

# PARENT / CARER INFORMATION PACK



**CYPF**  
Children, Young People  
& Family Health Services



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# MANAGING YOUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

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It's important to remember to look after you own health and wellbeing, to be best able to support your child or the person you are caring for. For more information on self-care for parents, visit [nhs.wales](https://www.nhs.uk)

The stress bucket concept is a useful way of understanding the impact that stress has on us all as humans. We will all experience stressors from time to time, and sometimes experiencing too many stressors at once can lead us to feel overwhelmed, burnt out and unable to cope. By spending some time noticing what stressors are contributing to your stress bucket, you may be able to do something about them, or if they are out of your control, you can use helpful coping strategies to manage them. Work on increasing and strengthening your healthy coping habits (e.g. going for a walk, eating well, spending time with family, having a bath, exercising, reading a book). Keep an eye out for any unhelpful coping strategies you may be using (e.g. drinking alcohol, using substances, avoidance, staying in bed, overworking) as short term they drain the water (stress) but in the long term they feed back into the bucket, causing even more stress and problems. Check out the following Youtube video to learn more!

**[The Stress Bucket - MindSpot \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)**

# FIVE WAYS TO POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

1

## CONNECTING

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Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing. They can:

- help you to build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- give you an opportunity to share positive experiences
- provide emotional support and allow you to support others

There are many different ways you can connect with others.

2

## BEING ACTIVE

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Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness, evidence also shows it can also improve your mental wellbeing by:

- raising your self-esteem
- helping you to set goals or challenges and achieve them
- causing chemical changes in your brain which can help to positively change your mood

3

## LEARNING

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Research shows that learning new skills can also improve your mental wellbeing. It can boost your self-confidence, help you to build a sense of purpose and connect with others. Even if you feel like you do not have enough time, or you may not need to learn new things, there are lots of different ways to bring learning into your life.

4

## GIVING

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Acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing by:

- creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- helping you connect with other people

It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community.

5

## NOTICING

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Paying attention to the present moment by noticing your thoughts, feelings, body and the world around you can improve your mental wellbeing. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

# MODELLING SELF-CARE

Children often learn from the adults around them at home, in the community and at school. It's much easier for them to understand what good habits look like if they see how you are taking care of your own emotional wellbeing. This could be as simple as **taking some time for yourself to have a bath, meet a friend or read a book.**

When you speak to your child or young person, you could tell them why you like these activities, how they make you feel, and make suggestions for activities that they might like to do to look after their wellbeing. This modelling can help the child to learn to notice feelings and emotions, and find useful way to regulate and look after themselves. Often children need scaffolding and guidance to develop these skills.

## CHALLENGE: COMPLETE SELF CARE BINGO

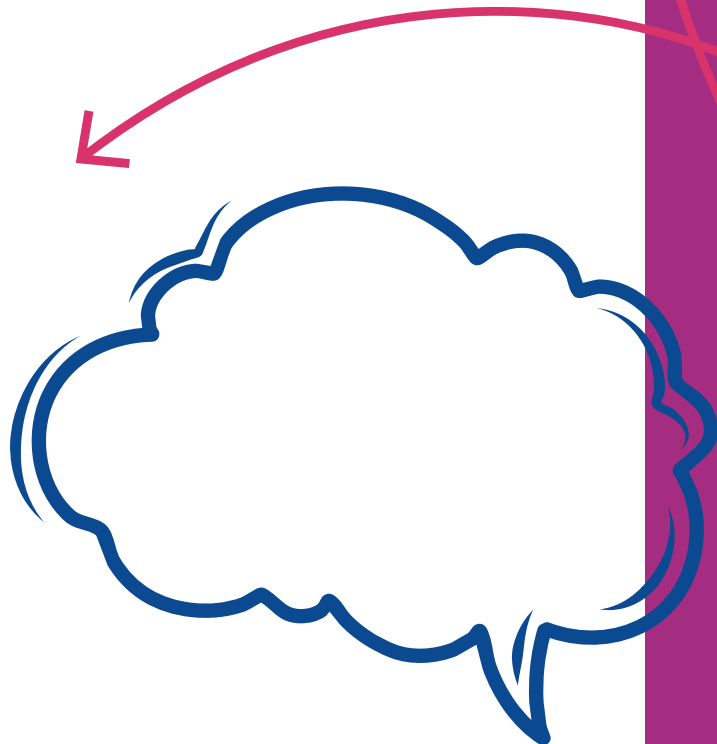
YOU COULD INCLUDE YOUR CHILD/FAMILY IN THIS. SEE HOW MANY YOU CAN TICK OFF THIS WEEK TO LOOK AFTER YOUR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING.

|  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
|  <p>WROTE A HAND WRITTEN THANK YOU TO SOMEONE</p>                             |  <p>MADE A PLAYLIST OF SONGS THAT MAKE ME HAPPY</p>                 |  <p>FORGAVE SOMEONE BECAUSE I DESERVE THE PEACE</p>                      |  <p>WROTE DOWN TEN THINGS I AM THANKFUL FOR TODAY.</p>   |  <p>TOOK A BUBBLE BATH, TRIED A FACE MASK AT HOME OR BOOKED A SPA APPOINTMENT</p> |
|  <p>ORGANIZED A CLUTTERED SPACE AT HOME OR SCHOOL.</p>                        |  <p>CHANGED A NEGATIVE THOUGHT TO A POSITIVE ONE</p>                |  <p>GAVE MY TIME, OLD CLOTHING, OR \$ TO CHARITY</p>                     |  <p>TRIED A MEDITATION</p>                               |  <p>TURNED UP THE RADIO AND DANCED WHILE DOING A HOUSEHOLD CHORE.</p>             |
|  <p>PLANNED &amp; MET UP WITH A FRIEND JUST BECAUSE</p>                       |  <p>HAD A GUILT FREE TREAT (snack, nap, alone time, or a break)</p> |  <p>FREE SPACE<br/>WOKE UP</p>   |  <p>FORGAVE MYSELF FOR SOMETHING IN THE PAST</p>         |  <p>CONNECTED WITH SOMEONE I HAVEN'T SEEN IN A WHILE</p>                          |
|  <p>TRIED A NEW EXERCISE FOR MY BODY AND/OR MIND</p>                          |  <p>STOPPED A BAD HABIT FOR _____ DAYS</p>                          |  <p>GOOGLED BELLY BREATHING AND TRIED IT</p>                             |  <p>FOUND SOMETHING TO DO THAT MADE ME BELLY LAUGH!</p>  |  <p>TOOK A _____ HOUR BREAK FROM TECHNOLOGY &amp; SOCIAL MEDIA</p>                |
|  <p>TOOK A MOMENT TO NOTICE WHAT I CAN SEE, SMELL, TASTE, TOUCH AND HEAR.</p> |  <p>READ/LISTENED TO A SELF-HELP BOOK, BLOG OR PODCAST</p>          |  <p>WENT OUTSIDE AND FOUND THREE THINGS I AM THANKFUL FOR IN NATURE.</p> |  <p>WAS EXTRA KIND TO SOMEONE WHO WASN'T NICE TO ME.</p> |  <p>BINGE WATCHED A SERIES OR BINGE READ SOME BOOKS</p>                           |

# UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

You know your child best! Even if your child/ young person aren't telling you in words, you will likely notice if they are behaving differently than usual. All behaviour is a way of communication.

Children, young people and adults communicate what they are thinking and feeling through their actions. Knowing what behaviour is typical for your family members makes it easier to notice when something changes, which could be a sign that someone is struggling.



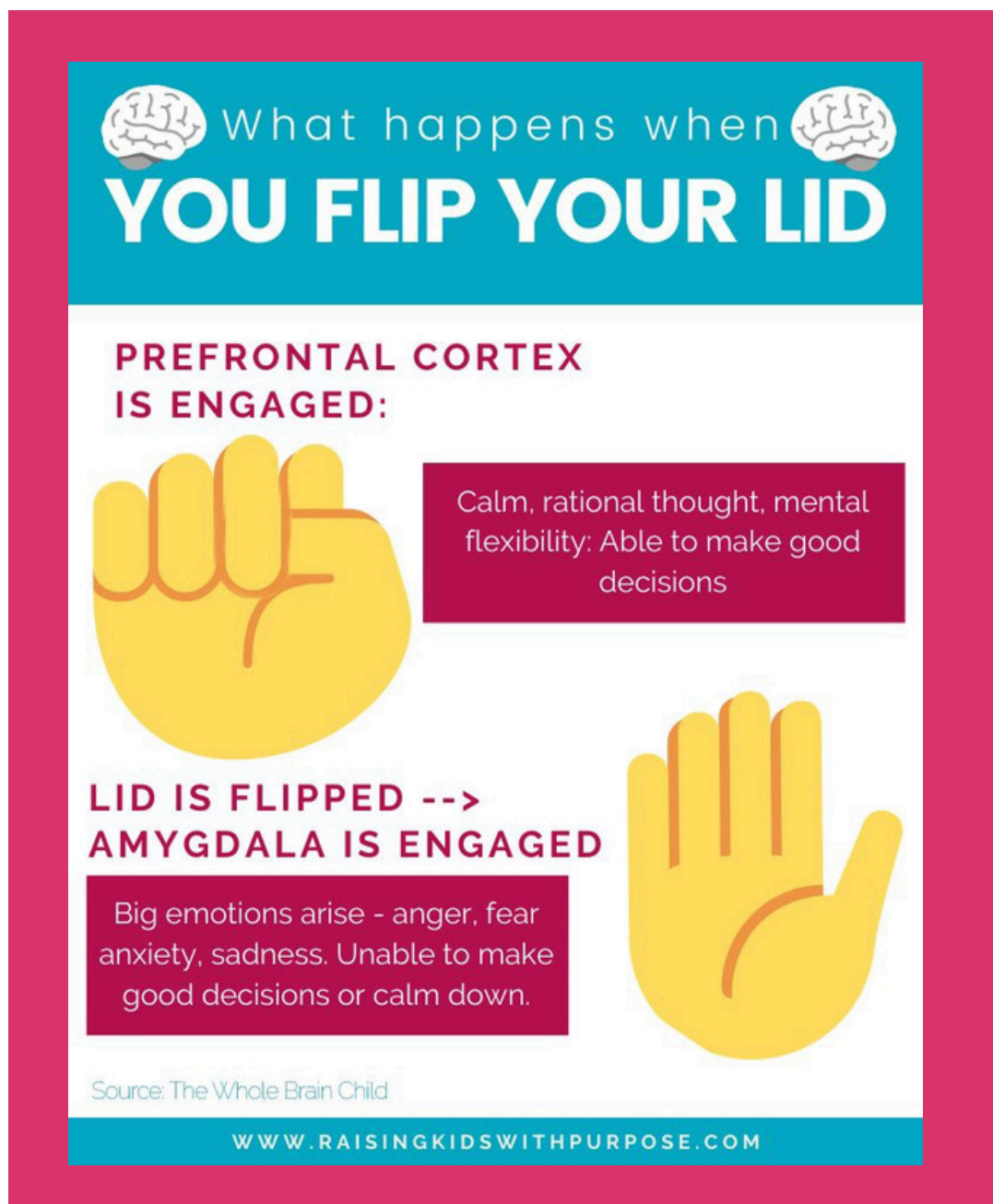
The following short handout offers useful examples and guidance to help parents and carers understand their child's behaviours and see underneath the behaviour.

[Understanding Behaviour V4](#)  
([nhs.wales](https://www.nhs.uk))

IT CAN BE HELPFUL TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHY CHILDREN (AND ADULTS) LOSE CONTROL OF THEIR EMOTIONS, AND WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BRAIN WHEN WE BECOME DYSREGULATED.

DAN SIEGAL'S HAND BRAIN MODEL HELPS TO UNDERSTAND THIS AND EXPLAINS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE 'FLIP OUR LID'.


HAND BRAIN MODEL - PARENTS  
(NHS.WALES)



What happens when

# YOU FLIP YOUR LID


**PREFRONTAL CORTEX IS ENGAGED:**



Calm, rational thought, mental flexibility: Able to make good decisions

**LID IS FLIPPED --> AMYGDALA IS ENGAGED**

Big emotions arise - anger, fear anxiety, sadness. Unable to make good decisions or calm down.



Source: The Whole Brain Child

WWW.RAISINGKIDSWITHPURPOSE.COM



# COMMUNICATION

## Listen and empathise

As they grow and become more independent, young people are not always looking for someone to solve their problems for them but someone with whom they can share their feelings and will listen to them without judgement.

## Use PACE techniques

A useful way to relate to young people is by being playful, accepting, curious and empathetic. **PACE** is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the child feel safe.

## P

### PLAYFULNESS

This involves expressing pleasure, joy, hope and fun. TIP: Use a light tone of voice.

## A

### ACCEPTANCE

This involves acknowledging and accepting the child or teen's inner experience. Including their; thoughts, wishes, needs, feelings and motivations. TIP: Accept the child or teen's feelings or emotions, but not their harmful behaviour.

## C

### CURIOSITY

This involves wondering about the reasons behind the behaviour which often leads to a better understanding. TIP: Wonder about what's beneath the behaviour.

## E

### EMPATHY

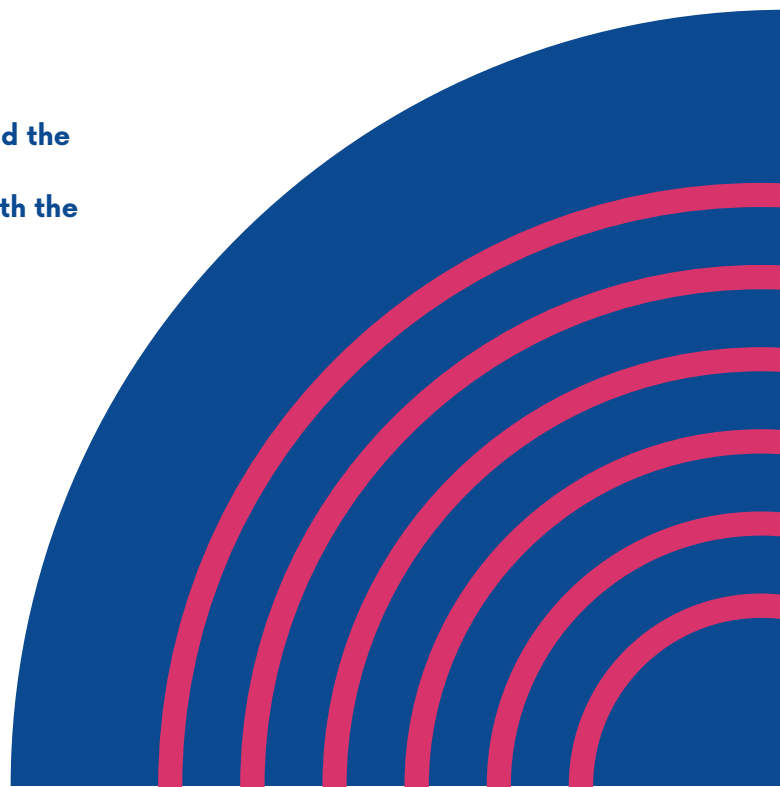
This involves showing that you understand and have compassion for your child or teen's experience. TIP: Show the child or teen that their experience is important to you.

<https://cavuhb.nhs.wales/files/resilience-project/parent-and-carers-guide-to-pace-pdf/>

Have a look at these useful videos for more information:

[How to use PACE in therapeutic parenting | Adoption | a practical look \(youtube.com\)](#)

[P.A.C.E a quick guide to help your child \(youtube.com\)](#)





# PACE IN PRACTICE

**P**

## PLAYFULNESS

Example - make a game of getting tasks done, or practice socialising using a role-play



**A**

## ACCEPTANCE

Example - "I didn't realise that you feel like that, I'm sorry it feels that way to you" or "I can see how you feel this is unfair. You wanted to play longer" or "I can hear you saying that you hate me and you're feeling really cross. I'll still be here for you after you calm down"



**C**

## CURIOSITY

Example - "I'm wondering if you broke the toy because you were feeling angry." "When she couldn't play with you today, I'm wondering if you thought that meant she doesn't like you." Sentence starters - I wonder if.... Could it be...? Can you help me understand...? Tell me if I'm getting this wrong... It sounds like you might really be struggling with...



**E**

## EMPATHY

"You are so upset about this right now. That must be really hard!" "You wanted to have another turn so badly. You were so excited about it and it's so unfair that we ran out of time". "I know it's hard for you to hear what I'm saying." Sentence starters - It sounds like it's been really tough... I am so sorry it's been so hard for you... I can't even imagine how that was for you...



# NOTICING THE BIGGER PICTURE

## Pause, take a step back and notice the bigger picture

Some things that may look like a mental health challenge may be the result of other things going on in our lives. It is important to remember that if a child or young person is behaving like this, they may be reacting in a normal way to something that they are experiencing.

This does not mean that your child or young person can't get support, it just means that how we talk about it will be a little different. It might also mean that another service or organisation is better placed to support your child or young person.

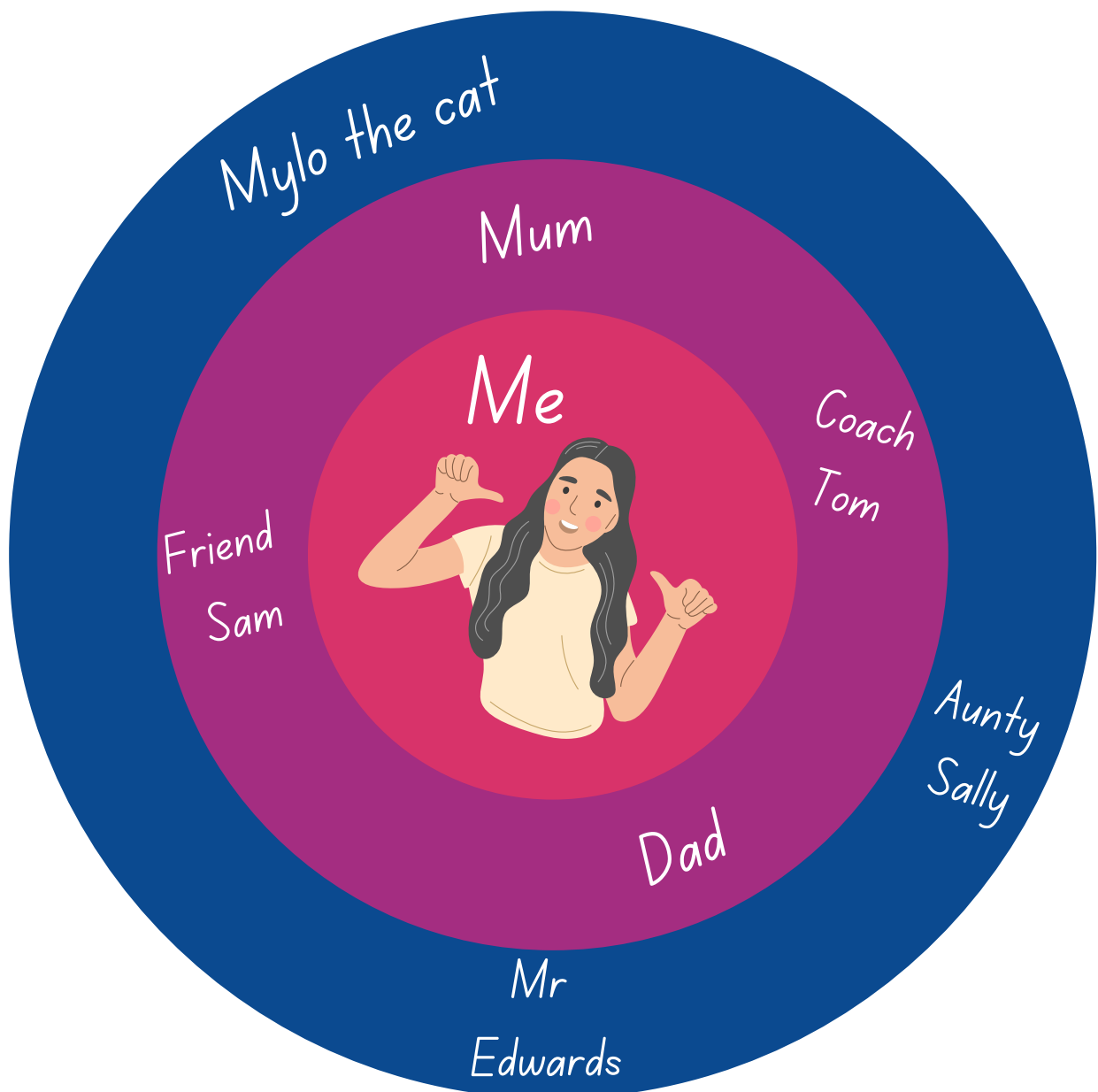
If this is the case we will explain this to you and tell you about other services that may be able to help you and your family.



# USING YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

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Having people around you to help and support you is really important, this may include family, friends, neighbours, school, professionals, community police and club leaders. Parents and carers, and also children and young people need a support network around them of trusted adults. Here's an example below:



For further information on support services, please turn to  
**'SUPPORT SERVICES'**

# ACTIVITY 1

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Take a moment to list out all the 'supporters' in your support network. It may be you notice that you find it hard to ask for help, feeling and thinking that you should be able to manage this yourself, please kindly remind yourself of the saying 'it takes a village to raise a child'. You do not have to manage alone. Think about who you may seek support from and what type of support you are seeking e.g. a friend may be a great listening ear when you need to talk and let of a bit of steam, whereas a neighbour may be great to call upon when you need support caring for one child, when another is feeling distressed.

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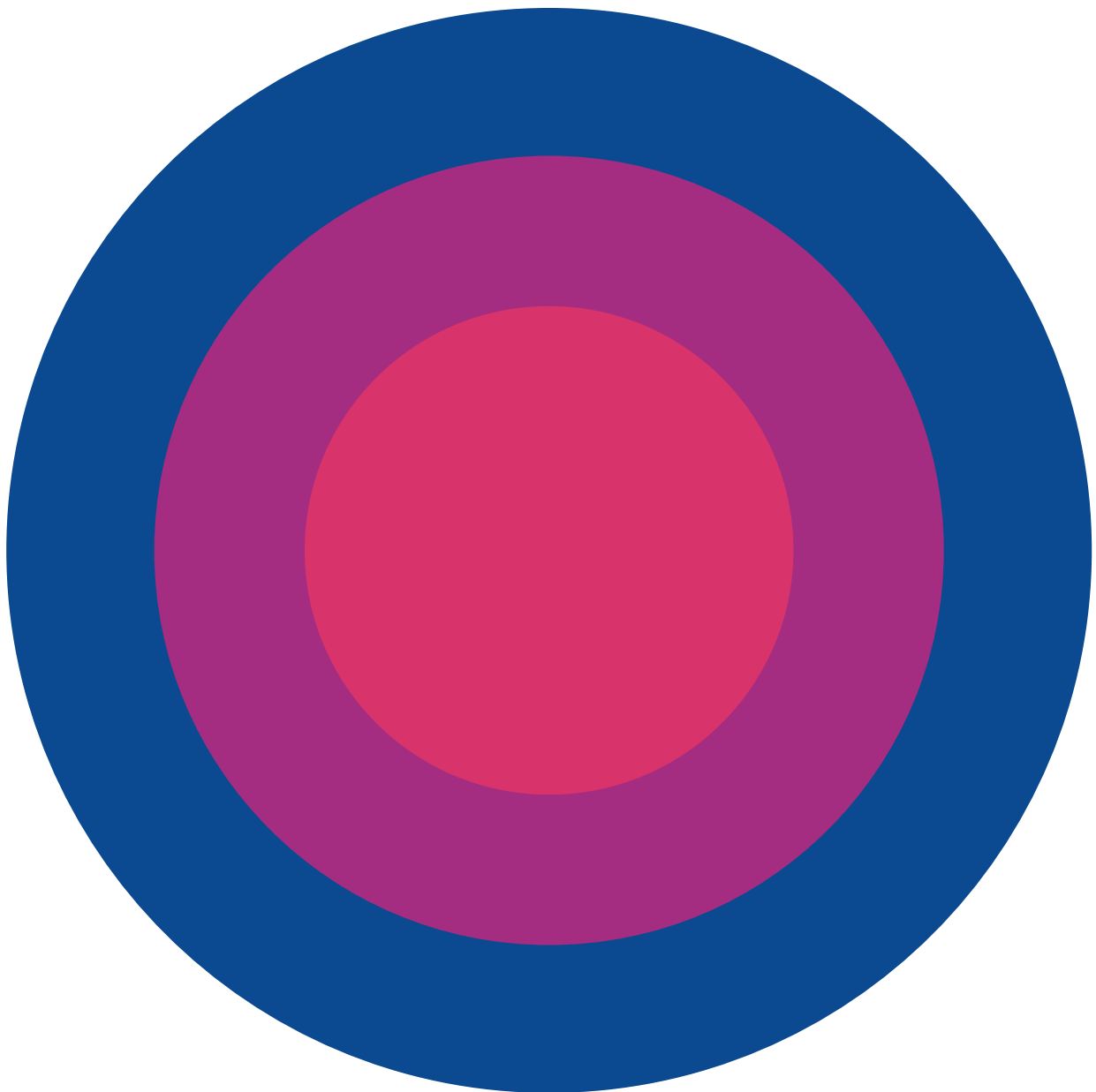
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# ACTIVITY 2

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Take a moment with your child, to talk through and draw out the 'supporters' in their support network. Encourage them to access support from a range of trusted adults, and model to them through your own help-seeking behaviours that they don't need to be afraid to ask for help.



# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD DURING A CRISIS

## WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN MY CHILD IS IN A CRISIS?

For urgent Mental Health support call 111 and press option 2. This line is open 24/7 if you need to talk to someone urgently about your mental health, or you're concerned about a family member.

If you cannot keep you child, yourself or others around you safe, call 999 or go straight to A&E.

For more info on how to get support during a crisis, please check out the link below:

<https://cavyoungwellbeing.wales/need-help-now/#in-crisis>



# KEEPING SAFE

## HOW CAN I KEEP MY CHILD SAFE DURING A CRISIS?

### TALK ABOUT IT

Talking to your child about suicidal thoughts can be difficult and feel very daunting. Remember, starting the conversation is the most important thing. Papyrus have developed resources to help guide parents through the process of supporting a child who is experiencing suicidal thoughts and urges to self-harm.

It provides guidance on steps that may help you to ask your child if they are thinking about suicide, including asking clearly and directly, and staying calm:

**[Supporting-Your-Child-A5-Booklet-English-2023.pdf](#)**  
([papyrus-uk.org](https://papyrus-uk.org))

### DEVELOP A SAFETY PLAN

Developing a safety plan with your child is an important part of helping to keep them safe. This can be completed alongside a professional or can be completed by parents with their child collaboratively. Papyrus have shared a blank safety plan which you can complete with your child, to help staying safe right now. It involves thinking together about reasons the child wants to live, ways the environment can be adapted to increase safety, what is making it hard to remain safe right now, what strengths does the young person have to remain safe and who can they reach out to for support?

**[Suicide safety plan | Papyrus UK | Suicide Prevention Charity](#)** ([papyrus-uk.org](https://papyrus-uk.org))



# CRISIS HELPLINES

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Ensuring both children, young people and families have access to crisis lines which they can access if things get difficult and they feel unable to keep themselves or someone they care for safe. It's recommended to save these numbers in your phonebook, so they are easily accessible if you need them.

## 111 PRESS 2

For urgent mental health support call 111 and press OPTION 2. If you need to talk to someone urgently about your mental health, or you're concerned about a family member, call NHS 111 Wales and select option 2 to be placed in direct contact with a mental health professional in your area.

## PAPYRUS

If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be you can contact HOPELINE247 for confidential support and practical advice. Call 0800 068 4141 or text 07860039967

## SHOUT

Shout is a free, confidential, 24/7 text support service for anyone in the UK who is struggling to cope. To start a conversation, text the word 'SHOUT' to 85258.

## YOUNG MINDS CRISIS MESSENGER

For free, confidential crisis support for topics such as suicidal thoughts, abuse, assault, self-harm, bullying or relationship issues, text 'YM' to 85258. Available 24/7.

## MEIC CYMRU

Meic Cymru is a bilingual confidential and free information and advice helpline for children and young people. Call on 080880 23456, text on 84001 or chat online



# SUPPORT SERVICES

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**HERE IS SOME FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE WITHIN CARDIFF AND VALE:**

## **THE HANGOUT**

The Hangout is a mental health and emotional wellbeing support and activity hub for young people aged 11-18. It has been developed by Children, Young People and Family Health Services at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board in partnership with Platform, a mental health charity that works with young people to promote positive wellbeing. Based in Cardiff City Centre, it is a safe and alternative space for young people who are facing challenges with their mental health — ranging from a one off 'bad day' to those who may already be accessing specialist support but require space and someone to talk to between appointments. Young people can access a range of support for different levels of need, including 1:1 contact with a member of staff, group work, peer support and access to signposting or referral information (including access to computers). These can be delivered alongside specialist services.

**T: 0300 3732717 / E: [hangout@platform.org](mailto:hangout@platform.org) / [www.platform4yp.org](http://www.platform4yp.org)**

## **FAMILY LIVES**

A peer support service for parents/carers of children aged 0-18 with emotional wellbeing and/or mental health issues. Our staff and volunteers support people by offering emotional and practical support, which aims to enable people to regain balance in their life. We do this by offering a listening ear and understanding and developing positive peer relationships. We support people to find their own strengths and solutions, build their confidence and self-esteem. We help them to develop a toolkit and coping strategies on their journey to achieving better family harmony by looking after themselves and being able to support their children. Our Peer Supporters have lived experience and have a good understanding of what parents/carers of children with mental health issues are going through and coping with. Family lives peer support offer the following types of support:

- Weekly 1:1 support for approximately 6 –8 weeks alongside drop –in groups
- Phone and online support
- Our free online parenting courses and access to relevant parent training and group sessions
- Signposting to relevant local support organisations that can provide help and support
- Online peer support forum where people can engage and connect with each other in a safe space, offer and receive support, share and gain information about coping strategies, local community events and relevant helpful organisations.

**T: 0808 800 2222 / E: [askus@familylives.org.uk](mailto:askus@familylives.org.uk) / [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)**

# SUPPORT SERVICES

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## **EARLY HELP SERVICES**

Early Help services in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan provide children, young people, families and professionals with information and support on a range of topics that could affect you and your family. Examples include low self-esteem, relationships with your family and the loss of an important person in your life. Wherever you live, the early help service will listen to you and assess your needs. They will either support you and your family directly or point you in the direction of a service that can help you with specific needs.

Cardiff Family Gateway -  
T: 03000 133 133/ E: [ContactFAS@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:ContactFAS@cardiff.gov.uk)

Vale Families First -  
T: 0800 0327 322/ E: [familiesfirstadvice@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:familiesfirstadvice@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

## **SILVERCLOUD**

SilverCloud offers online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) programmes for people aged 16 and over with mild-moderate levels of depression, anxiety or stress.

Browse a list of programmes and choose one to complete over a 12-week period. For best results, the platform should be used 15-20 minutes a day, three to four times a week. You'll receive fortnightly feedback from a qualified SilverCloud Supporter as you work your way through the programme.

<https://nhs.wales.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/>

## **ACTION FOR CHILDREN**

Action for Children run a one to one web chat for parents and carers to speak to a qualified parenting coach. It can be accessed Monday to Friday via web chat and email – check the website for further details.

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/>

## **SNAP CYMRU**

Information, advice and support for parents, children and young people who have or may have special education needs or disabilities

<https://www.snapcymru.org/>

## **YOUNG MINDS PARENT HELPLINE**

Contact Young Minds for information, advice and emotional support about the mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25.

T: 0808 802 5544 / Use webchat between 9:30am – 4pm  
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-helpline-and-webchat>

# SUPPORT SERVICES

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## **PAPYRUS**

PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide is the UK charity dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people. If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be, you can contact HOPELINE247 for confidential support and practical advice.

T: 0800 0684141 / Text: 07860039967 / E: [pate@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pate@papyrus-uk.org)

## **GINGERBREAD WALES**

Gingerbread provide expert advice and information to support all single parents so that they have the tools to support their children and themselves. Gingerbread also provide a support network so that no single parent is ever alone.

T: 0808 802 0925 / [www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)

## **KIDSCAPE**

Kidscape offer a helpline and email service for parents, carers and other adults who have concerns about a child or young person being bullied.

T: 02078 235 430 / E: [parentsupport@kidscape.org.uk](mailto:parentsupport@kidscape.org.uk) / [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

