



The list overleaf is by no means the only support available but they all offer online help for those that do not feel comfortable speaking face to face with people about their feelings in the first instance.

**If at any time you are feeling suicidal then contact your local Accident and Emergency unit or ring the Samaritans on 116 123 at any time day or night, where somebody will be available to talk to you about how you are feeling.**



## **Mental Health Online Directory for Young People**



Mental health is something we all have, whether it be good or bad. We all have good days and bad days - that's perfectly normal.

Mental health problems occur when we regularly have more bad days than good. These can lead to anxiety, depression and panic attacks plus many other symptoms. If you find yourself suffering from any of these symptoms, then it is time to seek help.

If you can, talk to your GP or somebody that you trust. If you find this difficult, Harlow Youth Council have compiled a directory of organisations and agencies who can offer you online support.

Do not ignore your feelings as things can spiral out of control. It is important to talk to someone as soon as possible.

**Change Grow Live**  
[www.changegrowlive.org](http://www.changegrowlive.org)

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

**Kooth**  
[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

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

**NHS**  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**NHS Moodzone**  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/depression-help-groups](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/depression-help-groups)

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

**Papyrus**  
[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

**PYSCOM**  
[www.pyscom.net](http://www.pyscom.net)

**Respect Yourself**  
[www.RespectYourself.org.uk](http://www.RespectYourself.org.uk)



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

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

**Sparks Support**  
[www.sparksupport.co.uk](http://www.sparksupport.co.uk)

**The Children's Society**  
[www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)

**The Mental Health Foundation**  
[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

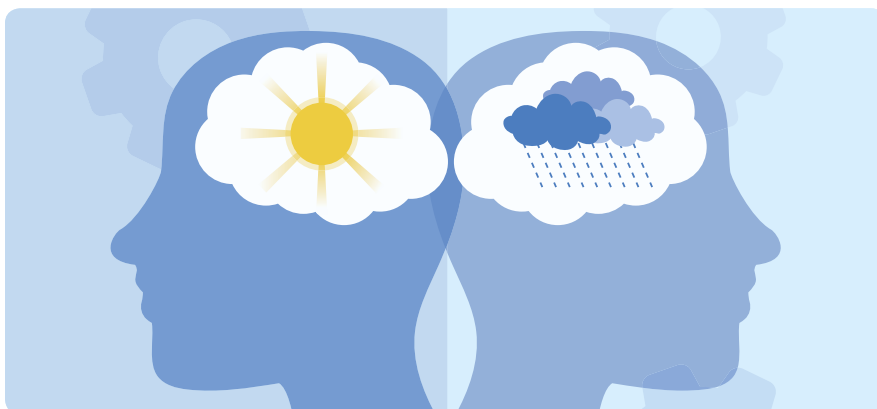
**The Mix Support for U25's**  
[www.TheMix.org.uk](http://www.TheMix.org.uk)

**The Shaw Mind Foundation**  
[www.shawmindfoundation.org](http://www.shawmindfoundation.org)

**Time To Change**  
[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)

**Young Concern Trust**  
[www.yctsupport.com](http://www.yctsupport.com)

**Young Minds**  
[www.Youngminds.org.uk](http://www.Youngminds.org.uk)



## Mental Health Self Care Strategy

### Coping with Anxiety

## 12 steps to help you cope with anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, worry or fear. It affects both our emotional and physical sensations and can lead to panic attacks.

Here are some strategies to avoid this.

# 1 Talking

Try talking to someone that you trust. Talking to someone about what's making you anxious can help. You may find that they have experienced a similar problem, so can talk you through it. It may be that just having someone to listen to you and showing they care can help.



# 2 Breathing

Try a breathing exercise. You may find that this will help you to manage anxiety and feel calmer. Always remember to breathe. Take your time to inhale. It is a simple thing to do but it can be forgotten in panic attacks.



# 3 Shifting your focus

You may find it helpful to shift your focus from the anxiety you are feeling. Look at a flower, a picture or something else that you find interesting or comforting. Really notice the detail, the colour or any smells or sounds. Use fiddle toys like puzzles, stress balls or a doodle pad to keep your hands and mind busy.



## 4 Listen to music

Listening to music that you find peaceful or that you enjoy can help you to feel calmer. Make up a personal playlist, put your headphones on, lay on your bed, close your eyes and lose yourself in the music.



## 5 Reassure yourself



You may find it helpful to tell yourself that the symptoms you are experiencing are actually caused by anxiety. It is not really dangerous, and it will pass. This can help you to feel calmer and less afraid of future attacks. Accept that this is how you feel at the moment but that it won't last.

## 6 Physical exercise

You may find that physical exercise can help you to manage anxiety and panic attacks. Going for a walk or a run can help you to get some time to yourself to think things through, away from everyday stresses. Physical training, playing with movement through things like gymnastics, yoga or circuit training can help by allowing you to have some fun. Going for a walk especially with a dog even if you can't go far can help to relax your mind.



## 7 Keep a diary

Making a note of what happens to you each time you get anxious or have a panic attack can help you spot patterns in what triggers these experiences for you, so you can think about how to deal with them in the future. Keep a photo diary of all the positive things that you do. This will help you realise you can do this. When you sit in a café or go for a walk, take a picture to record what you have done. When you next feel scared look back on it and remember what you have done - it may encourage you to do it again or even to do it more often.



## 8 Eat a healthy diet



You may find it easier to relax if you avoid stimulants like coffee, cigarettes and alcohol. Some people also find eating a healthy diet helps them to manage anxiety better.

## 9 Complimentary therapies



Yoga, meditation, aromatherapy, massage, reflexology, herbal treatments, Bach flower remedies and hypnotherapy are all types of complimentary therapies that you could try. See if they work for you. You might find that one or more of these methods can help you to relax, sleep better, and manage the symptoms of anxiety and panic attacks. Many chemists and health shops stock remedies and can offer advice.

# 10 Support groups

A support group can give you the opportunity to share common experiences and ways of coping with others who are facing similar challenges. It is sometimes comforting to know that you are not alone. There are many support groups online such as [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) or [www.anxietycare.org.uk](http://www.anxietycare.org.uk)



# 11 Happy Box

Create your own Happy Box. Take a box, cover it in your favourite wrapping paper and fill it with things that make you happy. You could collect together your favourite photographs or postcards, a playlist of favourite songs, an aromatherapy candle or something else that relaxes you, a prized possession, or anything else that makes you smile or feel happy. When you are feeling a little low, open your Happy Box, look through it and think about the things in there that make you feel like smiling.



# 12 A pamper session

Organise a sleep over with one or two close friends. Have popcorn, hot chocolate with marshmallows and plenty of snacks. You could order pizza and ice cream. Watch a romantic film or a scary movie or organise a gaming session well into the night.



# A parent's guide to understanding young people's mental health



#Break the stigma



## What do we mean by mental health issues?

Mental health relates to a person's psychological and emotional well-being. Did you know that there are more than 200 classified forms of mental illness? Some of the more well-known disorders are depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders such as obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

It is a fact that young people today face very different pressures to past generations and this can make their lives far more stressful in today's society. Mobile phones mean that young people can access the internet and social media sites 24 hours a day and this can increase the opportunity to become a victim of online bullying or bullying by text or email.

Access to social media can increase peer pressure and young people can become much more aware of body image and fashion consciousness. There is also far more pressure on young people to achieve higher grades at school and college and to spend much more time studying both during school time and after school and at weekends. This can lead to an unhealthy life balance and feelings of failure if they don't reach other people's expectations academically.

Young adults find it much more difficult to get onto the housing ladder because of a shortage of affordable social housing. The introduction of University fees means that many young people can leave education with large debts making getting onto the housing ladder even more difficult and adding to financial pressures in early adulthood.

All of these factors together can make childhood and early adulthood a very stressful time for today's young people rather than the carefree and happy time that it should be.





It is not surprising that many parents can find it difficult to understand their children's behaviour and might find it hard to know how to support them during times of stress or what may seem to be irrational or out-of-character behaviour.

Indeed, during consultations conducted by Harlow Youth Council, many young people said that they felt their parents did not understand the issues they face and the pressures they are under - simply dismissing their behaviour as a phase that they will grow out of. Many said that they would not feel comfortable discussing their mental health with a parent. We would like to help you better understand how you can talk to your children and offer them the support that they may need.

## **What signs could you look out for?**

Signs of poor mental health can vary depending on the individual but can include:

- **Confused thinking**
- **Prolonged depression**
- **Sadness**
- **Low mood**
- **Irritability**
- **Feelings of extreme highs and lows**
- **Excessive fears, worries and anxieties**
- **Withdrawal from family and/or friends**
- **Strong feelings of anger**
- **Noticeable changes in eating or sleeping habits**
- **Strange thoughts (delusions)**

## What can you personally do to help?

- Regularly ask your child how he or she is feeling and really listen to what they are telling you. Take them seriously and offer your understanding and support.



- Look out for changes in your child's usual behaviour and talk to them sensitively about this.
- Notice whether they have lost interest in things that they previously enjoyed and encourage them to re-engage if they feel that they can.



- Watch out for significant changes in your child's friendship group - specifically withdrawal from their usual friendship group. Are they becoming isolated? If so, ask them about the reason why and offer appropriate advice and support.
- Encourage your child to be independent and take part in everyday activities - building resilience is important.
- Aim to spend time with your child as often as you can, preferably doing things that they enjoy and that give you and your child opportunities to talk.
- Assist your child to access appropriate support services.
- Be patient - recovery can take time and your child will need your support.

## Where can you go to get help?

**Your doctor (GP)** – he or she can help with your child’s mental health as well as their physical health. Your GP can make a diagnosis, offer treatments and support and refer to mental health and other support services.

**A trained therapist** – trained therapists and counsellors can provide a range of different therapies through the NHS.

**Student services** – most schools have an on-site specialist that can help you and your child.

**Helplines** – there are many helplines online that offer support and advice for people experiencing mental health issues.

**Websites** – there is a wide range of websites that provide useful information and advice about how to support your child. Some of these are listed below but you can simply search ‘young people’s mental health’ and select a list of your own choice.



**Change Grow Live**

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**Kooth**

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

**MIND**

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

**Mind in West Essex**

[www.mindinwestessex.org.uk](http://www.mindinwestessex.org.uk)

**NHS**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**NHS Moodzone**

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/  
depression-help-groups](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/depression-help-groups)

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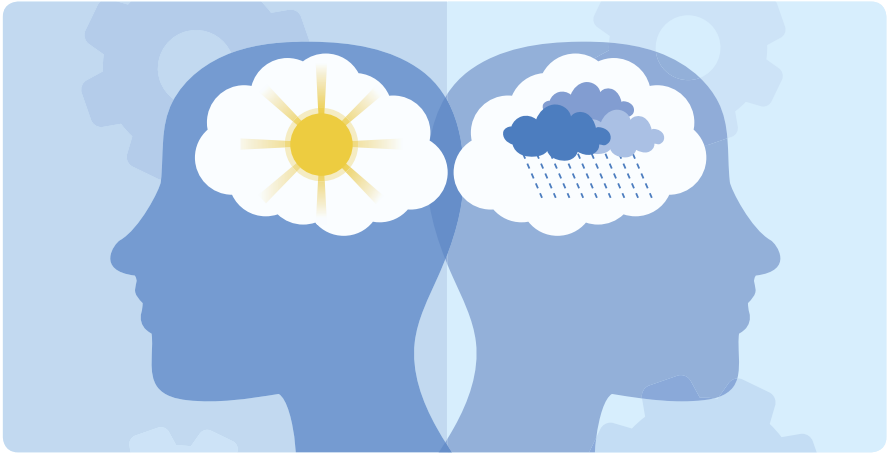
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**Time To Change**

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**Turn2Me**

[www.Turn2me.org](http://www.Turn2me.org)

**Young Concern Trust**

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**Young Minds**

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We hope this leaflet has been of help to you and that you feel more equipped to support your child if you have any concerns about his or her mental health. You may also find it useful to talk to other parents and carers who have been through a similar situation.

**It is ok to talk about mental health**

