sheet of flip chart paper to record the answers):

- What is a family?
- What makes a family different from any other group?
- What are the important issues in a family?
- How should a family deal with these issues?

### Follow up

- Recap on the answers.
- Does the group have a collective feeling on what family is?
- Come up with a definition of a family.



# The big change!

The teenage years, especially the early teenage years, are traumatic for young people. Not only do they have to change their school, their bodies also undergo some pretty dramatic changes.

At the other end of the spectrum, consideration should also be given to the needs of young people making decisions about further/higher education and employment. This can also be a traumatic time, with many young people feeling that the decisions they make at 14, 16 or 18 years of age are decisions that will affect the rest of their lives.

Throughout adolescence, many young people have to adapt to new environments: changing school/college, meeting new people, adjusting to new study or work patterns and dealing with new social groups. A young person has to develop social skills that many adults find difficult to acquire. You may want to consider the support you provide for young people who are going through big changes and possibly even set up a group that gives them an opportunity to share their experiences of adjusting to transition periods in their lives.

As we have already said, young people also have to cope with bodily changes around this time. Body image is important to young people, with (seemingly!) no one being happy with the way they look. This is linked to self-esteem, and young people should be encouraged to develop and maintain self-affirmation techniques to ensure they do not become depressed or obsessed with the way they look.



# exercise seven

## The media and body image

Invite participants to discuss body image and use men's and women's magazines to have a frank and open discussion about the 'ideal' body image presented in the media and why this ideal is perpetuated. Ask each person to select one picture that appeals to them and share why they chose that particular picture.

### Follow up

- What do participants feel about the images portrayed in magazines?
- Do they feel a need to be like the people represented in these magazines?
- If so, why?
- And if not, why not?

To close the discussion, emphasise that everyone is an individual and has a unique image. This does not have to fit in to a media image - the message is 'do not be afraid to be yourself'.

# 'Who am I?'

– young people and identity

Young people go through a transition in their teenage years and one of the biggest issues they will face affecting their mental health and wellbeing is personal and social identity. Young people will ask many questions of themselves at this time. Questions like 'who am I?' will cover many areas, not least their religious identity, political affiliations, sexuality, hopes for the future and educational/employment aspirations. Discussing these very important questions with an adult will enable the young person to more clearly articulate how they feel about their personal identity.

As already stated, social identity is also vital in the formative years of a young person (if the number of designer labels and hair products that suddenly appear are anything to go by!). One of the growing pressures on young people is the influence of media advertising on their desire to 'keep up appearances' which can lead to overspending and debt.

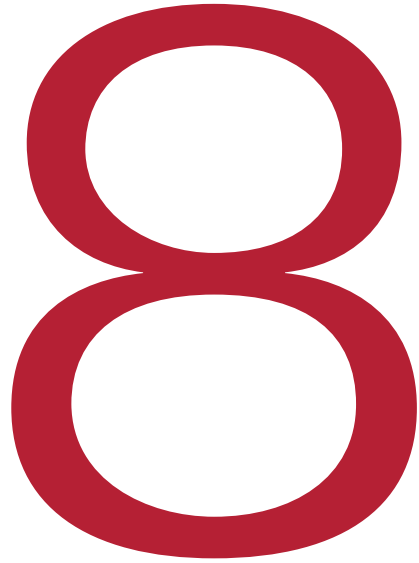
As adults, it may be easy to be a little cynical about this aspect of a young person's mental health. Yet, the importance of the influence of peers should not be underestimated. This is a self-esteem issue and a sense of belonging is important.

# exercise eight

## Identity

In pairs, ask the participants to discuss:


- What does 'fitting in' mean?
- What pressures are on young people to conform to images as perpetuated by the media, friends and family?
- What particular pressures do appearances, exams and qualifications and the world of work have on young people today?
- What would reduce these pressures?



## Follow up

Your role will be to:

- help facilitate the sense of confidence a young person needs in order to feel socially accepted;
- encourage the young people with whom you come into contact to feel able to express themselves as they see fit;
- help them to believe in themselves;
- teach them not to expect too much from themselves or other people;
- remind them they are not on their own.



# The sun don't always shine -tackling the blues

It is a sad fact that many young people feel unable to cope with their personal situation. The high number of young people that attempt or commit suicide is a tragic reminder that, sometimes, young people feel their life is not worth living.

There are many factors that may contribute to a young person's predisposition toward depression and possible suicide. These include the socioeconomic situation (eg employment and training opportunities), family support, educational achievement, peer influences and breakdown in personal relationships.

One way in which you may be able to better equip young people for times of difficulty is by enhancing their interpersonal skills, especially in the areas of confidence building, assertiveness and problem solving.<sup>3</sup>

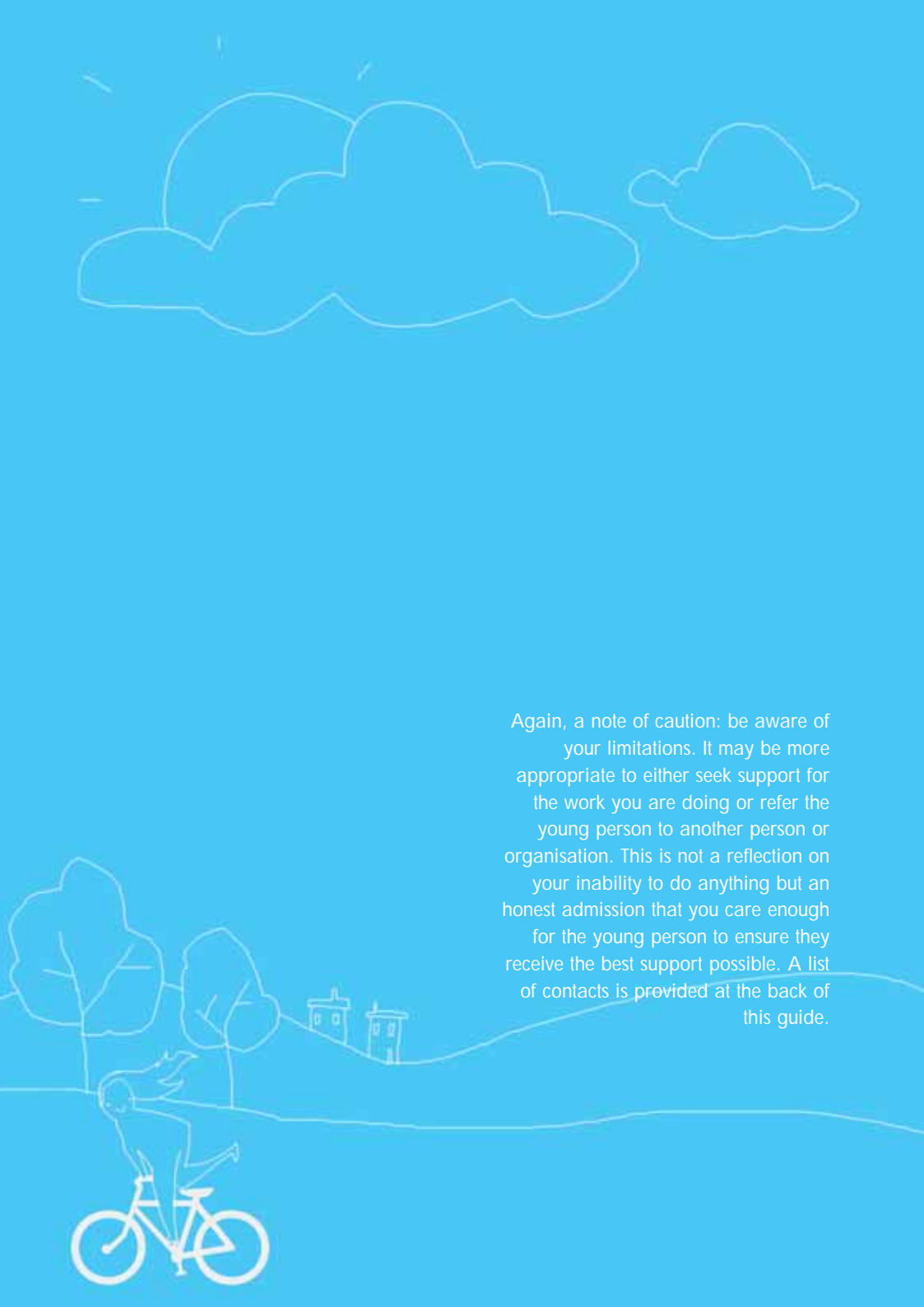
Special consideration may have to be given to specific issues such as self-esteem, sexuality and substance misuse. Because of the large number of suicides amongst young men, it may be appropriate to develop a self-help group specifically with young men.

## The following list of indicators may reveal if a young person is emotionally vulnerable:

- a recent loss or break up of a close relationship or a current or anticipated change in home circumstances;
- unemployment, loss of job or financial problems;
- physical illness that may be painful or disabling;
- dependency/misuse of alcohol or drugs;
- physical, emotional or sexual abuse;
- bullying - both at school and outside school;
- a previous suicide attempt, a suicide in the family or history of depression;
- absence of someone to confide in and/or living alone;
- anniversaries or reminders of losses;
- access to means, eg tablets, guns, etc;
- where suicide is a general community issue;
- history of psychiatric disorder, especially on discharge from hospital.

## The above indicators may be manifested in one or more of the following ways:

- the young person may appear withdrawn with very limited communication;
- they express feelings of isolation and consider there is no one there to help them;
- they feel they are a failure;
- they may have outbursts of anger and be irritable;
- they express a sense of hopelessness and may wish they were dead;
- they express definite ideas on how to commit suicide;
- they dwell on problems for which there appear to be no solutions;
- they view the future as uncertain.<sup>4</sup>



Again, a note of caution: be aware of your limitations. It may be more appropriate to either seek support for the work you are doing or refer the young person to another person or organisation. This is not a reflection on your inability to do anything but an honest admission that you care enough for the young person to ensure they receive the best support possible. A list of contacts is provided at the back of this guide.

# exercise nine

## Discover your natural highs

There are natural highs - ways of making yourself feel better when you are down - such as listening to music, playing sport, talking to friends or going for a walk. Invite the participants to think of ways they can feel better and encourage them to find out what works for them when they feel stressed or under pressure.



## Follow up

The *Sound Mind* young person's resource lists a number of ways to relax. These are:

- chill out;
- listen to music;
- be physically active;
- go to the cinema;
- soak in the bath;
- go dancing;
- write down or draw your thoughts and how you feel;
- talk to a friend.

Encourage participants to consider times when they feel under pressure and how best they can learn to cope with these pressures.

Emphasise that these are 'natural highs' and that resorting to other ways of coming to terms with the pressures of life, eg alcohol, drugs and solvent misuse, vandalism and crime, are not solutions to dealing with pressure.



# 'I like me'

- self-esteem

Many of the issues raised throughout this guide are inextricably linked to one aspect of mental health - self-esteem. Self-esteem is essentially what we believe about ourselves and is made up of thousands of beliefs, some positive, some negative.<sup>4</sup>

Beliefs we have about ourselves are learned and not inherited, and to a great extent depend on how we have been treated in the past by other people and the experiences we have had. A young person has a number of 'significant others', people who tell them whether they are valued or not valued, good or bad, loved or not loved, liked or disliked, successful or a failure. It is through this social interaction that the young person builds up this complex image, which is called the 'self-concept.'

# exercise ten

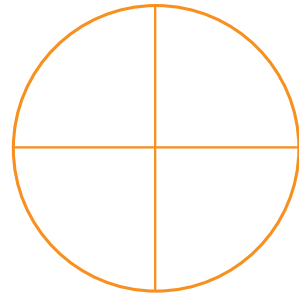
## Personal circle

The personal circle exercise enables young people to share a little about themselves. Each participant is given a sheet of paper with an outline of a circle divided in four.

# 10

**In each area of the circle, ask participants to draw:**

- \* something you enjoy doing for leisure;
- \* something you really like about yourself;
- \* something you would like to achieve;
- \* something that makes you happy.



Participants can feedback in pairs or to the whole group what they have included in the circle. (By the way, this is not an art exam!) From this exercise you can ascertain an individual's self-concept.

Another technique is to supply the participants with a collection of magazines and a blank sheet of paper. Ask them to cut out pictures, images and words illustrating their choices for the four categories listed above and stick them to the piece of paper. Then invite them to share their collage, either in pairs, small groups or with the big group. This exercise is a useful technique to draw out of young people how they feel about themselves.

## Follow up

Sometimes it is easier to say what we dislike about ourselves and more difficult to say what we like. Young people may feel this way, especially if they feel awkward, are adjusting to new body shapes or are lacking self-confidence.

Be cautious though - these two exercises are sometimes seen as an opportunity to simply comfort a young person. There may actually be more merit in ascertaining why a young person might feel negatively about themselves.

# Contacts

If you have any concerns about issues raised by young people during the exercises in this guide, seek out professional advice or information to ensure the issues are not left unresolved.

## Action Mental Health

Action Mental Health (AMH) works to improve the health and wellbeing of people with mental health needs or learning disabilities, by creating opportunities for progression towards independence and employment. Since its inception in 1963, AMH has been successful in providing high quality services. AMH helps more than 1,700 people each year in 14 locations throughout Northern Ireland.

Central Office, Mourne House  
19 Knockbracken Healthcare Park  
Saintfield Road  
Belfast BT8 8BH  
Tel: 028 9040 3726  
Email: cchesney@amh.org.uk

## Agoraphobia and Anxiety Society

Offers help with phobias, agoraphobia and high anxiety states in men, women and young children.

25-31 Lisburn Road  
Belfast BT9 7AA  
Tel: 028 9023 5170  
Helpline: 0845 1228630 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)

## Cara Friend (Gay Information and Befriending)

Gay and lesbian information and support service.  
Tel: 028 9089 0202  
Men's Line: 028 9032 2023  
Lesbian Line: 028 9023 8668

## Cause

For carers and users in the area of mental health.  
Main Office  
Glendenning House  
6 Murray Street  
Belfast BT1 6DN  
Tel: 028 9023 8284  
Email: info@cause.org.uk  
Helpline: 0845 6030291

## Contact Youth Counselling Services

Provides therapeutic counselling to 11-25 year olds throughout Northern Ireland. We operate from a variety of sites such as schools, youth groups, community organisations and from our headquarters on the Ravenhill Road, Belfast. We also operate a telephone counselling helpline called Youthline 0808 808 8000 and a specialist substance abuse service for 8-18 year olds.

5th Floor  
Youth Action Building  
14 College Square North  
Belfast  
BT1 6AS  
Tel: 028 9032 0092  
Fax: 028 9032 6870  
Email: info@contactyouth.org

## Cruse - Bereavement Care

Provides support to people who have been bereaved by the death of someone close. Support is provided mainly through counselling and group work.

Piney Ridge  
Knockbracken Healthcare Park  
Saintfield Road  
Belfast BT8 8BH  
Tel: 028 9079 2419  
Email: northern.ireland@cruse.org.uk

## Eating Disorders Drop-In Centre

Family Support Group, offering confidential advice and support to those suffering from anorexia and bulimia, and their carers.

28 Bedford Street  
Belfast BT2 7FE  
Tel: 028 9023 5959  
Email: mailtoedani@fsmail.net

## Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland

A special agency of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, with a regional mandate to work to improve and promote health and wellbeing.

18 Ormeau Avenue  
Belfast BT2 8HS  
Tel: 028 9031 1611 (Voice/Minicom)  
Fax: 028 9031 1711  
Email: info@hpani.org.uk

## HIV Support Centre

### Incorporating AIDS Helpline (NI)

Provides support services and advocacy for people affected by HIV, including carers, families and partners, throughout Northern Ireland. Also provides information, training and a confidential free helpline service, offering advice and information on HIV and sexual health matters.

The Centre at The Warehouse

7 St James Street South

Belfast BT2 8DN

Tel: 028 9024 9268

Fax: 028 9032 9845

Helpline: 0800 137437

Email: [info@thehivsupportcentre.org.uk](mailto:info@thehivsupportcentre.org.uk)

### Lifeline

Provides 24 hour help and support to those experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Helpline: 0808 808 8000

### The NEXUS Institute

Responding to the needs of adults who have experienced sexual abuse, through counselling, education and research.

119 University Street

Belfast BT7 1HP

Tel: 028 9032 6803

Email: [info@nexusinstitute.org](mailto:info@nexusinstitute.org)

### Northern Ireland Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Provides confidential, independent, impartial and free advice to all communities across Northern Ireland.

Tel: 028 9023 1120

(Check the phone directory for your local branch)

Email: [info@citizensadvice.co.uk](mailto:info@citizensadvice.co.uk)

### Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health

Provides support for those living in the community with mental health needs. As well as direct service provision, work also includes research and policy, information and education.

80 University Street

Belfast BT7 1HE

Tel: 028 9032 8474

Email: [info@niamh.co.uk](mailto:info@niamh.co.uk)

## PRAXIS Care Group

Provides services for those with mental health needs, including a range of accommodation, support in the individual's own home and a volunteer befriending service.

25-31 Lisburn Road

Belfast BT9 7AA

Tel: 028 9024 8665

Email: [admin@praxiscare.org.uk](mailto:admin@praxiscare.org.uk)

### The Rainbow Project

Aims to address the mental, physical and emotional health of gay and bisexual men living in Northern Ireland.

2-8 Commercial Court

Belfast BT1 2NB

Tel: 028 9031 9030

Email: [manager@rainbow-project.org](mailto:manager@rainbow-project.org)

### Rethink

Offers support for sufferers of severe mental illness, their carers and families. Provides drop-in centres, supported accommodation, training and employment, domiciliary care schemes, respite care facilities, relatives and carers' support groups, information and advice and community advocacy services.

Regional Office

Wynhurst

Knockbracken Healthcare Park

Saintfield Road

Belfast BT8 8BH

Tel: 028 9040 2323

Email: [info.nireland@rethink.org](mailto:info.nireland@rethink.org)

### Samaritans

Confidential emotional support 24 hours a day to those in crisis and in danger of taking their own lives.

5 Wellesley Avenue

Belfast BT9 6DG

Tel: 028 9066 4422 or 08457 909090

(Check the phone directory for your local branch)

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

### Youth Council for Northern Ireland

A statutory body which advises on the development of the youth service and training of youth workers, carries out research, produces curriculum guidelines, promotes community relations work, supports international exchange programmes, and funds regional voluntary youth organisations.

Forestview

Purdy's Lane

Belfast BT8 7AR

Tel: 028 9064 3882

Fax: 028 9064 3874

Email: [info@ycni.org](mailto:info@ycni.org)

# Useful websites

## Alcohol

**[www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)**

UK national agency on alcohol misuse.

**[www.drugsalcohol.info](http://www.drugsalcohol.info)**

Local website providing information on all aspects of alcohol use.

**[www.knowyourlimits.info](http://www.knowyourlimits.info)**

Information and advice about alcohol related issues.

## Depression

**[www.aware-ni.org](http://www.aware-ni.org)**

Local support group for people suffering from depression.

## Drugs

**[www.drugsalcohol.info](http://www.drugsalcohol.info)**

Local website for professionals working in drugs and alcohol.

## Eating disorders

**[www.eatingdisordersni.com](http://www.eatingdisordersni.com)**

Eating disorder recovery online.

## General health

**[www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk](http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk)**

General information on health from the Health Promotion Agency.

## Mental Health

**[www.counselling.co.uk](http://www.counselling.co.uk)**

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

**[www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)**

Provides information and support to people who are depressed.

**[www.leeds.ac.uk/ahead4health/](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ahead4health/)**

Great site produced by Leeds University for students facing common emotional problems.

**[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)**

Provides information and advice on mental health issues in the UK.

**[www.mentalhealthireland.ie](http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie)**

Guide to mental health issues and organisations in Ireland.

**[www.mindingyourhead.info](http://www.mindingyourhead.info)**

Local website for those worried about poor mental health - their own or someone else's.

**[www.nexusinstitute.org](http://www.nexusinstitute.org)**

Responding to the needs of adults who have experienced sexual abuse.

**[www.psychnet-uk.com](http://www.psychnet-uk.com)**

UK Mental Health Directory - major online guide to mental health, psychiatry and counselling in the UK.

**[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)**

Charity dedicated to improving the lives of everyone affected by severe mental illness.

**[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)**

Offers confidential support to anyone in crisis.

**[www.student.counselling.co.uk](http://www.student.counselling.co.uk)**

Support for university students in the UK.

**[www.studentmentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.studentmentalhealth.org.uk)**

A great guide to disseminating good practice in supporting students with mental health difficulties.

## Relationships

**[www.relateni.org](http://www.relateni.org)**

Relationship counselling organisation.

## Sexual health

**[www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)**

**[www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)**

Advice and information on sexual health and contraception.

**[www.thehivsupportcentre.org.uk](http://www.thehivsupportcentre.org.uk)**

Information and advice on HIV/AIDS.

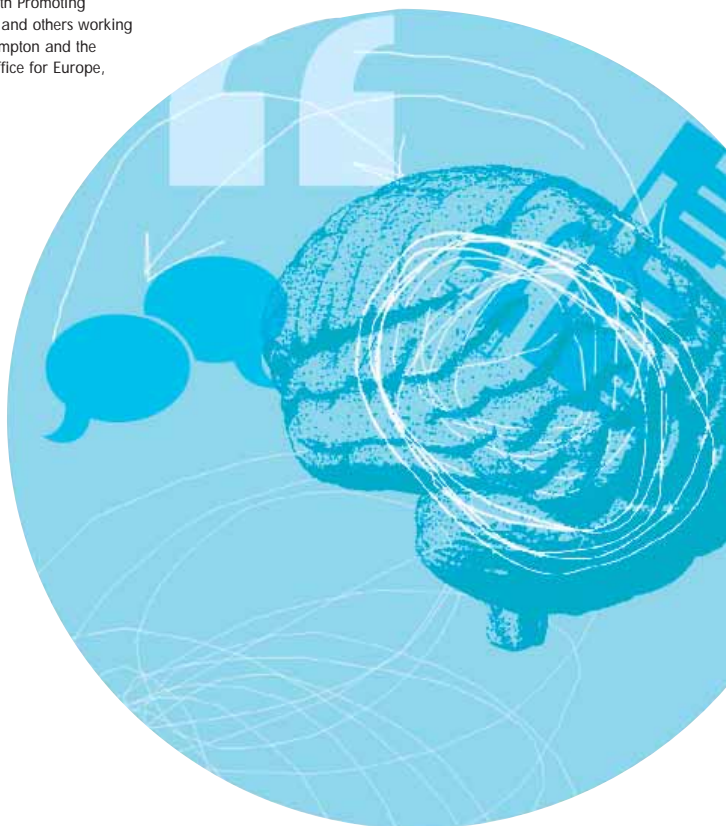
## Smoking

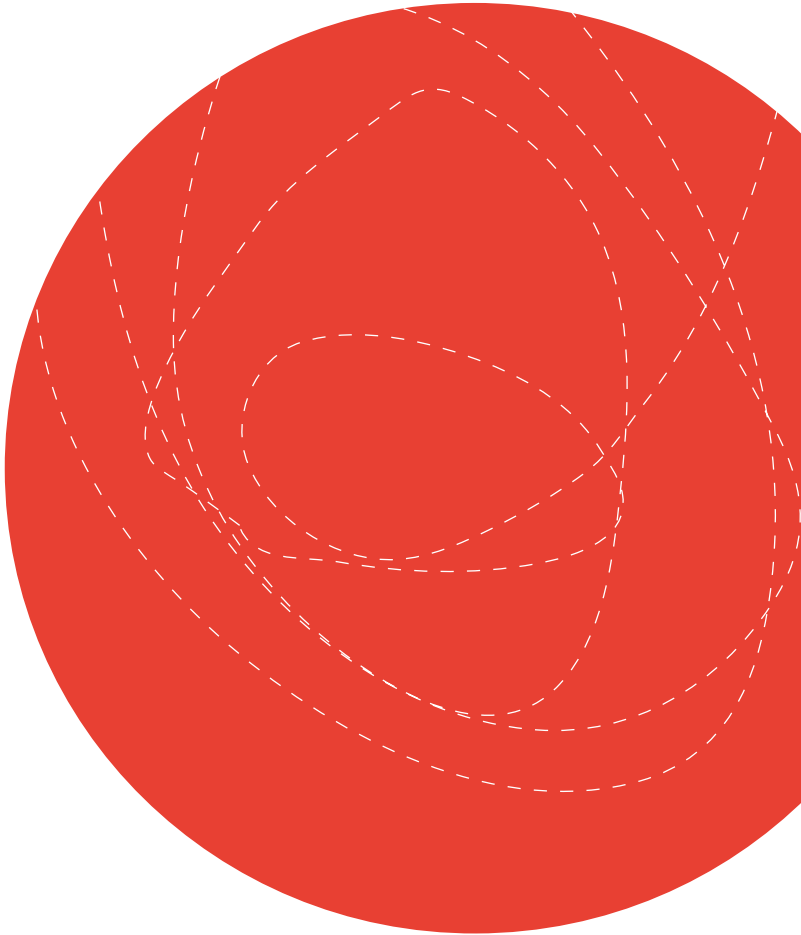
**[www.iqitononline.com](http://www.iqitononline.com)**

Site aimed at young people to help them give up smoking.

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