



Asking for help

When it's time to talk about
your mental health

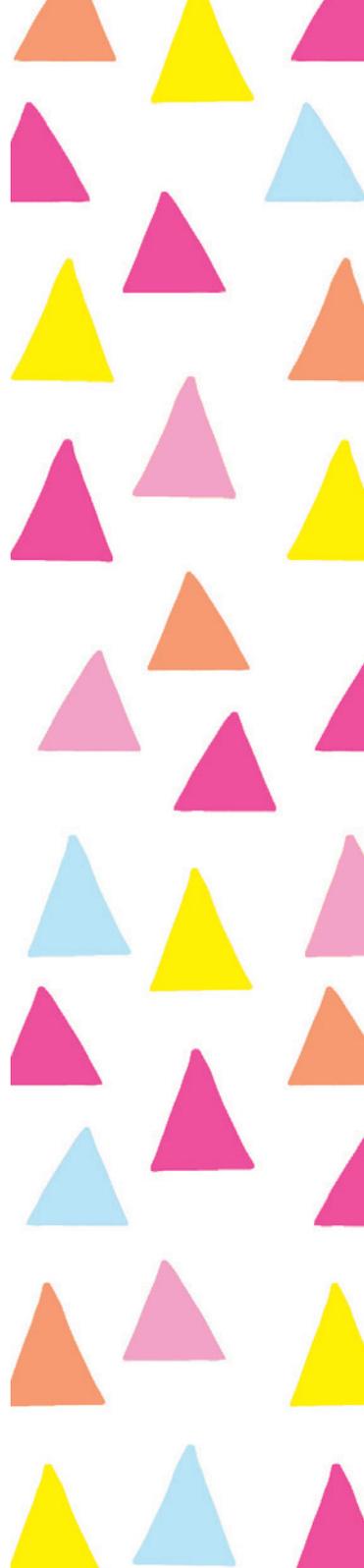
Find out who's best to talk to

You might already know who you want to talk to, perhaps a parent or a teacher you get on especially well with. If you're not sure who to talk to then it's worth thinking about who you trust and feel comfortable talking to. Have you talked to someone who has been particularly helpful before?

Think about what you want to say

Whilst you may have made the decision to talk to someone, you still need to decide what you want to tell them. You might want to think about:

- Is there a problem you need to talk about?
- How much are you happy to share?
- How do you feel each day?
- What are you finding hard to manage?
- What has prompted you to ask for help now?
- Is there anything you are finding hard to manage?





Practise saying what you need to say

It's alright to be nervous, so it's a good idea to prepare. It sounds a bit strange but you'll feel much more confident talking to a parent or teacher if you've worked out what you want to say and tried saying it beforehand.

You can start by writing down bullet points, writing a text or using a free online resource called DocReady... You could give this to someone to read if you are not yet comfortable to talk.

It's worth writing a list of what you want to say to take with you so you don't forget anything. You could formulate your words into a letter, both to help you work out what to say and also as a back-up. That way if you find yourself unable to talk about your issues you could give the letter to the person you've chosen to talk to instead.

It's ok to start small and say 'I'm not having a good day'.

A good next step is to call an anonymous helpline like Childline and practise talking to someone you don't know – that can be easier than talking to someone you know and care about and can help you whilst you get ready to take the next step.

You can contact Childline anytime on 0800 1111.

Find a quiet time

Make sure you start the conversation at a time when the person you're talking to won't be interrupted and has time to listen to you properly. It's important not to rush the conversation. If they can't talk now, it doesn't mean they don't care about you; ask them when would be a good time to talk and come back then.

Take it slowly

Don't feel like you have to say everything in one breath, or even in that first conversation. Take it nice and slowly and don't be afraid to pause to think about what to say next.

Don't over-analyse their reaction

It's perfectly normal to try and second guess what the person you're talking to is thinking. You might have all sorts of ideas about what is going through their mind, but don't try to second guess. They might be surprised, and thinking of ways and routes to help. Try to ask them rather than just guessing.

Remember that there are other people to talk to if the conversation doesn't go as well as you hoped.

It's okay to cry

However you react, it's ok. It's natural to cry or feel angry. None of these feelings are a bad thing.





Know your rights about confidentiality

If you talk to someone who you know through their professional role, one of the first things they'll do is to tell you that they can't keep confidentiality. That's because they'll need to ensure you get the support you need to help you to get on top of things.

You can talk to them about who needs to know what – but try to remember it's a good thing that people understand what's going on so they can help you, though it might seem a bit scary at first.

Think about what you want to happen next

It's a big step to ask for help and it usually means that on some level you're ready for things to improve. Do you have any idea of what you might like to happen as a result of the conversation you're planning? This might include:

- Support telling parents or a friend
- First aid or medical help for injuries
- Support to help you talk through and overcome underlying issues
- Referral for specific treatment that you're already aware of
- You're not sure, you just can't carry on with how things are

Even if you've gone looking for help, it can be hard to accept it – but try. Have faith in the person you've confided in to help you to take the first steps to make things better. They won't be able to fix everything all in one go, but they can work with you to start to make things change.

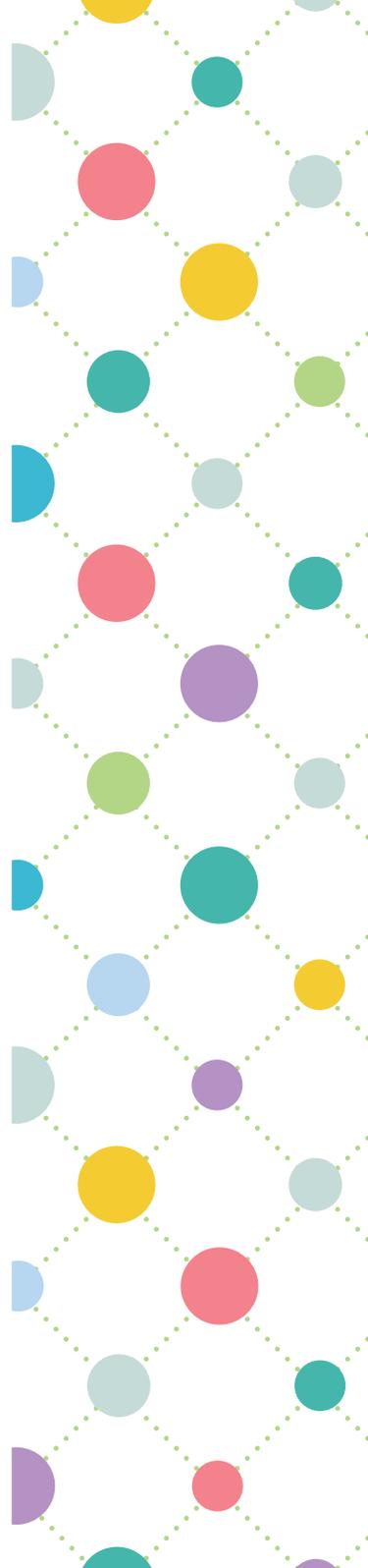
“When I first started talking I realised I wasn’t so alone”

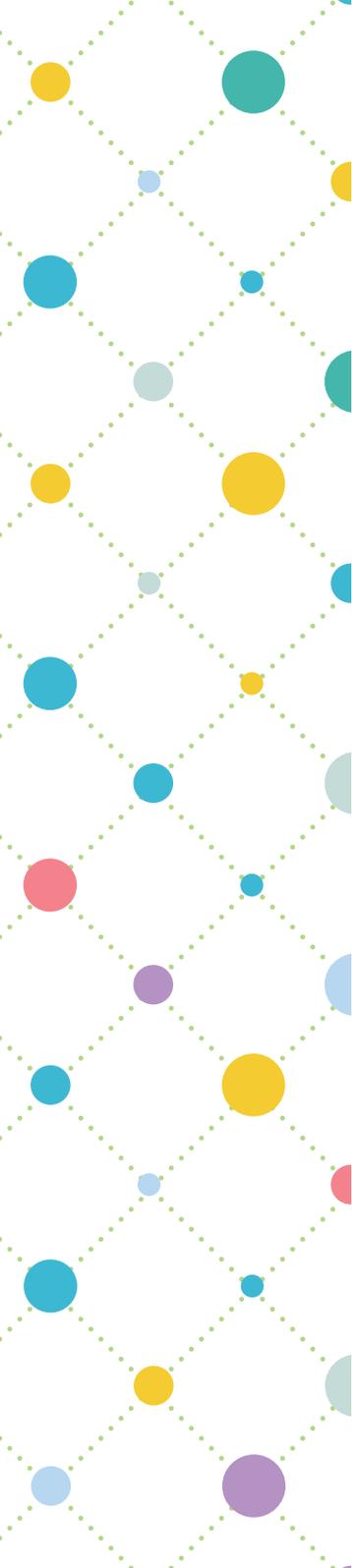
“From the moment I took that brave step I felt very much less alone.”

“I thought it was weak to ask for help, but I realised eventually that it was the ultimate sign of strength.”

*“You’re not alone.
Reach out... let yourself
be loved.”*

“Although it can be hard to take a first step there is help out there”





Sources of advice

[childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk) | 0800 1111 (free 24hr)
confidential listening

[samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org) | 116 123 (free 24 hr)
confidential listening

[studentsagainstdepression.org](https://www.studentsagainstdepression.org)
resources to move away from depression

[youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)
mental health info and guidance

[youthaccess.org.uk](https://www.youthaccess.org.uk)
young people's info, advice and counselling

[themix.org.uk](https://www.themix.org.uk)
essential support for under 25s

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