

YOUNG MiNDS

fighting for young people's mental health



Starting a conversation about mental health.....

I like to use physical activity to help me deal with anxieties and worries. I think fresh air and exercise combined really helps me. I cycle a lot, for work, and this is really beneficial for me and my mental health. I also love going for walks with my family. The exercise of walking, being outside and enjoying nature and chatting away to my family all helps to keep me calm and really be in the moment.

When I was studying at school and then at University I really struggled with exam stress. I found revising really stressful and I put way too much pressure on myself. Talking really supported me. Once I spoke with others about my anxieties I discovered I wasn't alone and this was a huge realisation for me. It really helped me to share my worries and then discuss strategies and coping mechanisms that others had used. I no longer felt alone and different and I now had actual ideas to help me through difficult times. For example, I found having a routine really helped me and making sure that I ate well, exercised, socialised and slept well during times of revision and exams helped me to support my mental health and begin to deal with the anxieties and pressures.

**STAND
OUT & SHOW UP**

for young people



#HelloYellow



**WEAR
YELLOW**

ON 10 OCTOBER



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I'm a big fan of walking. The combination of physical activity and fresh air has such a positive impact on my mental health. It boosts my mood, elevates stress and even helps me sleep better! One of my favourite things to do is discover new routes and enjoy the beautiful green spaces South Leicestershire has to offer.

I also enjoy walks with my family and friends - it's a great chance to unwind and open up conversation in a relaxed environment. It also gives my little ones the space to share any concerns or worries they might have.

Over the last 4 years, my family has gone through some incredibly stressful times and it's taken a toll on my mental health. The anxiety and constant worry felt overwhelming at times. I found that opening up and talking through my concerns with friends was crucial in protecting my mental health. Friends keep us grounded, help us get things into perspective and offer support in negotiating life's hurdles.

I also found listening to podcasts and audiobooks helped to alleviate some of my anxieties. It gave me the opportunity to focus on the story and provided a calming distraction.

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As Health and Well-being Development Officer I like to advocate that we can use physical activity to help support our mental health. I've always played team sports and have made lifelong friends through sport. Playing rugby gave me an outlet to channel my aggression and stress and also have friends I could confide in.

When I get upset I've always written my feelings down on paper and even turned them into poems. This helps me to not bottle up my emotions. I also like to put music on and sing as this helps lift my mood. I've found making plans for the future gives me something to look forward to.

One piece of advice is to always have a water bottle with you and try to drink the recommended 6-8 glasses of water a day. When I'm dehydrated it affects my mood and concentration and gives me headaches. This can all be avoided by simply continuing to drink throughout the day.



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During my teenage years, I was very anxious and suffered from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). I used to shower 6 times a day for an hour. This had a negative impact on my social life, sport and schoolwork. I was able to speak to my GP and he referred me to a psychologist so I could get the help I needed.

Through the help/support of the psychologist and my family, I was able to reduce the amount of time I spent cleaning myself over the course of 12-18 months. I kept using the advice and tools I was given by the psychologist, and I am glad to say that I now shower a 'normal' amount (once a day)!!! I still experience times, as a result of lives' stresses, when I might slip into old habits. However, I am able to overcome this through self-reflection.

My advice to young people is to not be scared to ask for help if you are struggling with your mental health. Contact your GP if you are concerned about your mental well-being.

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I am a very relaxed, laid-back person and I try not to let things affect me. This mind set stems from doing things I enjoy, such as playing different sports, going out for walks or socialising with friends. I am very much of the belief that you should take each and every day as it comes.

When I complete tasks and activities, I like to do them right. As a result of this, I'm a planner and think of multiple outcomes for my actions. Inevitably in life, things do go wrong or not to plan. If this happens, take a step back, take a deep breath and think about how you can best move forward. Talking with those around you really helps!

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I like to exercise regularly in order to keep myself motivated and positive. Whether it's a workout at the gym, a round of golf, playing for my local rugby team or going for a walk, I feel that being active is one of the best ways to relieve stress. I feel that having a good work-life balance is important. In order to do this, I like to socialise regularly with my friends and family which allows me to unwind and check in with others to make sure they are doing well.



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