



Care Cards



For young people aged 12 - 15 years

A pocket-sized toolkit of information, tips, and calming activities to help you understand your feelings, manage difficult moments, and support your wellbeing.

Use them on your own or with a trusted adult.

Young People's
Mental Health
Research Centre



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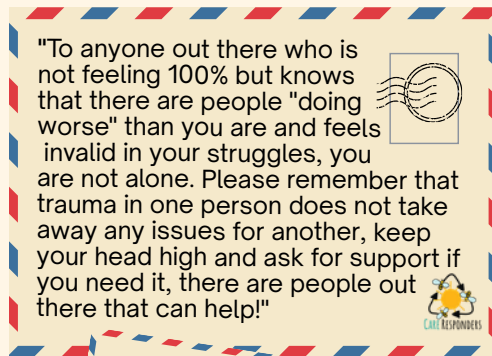
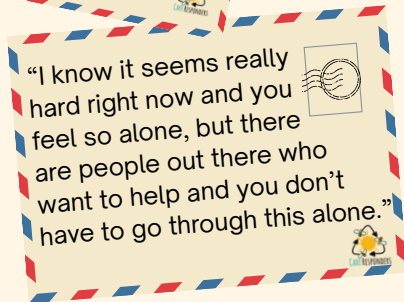
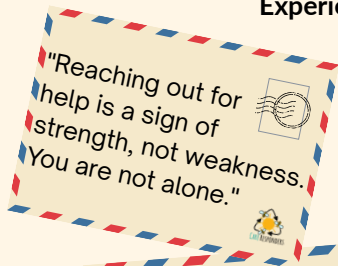


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Postcards From Young People

These quotes were kindly shared by members of the Care Responders Lived Experience Young People's Advisory Group.

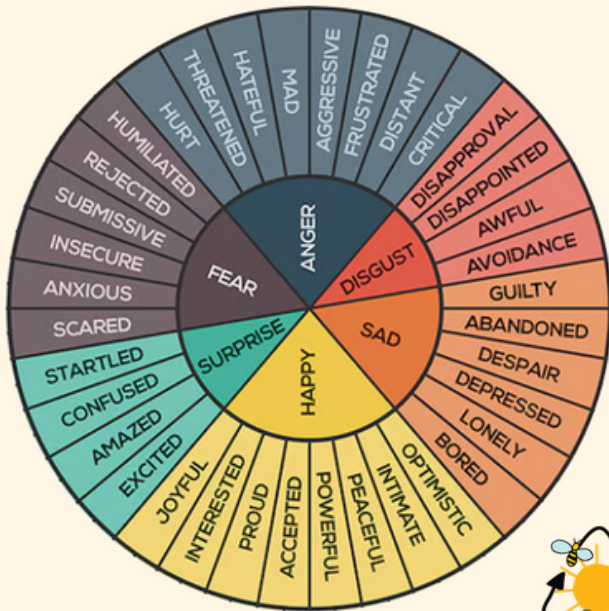


Feelings Wheel

Think of feelings and emotions like colours.

Basic feelings are in the centre, with more detailed emotions as different shades around them.

The wheel helps you link a simple feeling to a more specific emotion.



Making Sense of a Crisis

A mental health crisis doesn't just affect how you feel emotionally. It can affect your **thoughts**, your **body**, and your **behaviour**.

Thoughts   **Body**   **Behaviour** 

Racing thoughts
Overthinking
Finding it hard to
focus
Expecting the worst

Difficulty sleeping
Headaches
Feeling sick
Tiredness
A racing heart

Avoiding people
Staying in your room
Crying
Taking risks
Losing motivation



Panic Attacks

Sometimes you might feel really scared, even when you're safe.

This could be a **panic attack** which is your body's **fight-or-flight response** activating when it doesn't need to. It can feel intense, but it will pass.

You might feel your **heart racing**

You could feel **shaky or dizzy**

Your breathing might be **uncomfortable or faster**



Slow your breathing to help your body settle.

Try to tell a **trusted adult** how you're feeling.



Self-Harm

When feelings (like stress, anger, or sadness) get overwhelming, you might have urges to hurt yourself. It can feel like a way to cope, but there are **safer ways** to manage what's going on.

What you could do instead:

- Try holding ice or running cold water over your wrists
- Write these feelings down to get it out of your head
- Keep your hands busy (e.g. fidgets)
- Try something that distracts your focus
- If you can, talk to someone you trust
- You can text SHOUT to 85258 for support



Self-Harm – What to do Next

If you've hurt yourself, it's important to get support.



Self-harm is often a way of coping with overwhelming feelings, but you don't have to deal with it alone.

If you have hurt yourself:

Try to pause and slow your breathing to help your body settle.

If you can, tell someone you trust (parent, carer, teacher, or another adult).

Clean any wounds with clean water and apply a plaster or bandage.



If you're on your own:

Find someone nearby or reach out for help

If the injury is serious, call 111 or 999 for advice

After self-harm, it's normal to feel scared, confused, or low

You can text SHOUT to 85258 for support



CARE RESPONDERS

Distressing Sensory Experiences

Sometimes young people hear voices or sounds that other people can't hear, see things that other people can't, or feel like someone or something is nearby when others don't. This can feel scary or confusing, but lots of young people have experiences like this.

These experiences can be more likely if you are:

- Going through a stressful time
- Not getting enough sleep
- Coping with the loss of someone
- Being bullied
- Dealing with other upsetting life events.

Try saying:

"I am safe."

"I can get through this."

"This feeling will pass."





Distraction Techniques



Be the boss: You can tell the voices to be quiet or tell them you will talk to them later.

Block out difficult voices or sounds:

- Listen to music you enjoy.
- Use headphones or ear defenders.

- **Count** quietly to yourself and **focus on the numbers** until they are all you can hear.
- You can also **repeat a favourite word** at different volumes.

Tell a Safe Adult: You don't have to deal with this alone. Talk to a parent or teacher about how you're feeling.



Language Used in Mental Health

Referral?

Asking another team to support you

CAMHS?

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

Inpatient?

Staying in hospital to get extra support

Support network?

People around you who care about you and can help

Discharged?

A service feels you no longer need their support

Safety plan?

Things we can do to help you stay safe

Outpatient?

An appointment where you don't stay overnight





4-7-8 Breathing

4

Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds.

7

Hold your breath for 7 seconds.

8

Slowly **exhale** through your mouth for 8 seconds.



Repeat this process 3-4 times until you feel calmer.

**If holding your breath feels uncomfortable or makes you feel panicky, skip the hold and just focus on making your exhale longer than your inhale*





Square Breathing

1

Breathe in through your nose for 4 counts.

2

Hold your breath for 4 counts.

3

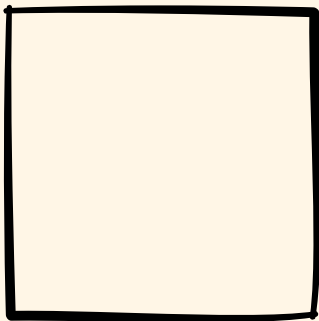
Breathe out through your mouth for 4 counts.

4

Imagine drawing a square with each step. You can even follow this square with your finger as you breathe.

2, 3, 4... Imagine

2, 3, 4... Inhale



2, 3, 4... Hold



2, 3, 4... Exhale



CARE RESPONDERS

Mindfulness

Focus on one thing at a time

Let's get through the next small step, not everything at once.

Imagine your thoughts are like:



Clouds in the sky



Messages popping up



Cars passing by

You can notice them without reacting to them

Reset through movement

Play a song and focus on the beat, the lyrics, or one instrument

Shake out your hands and body





Muscle Relaxation



Find a Comfy Spot:

Sit down or lie down somewhere you like.

1

Tighten and Relax:

Start with your toes. Squeeze them tight and then let them relax.

2

Repeat:

Do the same with your legs, stomach, hands, arms, and face.

3

Breathe:

When you squeeze, breathe in. When you relax, breathe out.

4



CARE RESPONDERS



Grounding Technique

5

things you can **see** (a chair, a tree, a phone)



4

things you can **touch** (your clothes, your hair)



3

things you can **hear** (traffic, typing, birds)



2

things you can **smell** (perfume, hand soap, fresh air)



1

thing you can **taste** in your mouth (water, gum)



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