

While  
you're  
waiting



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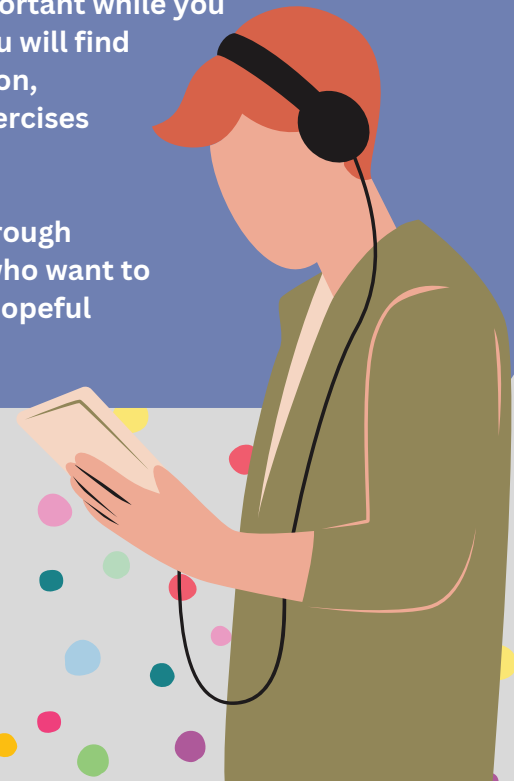
## Hey there!

Waiting for mental health services can be tough but don't worry, there are things you can do to take care of yourself while you wait. CAMHS, along with other services within the NHS, are doing their best to see everyone as soon as possible but due to the increased demand on our services you may experience a longer wait time. The staff at CAMHS have created this self-help guide specifically designed to help you during this time.

Our self-help guide has been put together by specialists within CAMHS to give you helpful tips and advice on taking care of your mental health. Along with CAMHS, there are many other services that can help you with your mental health. Don't be afraid to reach out to them as well.

Taking care of your wellbeing is important while you wait for our help. In this booklet you will find guides and information on meditation, mindfulness and deep breathing exercises to calm your mind and more.

Remember, you don't have to go through this alone. There are many people who want to help you. It's very important to be hopeful and stay positive.



## My experiences

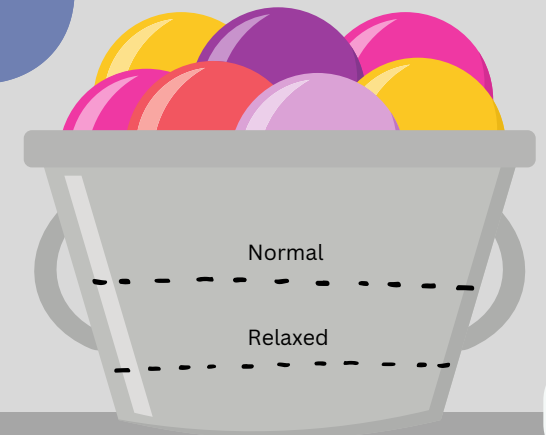
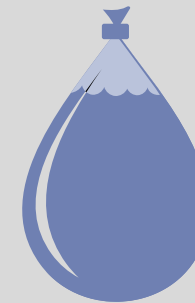
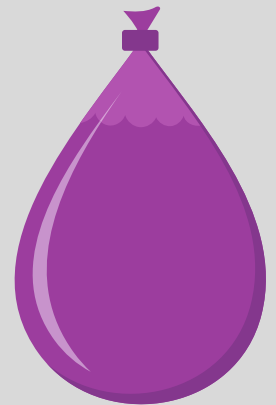
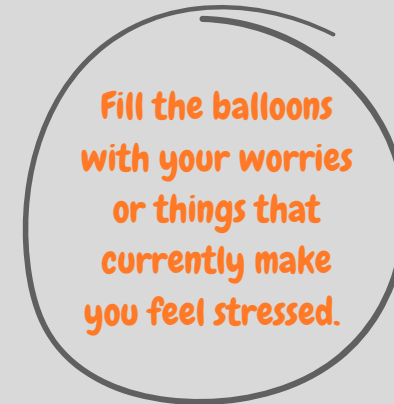
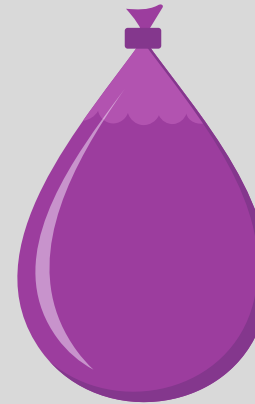
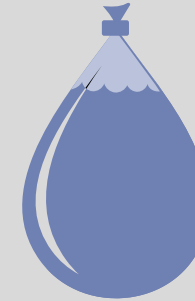
What warning signs or triggers have you noticed that make you feel more out of control? For example places, people, feelings or memories

What coping skills have you used in the past that have helped? For example, talking to friends or family, practical activities or techniques learnt?

What could other people do to help me? For example, let me have some space, keep me company, help distract from current thoughts

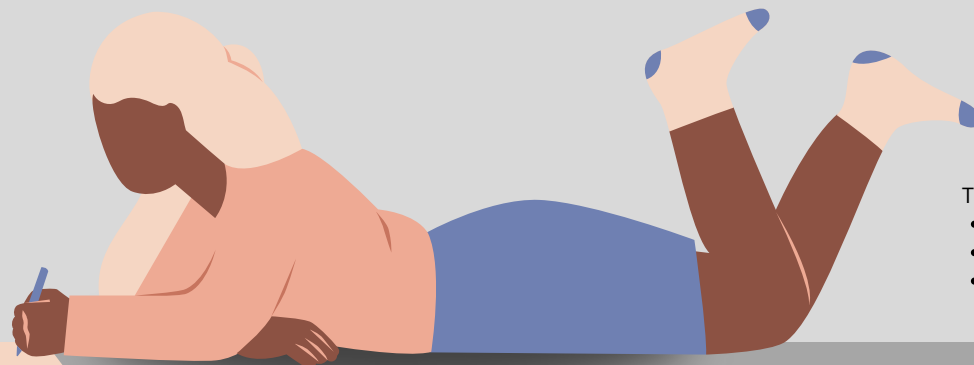
What would I tell a close friend who was currently feeling like I am?

## My stress bucket



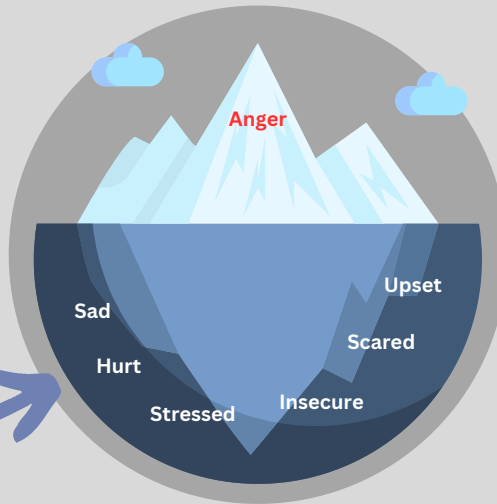
Try to consider:

- How full is your bucket?
- Do your coping skills work?
- Do you turn to unhealthy ways to manage this?

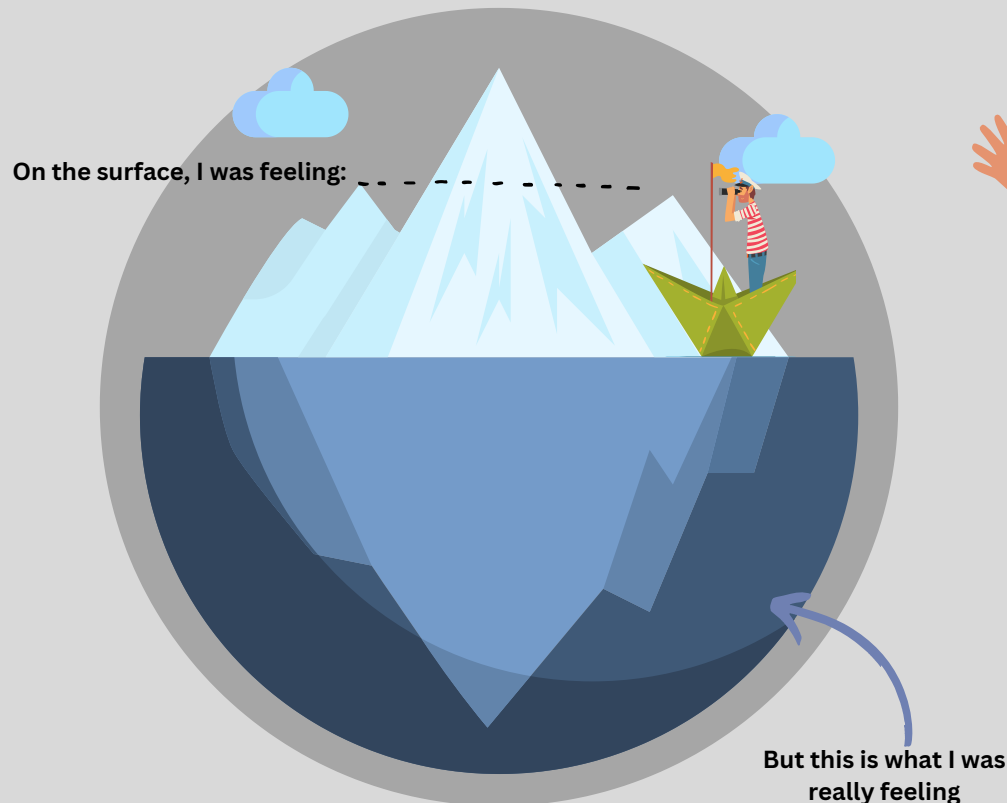


## Icebergs

We all experience difficult feelings from time to time. However there is usually more to what we're feeling than what others see on the surface. Here is an example of an iceberg when someone might be feeling angry:



Have a go at creating your own by choosing an emotion you often feel i.e. sad, angry, worried.



## Distress Tolerance

Whether it's something small or something big like failing an exam, falling out with a friend or losing a loved one, everyone experiences stress at some point in their life.

How well you're able to manage these stressful situations is, in part, determined by your level of distress tolerance. By learning effective distress tolerance skills, you can significantly improve your ability to deal with difficult emotions and challenging circumstances.

This booklet will go through some epic tips and tricks to keep your cool, even when things get chaotic.

It's common to turn to unhealthy or even destructive ways of coping with difficult emotions but these strategies will help you deal with them in a healthier way.



## TIPP

**TIPP is an acronym for Temperature, Intense exercise, Paced breathing, and Progressive muscle relaxation. It's a distress tolerance trick that'll help you stay cool in tough times.**

### Temperature

Change your body temperature. Splash your face with cold water, hold an ice cube to your temple, take a cold shower.

### Intense Exercise

Intense exercise can release some of the stress you are experiencing. Aim to get your heart rate up and out of breath for 20 mins.

### Paced Breathing

Try box breathing: breathe in for 4 seconds, hold it for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds and hold for 4 seconds. Start again until you feel more calm.

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Focus on 1 muscle group at a time. Tighten your muscles as much as possible for 5 seconds. Then release & relax. Repeat with other muscle groups.

## Self-soothing

When emotions are running high or life gets overwhelming, it can help to practice self-soothing. These strategies are all about tapping into your senses for some much-needed comfort and relief. Instead of harmful habits, you can try out these physical techniques to calm your mind and body.

Don't forget to practice them regularly even when you're not stressed!



### Sight Sense

- Take a break and explore nature whether it's a local park or a scenic trail. Embrace the vibrant colours of the sky, trees, grass and people around you.
- Collect a series of pictures that relax you and use them as a visual escape whenever you need them.



### Hearing Sense

- Enjoy a conversation with someone who has a voice that soothes your soul.
- Listen to a podcast, audiobook or TV show that you find entertaining



### Smell Sense

- Spritz on a perfume or cologne that brings you joy.
- Light up a scented candle in your room and let the aroma whisk you away.



### Taste Sense

- Treat yourself to a small serving of your favourite snack or comfort food like chocolate, ice cream, or chips (but don't go overboard!).
- Sip on a cup of coffee, tea, cocoa or any other beverage that you enjoy (avoid alcohol).



### Touch Sense

- Wrap yourself in your favourite cosy blanket and let the soft texture soothe your skin.
- Enjoy a warm shower or bubble bath to relax your muscles.
- If you're feeling daring, try a refreshing cold shower instead!

## Radical Acceptance

Radical acceptance is all about embracing our present reality and freeing ourselves from any gloomy emotions that may be weighing us down. Instead of fighting against what is already happening, it's better to accept things for what they are.

**Think of an important event in your life that you have a hard time accepting:**

**What caused the event?** Try to stick to facts

**What emotions did you feel?**

**How can you tackle the situation head-on now if it happens again?**

## Good vs bad

When it's time to make a choice, weighing up the good and the bad is a classic move we all use, no matter your age. It's a great way to tackle the trickiest of situations and can help us make better decisions. The key is to face reality head-on and manage any distress that comes your way.

1. Start by describing the problem you're facing.
2. Weigh up the pros and cons of giving in to your urges or taking action during a crisis. You can write these down if it helps.
3. Finally, compare the advantages and disadvantages of each of your possible choices.

By mastering this smart technique, you can make better decisions!

### What to do in a crisis?

1. Take a step back and weigh the pros and cons of your actions.
2. Picture all the good things that can come from the pros.
3. Think about all the bad things that can happen too.
4. Remember the results of past moments when you followed your urges.
5. Make a decision knowing you've reviewed both the pros and cons



## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is like a secret handshake between you and the present moment. It's about tuning in to your thoughts, feelings and the world around you without playing the blame game.

The main goals of mindfulness are:

- Raising self-awareness
- Kicking stress to the curb and welcoming tranquillity
- Choosing how to respond to your thoughts and emotions
- Handling negative or unhelpful thoughts
- Growing self-love

Lots of people say mindfulness helps keep their spirits high and their minds sharp. It takes a bit of commitment and may not suit with everyone's routine. Plus, with lots of mindfulness tips floating online, it's easy to get confused. To make things more straight forward, we've got easy-peasy mindfulness exercises on the following pages you can use while waiting.



## Self-care

Self-care means making time to look after yourself and your wellbeing, both physically and emotionally. Sometimes self-care can look like brushing your teeth, having a shower, leaving the house or it can be about doing things that make you feel better such as listening to music that makes you feel good, taking a nap or doing a doodle!

**[Click here](#)** to learn more about self-care.

Get dressed	Do one thing you've been putting off	Have a bubble bath	Do some yoga	Spend time with family
Do something you enjoy	Listened to music	Eat something you enjoy	Make a list of life goals	Do some exercise
Go to bed at a healthy time	Spend some time outside	Read a book	Meditate	Learn something new
Listen to a podcast	Go for a walk	Take a nap or have a rest	Drink some water	Tidy your room/ space
Treat yourself to something	Make a list of things you're grateful for	Spend time with friends	Put on a facemask	Have a shower

**Self-care bingo!**



## The "5, 4, 3, 2, 1" Grounding Technique

Worrying thoughts taking over? Take a breather and give the "5, 4, 3, 2, 1" mindfulness technique a try! Here's how to ground yourself in the present moment:

- 5 | Locate five things you can see around you. Get specific and pay attention to the tiniest details.
- 4 | Tune out the noise in your head and focus on four sounds you can hear. Let the sounds of the world around you take centre stage.
- 3 | Check-in with your sense of touch and identify three things you can feel. Think textures, temperatures and sensations.
- 2 | Breathe in two different scents. Savour the smells around you and let them anchor you to the present.
- 1 | Finally, focus on your sense of taste and identify one thing you can taste. Let the flavour bring you back to the here and now.



**LEARN MORE**

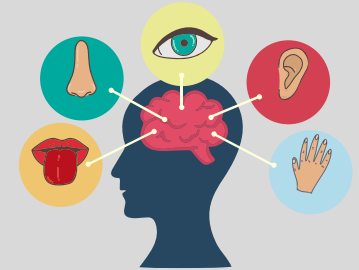
[Click here](#) to watch a video guide on this technique.



## Mindfulness cards



Place your hand on your belly. Take 10 deep breaths and notice your hand moving up and down as you breathe.



Sit very still and notice one thing that you can see, hear, feel taste and smell.



Close your eyes and spend one minute thinking about the happiest day of your life. Try to remember as much about the day as possible.

Close your eyes and think about how you are feeling. Happy? Sad? Mad? Think about how you know you are feeling that way.

**FEEL  
YOUR  
FEELINGS**

Sit quietly and place a small object in your hand. Notice how heavy the object feels. Think about what it feels like in your hands. Notice one new thing about this object.



Close your eyes and sit quietly. Notice the way your clothes feel on your body. Notice your top, trousers and shoes. Did you notice anything you didn't notice before?



## Relaxation techniques

[Click here to watch a handy video on thought bubbles.](#)

[Click here to watch a handy video on belly breathing.](#)

[Click here to watch a handy video from the NHS on relaxation techniques.](#)



## Emotional Regulation

Emotion regulation is the ability to manage our emotions.



[Click here to learn more about how to regulate your emotions](#)

### Facts vs. Opinions

Facts are truths that we can prove and verify through science and research such as grass is green or the sky is blue.

Opinions are unique and individual. They're personal thoughts and ideas that can differ from person to person, even when we're looking at the same facts. So, while it's a fact that the sky's blue, some might think it's a lovely day while others might think it's not.

It is very important to separate facts from opinions. If you have a negative thought about yourself or a situation, it may be useful to write the thought down and note if it's a fact or opinion, just like this:

Your thought	Fact	Opinion
"Everyone hates me"	X	✓

## Thinking traps

Watch out for thinking traps also known as cognitive distortions. These can twist our thoughts into negative patterns, making us jump to the wrong conclusions and bad choices. They're like weeds in our mind making us miss the bigger picture and get tangled up in negativity. Suddenly, we're feeling glum and our view of the world is a bit...blurry. Instead of negative thoughts, try these instead:



"I shouldn't jump to conclusions. Just because I think it is the case, doesn't mean it is."

"Not everything is black and white. It's important to see the grey in between."

"I can't predict the future. No one knows what will happen".

"I won't label myself or others. Just because I failed one exam, that doesn't make me a failure."

"Bad things happen sometimes. That doesn't mean they'll always happen".

"I won't think 'What if' often. This is just catastrophising the situation".

You're a failure

No one likes you



## Behavioural Activation

Behavioural activation is the idea that things you do can have an affect on your mood. Monitoring your activities and the mood it puts you in can help you identify and prioritise activities that help your mood.

**Let's get organised with a little activity!** Create a list of activities. Then give each item a score on two fronts: how easy it is to do and how much of a reward you get. Remember, it's not all fun and games, such as seeing friends or playing on your xbox, so don't forget to include necessary tasks like making your bed or studying for a test.

Activity	How easy is this to do?	How rewarding is this to do?
Seeing my friends		
Going for a walk		



LEARN MORE

[Click here](#) to learn more about behavioural activation

## Break it down

When life throws you a curveball, you need to show off some problem-solving skills! Whether it's a big or small problem, the skills below will help you find a solution.

By focusing on one aspect at a time, you can help find the cause of the problem and how to solve it.

Dividing the problem into more manageable pieces will help you set realistic goals, boost your confidence, give you a sense of control and help stop you from feeling overwhelmed.

This approach will also reduce the stress and anxiety that come with facing a daunting task. So, whatever the problem, take it one step at a time by breaking it down into smaller parts.

Lets break it down!	Example problem	Your problem
<b>Step 1:</b> Figure out what the problem is	Me and Sam had an argument at school	
<b>Step 2:</b> How big is this problem?	Medium	
<b>Step 3:</b> What are the solutions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never talk again</li> <li>• Talk to Sam about how I feel</li> </ul>	
<b>Step 4:</b> Chose a solution to try	Talk to Sam about how I feel	
<b>Step 5:</b> Did it work? If not, why not?	It worked. Me and Sam both apologised and we are friends again	

[Click here](#) to watch a helpful video social story on positive problem solving.

[Click here](#) to watch a handy video on problem solving steps.

Dealing with a problem can be overwhelming but breaking it down into smaller parts will help you find a solution.

## Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Interpersonal effectiveness is the art of achieving your goals while maintaining good relationships by having healthy conversations.

For when it feels important to get what you need.

**D**escribe the facts of the situation

**E**xpress how you feel

**A**ssert a specific ask related to the facts and your feelings

**R**einforce your feelings and why they should listen to you

**M**indfully ask for what can be given and only one thing at a time (ignore any attacks and repeat yourself if need be.)

**A**pppear effective and competent

**N**egotiate alternative solutions

For when it feels important to maintain a relationship.

**G**entle manner without attack or threat

**I**nterest in the other person

**V**alidate the other person without judging

**E**asy manner (why not try and add a little humour?)

For when it feels important to maintain your self-respect

**F**air to myself and others

**A**pologies not needed

**S**tick to values (not do anything You'll regret later)

**T**ruthful without excuses or exaggeration

These acronyms are a clever way to remember communication techniques for different chats. Give them a try and see what you think!

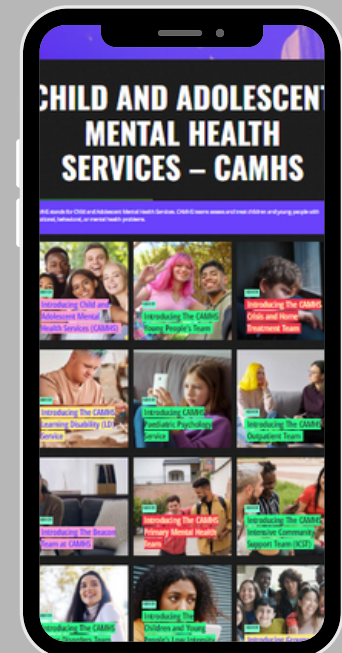


## DID YOU KNOW?

CAMHS has its own section on **Health for Teens?**

Our Doctor's, Psychologist's, Nurses and other clinician's at CAMHS create lots of content for this website, such as information on tics, sleep, Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder and more!

**Click here** to have a look!



## Additional support

There are a range of websites that provide information, advice, links and even counselling to support you with your mental health. Some of these include:

### HEALTH FOR TEENS

[Health for Teens](#) is an online service provided by the NHS that covers large area of health and wellbeing. This website also has articles created by professionals who work at CAMHS, providing clinical advice on many topics such as ADHD, tics and OCD and an [area specifically for CAMHS Leicester](#).

### YOUNGMINDS

[Young minds](#) is a mental health charity for younger people. Their website has different articles, useful resources, and online crisis messenger. You can also text YM to 85258.



[Tellmi](#) allows an online safe and anonymous space for young people to discuss their feelings, seek support and receive counselling when necessary. It is available 365 days a year.

### NSPCC

[NSPCC](#) specialises in child protection and is dedicated to protecting children to prevent abuse. They are the only UK children's charity with statutory powers which means they can take action to safeguard children at risk of abuse.



If you are having thoughts about suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be, you can contact [HOPELINEUK](#) for confidential support and practical advice.  
Call: 0800 068 4141  
Text: 0778 620 9697  
Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org



[The Mix](#) offers online counselling and has a crisis messenger for young people under the age of 25. You can contact them via their online community, on social media, through a free, confidential helpline (0808 808 4994) or their counselling service.



Feeling worried or low? Need to talk? Text [SHOUT](#) to 85258 for free and confidential support, 24/7. Texting the word 'SHOUT' to 85258 is anonymous and will not show up on your phone bill.



If you, or someone you care about, need urgent advice or support for your mental health, you can call our [Mental Health Central Access Point](#) on 0808 800 3302, 24 hours a day, seven days a week free of charge and in confidence.

## DID YOU KNOW?

You can click the **blue highlighted** text to launch more information

### childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME  
[childline.org.uk](#) | 0800 1111

[Childline](#) is a counselling service. Their website provides a free online service. They also have a free phone support service on 0808 808 4994.



If issues are directly related to autism, you can ask advice from [Chat Autism](#) - a text-based support service for autistic people and their families. Send a text to: 07312 277097



Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust has partnered with the [Solihull Approach](#) to offer free access to expertly designed online courses for parents, carers, grandparents and teens living in the region.

