



EMMANUEL COLLEGE

Emmanuel Schools Foundation



LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

CHARACTER, EXCELLENCE, LEADERSHIP

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

You matter! At Emmanuel College, we talk a lot about every one of us being important – infinitely precious, morally responsible and gifted for a purpose – and we want you to feel a sense of your own uniqueness and preciousness. But we also know that at times everyone struggles: we all encounter challenges as we move through life and we can be affected – physically, mentally and emotionally. We want to support you whatever you are going through and this booklet aims to give you some things to think about and some things to do when you're experiencing a period of struggle. In fact, many of the things that are helpful to those who are dealing with a particular issue are helpful to us all – they are useful for living well. So even if you've got this booklet in your hands and you feel no particular pressure at the moment, you will no doubt find things in it that will help you live a more healthy life. So let me encourage you to read it, to talk about it with people you trust and to put into practice some of the things it suggests.

CONTENTS

In the booklet you'll find a few sections:

First, there are some pages that look at **some specific issues** that people sometimes need help with: anxiety, self-harm, depression and eating disorders. In the back pages you will find links to agencies which can support with a variety of other concerns. Each page sets out the key facts and then offers some advice about what you might do if you are struggling with that issue. Make sure you don't overlook the importance of seeking professional help: talking to your GP is essential at times. Of course, making sure you tell someone about your concern is also important.

Next, there are a couple of pages that give some tips about **building resilience and developing a positive mindset**. These are pages that everyone will benefit from even if you are "mentally healthy".

This resource is just an introduction to some important issues. If you would like to know more, there are some links in the back pages to some **specialist organisations**. Some are organisations that help young people with a range of different issues and some are experts in one specific field. If you are finding it difficult to talk, some of these agencies provide texting services, forums to research and so on.

The final pages offer a reminder of where you can go for more information on our website. At www.emmanuelcollege.org.uk/support there are articles and resources as well as links to all the organisations listed in this booklet.

SUPPORT WITHIN COLLEGE

Of course, all of us can help each other in our community – we can listen and encourage; we can refuse to accept it when someone seeks to harm or hurt; we can be kind always. Your tutor is there to listen and support you when you are finding things difficult or when you become aware of the struggles of a friend. Sometimes, a friend may have shared with you some very private worries or concerns that you are struggling to support them with and your tutor will be able to offer their assistance with this. You are not betraying a friend if you are passing on information so that they can get the help they need. If your tutor thinks that you need further support, they will refer you to the welfare department who are experienced in dealing with a variety of concerns.

ANXIETY



KEY FACTS:

Anxiety is the most common mental health condition people experience and is characterised by a range of anxious thoughts and behaviours. Anxious thinking is almost always fear-based and anxious behaviour is often carried out to make the person feel less fearful. This behaviour is not generally positive. So, for example, someone who is anxious about flying may not get on a plane.



WHAT CAN I TRY TO DO?

- **Face it!** - If you are putting off either thinking something or doing something because it makes you feel anxious, try and support yourself to face it – bit by bit.
- **Do less** - If your anxiety makes you think too much (e.g. going over something again and again in your mind) or do too much (e.g. frequent hand washing) try and reduce the behaviour – one step at a time.
- **Accept it** - The thoughts and behaviours you experience are symptoms of anxiety. See if you can calm your breathing and just let go of your fears by accepting them for what they are.
- **Relax** - Have regular breaks, learn to relax, be mindful. Art, exercise, writing, acting, yoga, massage and listening to music help.
- **Monitor** - Keep a diary to work out triggers and patterns.
- **Seek help** - Visit your GP by phoning your local practice and booking an appointment. Go ready to discuss your concerns and the problems you are experiencing. You can always take your diary with you in order to help this process. If you have a lot to discuss, book a double appointment.

SELF-HARM



KEY FACTS:

Self-harm can:

- Be used to communicate feelings such as distress, confusion or anger
- Occur with a mental illness such as depression
- Become habitual in an unhealthy way



WHAT CAN I TRY TO DO?

- Discuss your self-harm with a trusted adult and set up a meeting with a professional who can help.
- Visit your GP by phoning your local practice and booking an appointment. Go ready to discuss your concerns and the problems you are experiencing. Write things down if you think you will find it hard to speak. If you have a lot to discuss, book a double appointment.
- Try and keep a diary of triggers to your self-harm and begin to understand the patterns.
- Decide on an alternative way you could try and cope when faced with these triggers (for example, listen to a chosen playlist of music).
- Reduce easy access to what you use to self-harm.
- Have the name of a 'go to' person in the first instance and also the names of a few people you could contact as a 'safety net'. Carry this list of contact numbers with you.
- Keep cuts and wounds sterile. If in any doubt about safety, please tell someone, see Student Welfare or your GP, or go to your nearest A&E department.
- Shock can sometimes be experienced after self-harm. If your breathing is shallow, or faster, if you feel dizzy, weak or cold, ask someone to look after you.

DEPRESSION



KEY FACTS:

Clinical Depression may feature:

- Consistent low mood
- Loss of interest
- Negative self-beliefs
- Changes in appetite and sleep
- Lower energy levels
- Withdrawing from friends and things you love doing



WHAT CAN I TRY TO DO?

- Eat a balanced diet and eat regularly.
- Get into healthy sleep patterns. This means sleeping at night for around 8 hours and avoiding catching up on lost sleep during the day.
- Follow an exercise schedule – half an hour a day makes a difference.
- Draw up an activity schedule of regular things to do every day.
- Increase your social contact by planning to connect with at least one person a day.
- Keep a mood diary – note down your negative thoughts to see if you might be able to check out if they are valid.
- Talk to someone you trust such as a friend, family member or school staff member. Emotions don't work well when buried.
- See a mental health professional by going through your GP as there are lots of very effective treatments.
- Check recommended apps to help depression on NHS Choices.

EATING DISORDER



KEY FACTS:

Eating disorders are characterised by an abnormal attitude to food and body weight/shape, leading a person to alter their eating patterns and behaviours, causing damage to their physical and mental health. There are three main types of eating disorders:

- Anorexia nervosa – a person who perceives their body abnormally and as a result tries to keep their weight as low as possible
- Bulimia nervosa – a person who goes through periods of binge eating followed by trying to get rid of what they have eaten
- Binge eating disorder – a person who compulsively eats large quantities of food

All eating disorders harm physical and mental health and are very dangerous mental illness conditions. Early and effective treatment is essential.



WHAT CAN I TRY TO DO?

- Take on board other people's concerns and accept that there is a problem.
- Encourage yourself to eat regularly however hard it may be. Take small and consistent steps to get better.
- Make a decision to reduce harmful behaviours associated with binge-eating, one step at a time.
- Talk to a trusted adult.
- Visit your GP by phoning your local practice and booking an appointment (check if you can book it with their mental health lead). Go ready to discuss your concerns and the problems you are experiencing. Make sure you mention any physical symptoms you have noticed. Write down things that are hard to say. If you have a lot to discuss, book a double appointment.
- Ask your GP to check your health – for example, your blood pressure or your blood iron levels.
- Keep a diary to note triggers, negative thoughts and eating patterns.
- Get help as early as possible. You can ask your GP what treatment is available and what it entails.
- Read any self-help material that your GP gives you or check recommendations on NHS Choices.
- Be open-minded and be prepared to change.

WANT TO BUILD RESILIENCE?

RESILIENCE

THE POSITIVE WAY IN WHICH WE ADAPT TO THE ADVERSE CHALLENGES WE FACE IN LIFE

- Resilience is more than just 'bouncing back' when you are knocked down. It is the ability to adapt to hardship and the process of building up tools to deal with the challenges you face in life.
- Sometimes you may also need to build a resilience to distractions and temptations. It is important to be able to say no to things that will damage your mental health. For example, practising digital resilience and monitoring your screen time can be helpful in managing excess or damaging behaviour.
- Resilience building is not just down to the individual. You can use your ties to families, relationships, schools and communities to help grow your resilience.
- Some of the challenges you face might be quite specific. For example, many young people find school and the many elements they have to face – friendships, learning, exams, homework – stressful. Being resilient will help you to handle these.



TOP TIPS

- Try to have a positive, 'give things a go' attitude and be prepared to change your direction of thinking if needed.
- Try and view setbacks as an opportunity to grow, and failure as an opportunity to learn.
- Work on your ability to understand, regulate and express your emotions.
- Focus on developing your 'Grit,' which is described as 'perseverance and passion for long term goals'.

ASKING FOR HELP

1. The first step is to accept that it's okay to need help.
2. Before you speak to someone try and figure out what you need help with. It might be easier to write it down.
3. Remember, you don't have to know the reasons why you are feeling the way you are. You just need to be able to put into words or write down what you want help with.
4. Now find someone you can talk to. Please keep in mind that although friends, family and teachers are often the first people teenagers approach, they are not trained professionals, and whilst most of the time they respond brilliantly because they know you, very occasionally they may not respond in the right way. When this happens, don't give up, keep talking until you have the answers that will help you.

TELLING A PARENT

Most people are afraid to talk to their parents about a mental health problem. Here are some top tips.

1. You may not want to upset them or imagine they might be angry, disappointed, sad or dismissive. Most teenagers feel their parents just won't understand.
2. Try to plan what you are going to say to them first.
3. You don't have to give them details if you don't want to. Start by telling them the symptoms you feel and how they have been impacting on you.

OUR TOP TIPS TO ACHIEVE A POSITIVE MIND-SET

1 Transform negative self-talk into positive self-talk

You may find yourself self-talking negatively. You might think "I'm so bad at this" or "I shouldn't have done that" but these thoughts can turn into internalised feelings and may cement your conceptions of yourself. During these times, try replacing those negative statements with positive ones. For example, "I'm so bad at this" could become "Once I get more practice" or "I shouldn't have done that" to "That didn't work out as planned – maybe next time".

2 Treat yourself with compassion

When we feel compassion for others, we feel kindness toward them, empathy and a desire to help reduce their suffering. It's the same when you are compassionate toward yourself. Self-compassion creates a caring space – free of judgement – within you.

3 Make positive connections

When you surround yourself with positive people, you will hear positive outlooks, positive stories and positive affirmations. Negativity and positivity have been shown to be contagious. Being around positive people can boost your self-esteem and increase your chances of reaching goals.

4 Start each day with a positive affirmation

Positive affirmations are positive, specific statements that help you overcome self-sabotaging and negative thoughts. The more you speak about yourself positively, the more you will start to believe it. Examples of this, "I am brave because..."; "I am worthy because ..."; "I am joyful because..."; "I am healthy because..." or "I am friendly because..."

5 Practise gratitude

Practising gratitude has been shown to reduce stress, improve self-esteem and build resilience. Try writing in a Gratitude Journal. You could write three things you are grateful for each day, for example, a person, an object, a food, an animal, a subject etc. Try doing this at night so you can reflect on your day positively: it can help you sleep better – and dream happier!

6 Focus on the good things

We are often faced with challenging situations or obstacles which are a part of life. When faced with one, try and focus on the good things no matter how small they seem. If you look for it, you can always find the proverbial silver lining in every cloud. For example, if your friend cancels plans, focus on how this frees you up to catch up on an activity you enjoy.

7 Limit your intake of new/social media if this is impacting on your mood

Limiting our use of social media can increase our time and productivity. Studies show that people who spend a significant amount of time on social media experience increased anxiety and decreased self-esteem. Focus on something you enjoy instead, like going for a walk or reading a book.

8 Do something you enjoy

Take time to do an activity you enjoy, for example, baking, cooking, crafting or drawing. Taking time for yourself gives your brain a chance to reboot, improves concentration, increases productivity and helps you discover your own voice.

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Anxiety UK

Provide support and help if you've been diagnosed with, or suspect you may have, an anxiety condition.

Text Service: **07537 416 905**

Infoline: **08444 775 774**

(Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5.30pm)

Website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

No Panic

Provide information for sufferers and carers of people with Panic, Anxiety, Phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD).

Helpline: **0844 967 4848**

(Every day, 10am-10pm)

Youthline: **0330 606 1174**

(For 13 to 20 year-olds, Mon-Fri, 3pm-6pm;

Thurs, 6pm-8pm; Sat, 6pm-8pm)

Website: www.nopanic.org.uk

OCD Action

Offer support and information to anybody affected by OCD.

Helpline: **0845 390 6232**

(Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm)

Website: www.ocdaction.org.uk

SANE

Offer specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers.

Helpline: **0300 304 7000**

(Every day, 4.30pm-10.30pm)

Website: www.sane.org.uk

The Mix

Information and support for under 25s.

Helpline: **0808 808 4994**

(Every day, 11am-11pm)

Website: www.themix.org.uk

YoungMinds

Information for both parents and young people on child and adolescent mental health.

Parents' helpline: **0808 802 5544**

(Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm)

Website: www.youngminds.org.uk

Beat

One of the UK's eating disorder charities.

Youthline: **0808 801 0711**

Helpline: **0808 801 0677**

(Every day, 3pm-10pm)

Website: www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

SEED

Eating disorder support service.

Helpline: **01482 718130**

(Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2.30pm)

Website: www.seeedeatingdisorders.org.uk

Eating Disorders Support

Provide support to anyone affected by eating disorders, including carers.

Helpline: **01494 793223**

(24 hours, 7 days a week)

Website: www.eatingdisorderssupport.co.uk

Calm Harm App

The Calm Harm app provides ways for children and young people to manage the urge to self harm. Developed for stem4 by Dr Nihara Krause, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist together with input from young people. Free to download.

Website: www.calmharm.co.uk

Childline

Counselling service for children and young people in the UK. Phone, talk to a counsellor online, send Childline an email or post on the message boards.

Helpline: **0800 1111**

(Everyday, 24 hours)

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Clear Fear App

The Clear Fear app provides ways for children and young people to manage anxiety.

Developed for stem4 by Dr Nihara Krause, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist together with input from young people. Free to download.

Website: www.clearfear.co.uk

Combined Minds App

Combined Minds is a free app developed for teenage mental health charity stem4 by Dr Nihara Krause, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, to help families and friends support young people with their mental health.

Website: www.combinedminds.co.uk

Frank

Confidential information for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drug misuse.

Helpline: **0300 123 6600**

Website: www.talktofrank.com



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