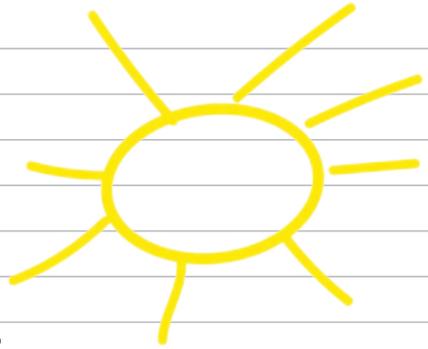

TEEN YEARS:

WHAT
WE
WISH WE
KNEW



Introduction

Hello,

This booklet was created for you by North Tyneside Youth Council's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing committee. This is made up of young people your own age to tell you what we wish we knew ahead of our teen years. This means that what we say in this book is simply advice - not medical guidance. Nonetheless, we believe that mental health is just as important as physical health so this booklet has everything that we think you need to know throughout your time in education. From taking care of your own mental health, knowing how to help others to generally keeping emotionally well. Keep this booklet somewhere safe as you never know when you may need it!

Enjoy,

**Abigail, Alannah, Alisha, Cameron, Connor,
Daniel, Lyra, Poppy, Sharon and Suzie
(NTYC Mental Health and
Emotional Wellbeing Committee)**

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- 12 **LGBTQIA+** - learn more about the LGBTQIA+ community and how to support friends within it.
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First day

First day at school

We were all nervous starting our new schools but you must remember that everyone is in the same boat, most people will be nervous and that is completely normal! No matter if you are just starting secondary school or are changing schools completely, there are some things that you should expect.



Finding your way around school

The teachers in your school should be more than willing to help you if you can't find where you're supposed to go and other pupils will be there to help you settle in and perhaps answer questions if you're unsure. If there is a map on offer definitely ask about it.

Schoolwork and Homework

When you get homework, it's best to get into a good habit and routine. Don't leave it until last minute, it won't help you learn in the long term and not really that efficient. And remember, it's normal to worry about schoolwork and homework or feel confused sometimes.

However, not understanding something doesn't mean you're falling behind. If you're struggling at all, talk to your teacher - they're there to help! Always leave some time aside for yourself. Overworking yourself is just as bad for you as not working at all.

Try something new

Trying something new is a great thing to do when starting secondary school as it's a fresh start — whether it be a club, a hobby or new opportunity offered by your school. It's also a great way to make new friends and explore different interests. Ask yourself, what's the worst that could go wrong?

First day

Your first day

Now, that wasn't so bad, was it? Keep track on how your days are going!

Day	Feeling	Why?	One good thing that happened today?
1	😊😊😊😊😊😊	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2	😊😊😊😊😊😊	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3	😊😊😊😊😊😊	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4	😊😊😊😊😊😊	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5	😊😊😊😊😊😊	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Worried in Wallsend

"I've never used public transport before and I'm not sure how to use the buses and get to school. I'm worried I'll miss the bus or get the wrong one. What do I do?"

Auntie Suzie

You can ask an older sibling, your parents or someone who uses buses. Sit down and talk to them and plan out how you can get to and from school. Your school might also have some information on scholars buses specific to your school, be sure to check those out via their website.

DON'T FORGET!

You can apply for a Pop card for discounted ticket prices! Check out which card you're eligible for by visiting <https://www.nexus.org.uk/ticket-information/pop>

People you can trust

It is always good to have someone you can trust. As well as friends, you can also trust teachers. This may be a close teacher, your favourite teacher or any member of staff! Fill in the table below in your own time so you can come back to it at any time if you need to talk to a trusted adult.

My form teacher	<input type="text"/>	A teacher with a funny name	<input type="text"/>
My head of year	<input type="text"/>	Another teacher I trust	<input type="text"/>
A teacher I can trust	<input type="text"/>	A teacher who reminds you of yourself	<input type="text"/>
My favourite teacher	<input type="text"/>	A really fun teacher	<input type="text"/>

FRIENDSHIP

Making friends

Making new friends may seem daunting at first but everyone starts somewhere. Whether you've started a new school or you're in a class with none of your friends, here's some ways on how to make friends.

You could:

- join an extracurricular club to meet people with similar interests to you
- take something to school to share at break time, like sweets or a new game
- speak to someone new! If you see someone having lunch on their own, why not go over and sit with them? You could ask how their day is going and start a conversation about what you both like to do at the weekend. Maybe find out if you have any classes in common
- share a song or video you find

Remember that it's scary going up to someone new but you'll gain more confidence and don't be hard on yourself if you freeze up - you can always try another time. It can take time to make friends, it doesn't happen overnight. Also, you don't have to be friends with everyone, you can't get along with every person that you meet.



FRIENDSHIP

Toxic friendships

Toxic friends are pessimistic, make you feel guilty, are not trustworthy and ultimately inspire unhappiness. Toxic friendships can do a lot of damage and completely destroy our self-esteem.

There are fights and misunderstandings in every friendship.

However, some people just aren't good for us overall. Know how to set boundaries with friends and don't feel inclined to break those for anyone. Here are some ways you can identify a toxic friendship.

Questions	Always	Sometimes	Never
• Do you feel left out?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Does your friend put you down?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do you feel like a last resort?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do your friends mock you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do they treat you worse than they do other people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do they expect you to believe and act in the same way they do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do they talk badly about you behind your back?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do they control who you talk to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do they lie to you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Does your friend lead you into uncomfortable situations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FRIENDSHIP

Healthy vs unhealthy behaviours

Choose two highlighters or coloured pens and decide which ones are healthy and unhealthy

Healthy

Unhealthy

You're left feeling drained or even resentful

Promises broken and secrets spread

You're left feeling happy or uplifted

You both put effort into the friendship

You feel like you can be yourself

They always lie

Always tells the truth

You're the only one putting effort into the friendship

You stand up for each other

You feel safe and secure

You feel worried or like your trust is broken

You feel like you have to change for them

Promises are kept and secrets safe

They talk badly behind your back

FRIENDSHIP

How to confront a toxic friendship

Remember you feel this way for a reason, don't let them make you feel bad for standing up for yourself. However, its not always about ending a friendship immediately. Your friend could not understand how their behaviour affects you. It's best to try and explain your feelings and your point of view. A true friend would try to understand your side and change their ways. If they aren't trying to do that, they aren't a true friend.

How to end a toxic friendship

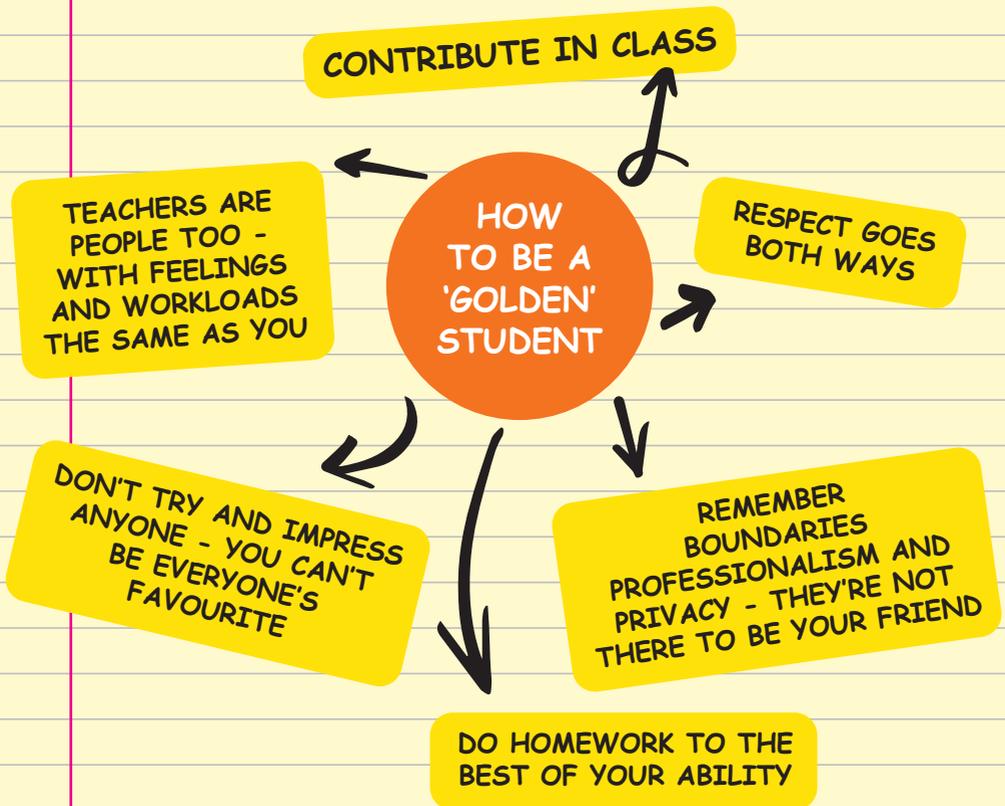
Saying goodbye to your friend may be difficult, but it will benefit you the most in the future. Its best to break all contact with them and try to avoid them if possible. They may try to talk to you or manipulate you into feeling bad however it will be for the best. Try to make new healthy friendships with our tips.

RELATIONSHIPS



Teachers

Relationships with teachers are important to maintain and develop. They can be a part of a great support system and someone to talk to and trust. Here are some tips on how to create a good relationship with your teachers.



At the end of the day, remember they are there to help you and please ask them if you are struggling.

RELATIONSHIPS



Family

You're not always going to see eye to eye with your family and that's natural. You can always agree to disagree. Taking time to yourself is important to reflect on disagreements and cool off. However, it becomes too much or you're concerned you can speak to a trusted teacher or see our 'how to help yourself' section at the back of this booklet.

Frustrated in Forest Hall

"I feel like my privacy is constantly being invaded as my parents are trying to be involved in every part of my life. It's so frustrating. What can I do?"

Auntie Suzie

Try talking to your parents. They may not realise how overbearing they are being. Reassure them if they are concerned about any aspects and this could lead to a more trusting and freeing relationship between you all. Try actively showing them you are responsible and trustworthy - this can lead to great things!

Romantic

Romantic relationships for young people are not the be all and end all (you are probably not going to marry each other). Remember, just like friends, a good person to be in a relationship with will not force or pressure you into situations you are uncomfortable with, so remember to choose people carefully that you would want to be in a relationship with. A good relationship works by respecting one another, and their boundaries, sometimes using compromise to work together with one another. Remember if they do not respect your boundaries, they are toxic. Don't forget, if you have never met them in person, you should probably not be in a relationship with them. When talking with people online, remember they might not always be who they say they are, always be cautious about people you may not know.

LGBTQIA+

Reminder: You don't have to identify with any of these labels, stick to what feels comfortable. You aren't defined by a label, they're just words some people like to use to help them understand themselves better. Take them or leave them! And, of course, there are more identities and sexualities covered in the plus sign. You can go to www.stonewall.org.uk to learn more.

Labels and definitions



Lesbian: a woman being attracted to another woman.

Some non-binary people may identify with this term.



Gay: A man being attracted to another man.

Sometimes used as a generic term to describe same sex attraction.



Bisexual: an umbrella term for someone who is attracted to more than one gender. May identify as pansexual, queer or omnisexual.



Transgender: an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.



Queer: an umbrella term for someone who doesn't identify as straight/someone who is unsure of their sexuality.



Intersex: a general term used to refer to people born with biological sex characteristics which are not typically male or female.



Aromantic: a spectrum where someone feels little to no romantic attraction to anyone.



Asexual: a spectrum where someone feels little to no sexual attraction to anyone.

Coming out to someone is very daunting and you must make sure you know you can trust them and you are comfortable with them. Never feel forced to come out to someone, you don't owe them that. Unfortunately, homophobia and transphobia are not completely removed from society so be careful who you come out to. It's also okay if you don't want to come out and want to keep it to yourself.

LGBTQIA+

Pronouns: a how to guide

Pronouns are what people can use to refer to someone without using a name. Some people may not use the pronouns that others assume they use. For example, Lesley uses they/them pronouns. Use the correct pronouns for Lesley in their story below.

Lesley was having a day by the beach. _____ went to the Spanish City and _____ ate some fish and chips. _____ left for Tynemouth priory but _____ soon realised that left _____ bag. _____ asked if anyone had seen it. Luckily, Sam knew it was _____ and gave it back to _____.

If you have changed your pronouns, it may take some people a while to get used to your new pronouns and identity, especially if they have known you for a long time. They more than likely are not doing this to be hurtful or to disregard your feelings.

Deadnaming and misgendering

Misgendering: referring to someone using a pronoun that does not correctly reflect their affirmed gender. For example, calling a transgender woman "he", "him", or "sir".

Deadnaming: using the birth name or another former name of a transgender or non-binary person that they no longer use, whether a legal change or not.

Deadnaming or misgendering someone is very harmful and although not always intentional, it always has an impact on the person you are referring to.

Help! Exam stress and anxiety

Exams are scary things, or they seem scary but when you think about it exams really aren't any scarier than the work you do in class. However, no matter what, our brains will always perceive exams as scary. Here are some ways you can cope with exam stress.

- listening to music/podcasts
- walks or going outside
- watching your favourite shows/films/content creators
- talk to someone
- take some time out of your day to reflect
- organise: it makes things seem more manageable

Sci Test 13th
REVISE!!
00

Revision Help

Knowing how to revise is a huge step in reducing exam stress but isn't often talked about. Here are some helpful websites and tools that we use and why we like them.

- **BBC Bitesize** - concise information on all topics, lots of activities including quizzes, can be used on any device.
- **Get others to quiz you** - they can prompt you to get the answer and often you can have fun doing it
- **Revision games** - These can be randomised and there are many examples of these online.
- **Flashcards** - quickfire revision that can be done with friends or by yourself.
- **Workbooks** - you can get workbooks on your relevant subject and exam board and normally match the corresponding textbook.
- **Highlighting and annotating** - and making sure to do something with this highlighted information.
- **Break things down into smaller chunks** - this makes even the trickiest questions seem easier.

Help! Exam stress and anxiety

What is a panic attack?

A panic attack is where you get a rush of sudden feelings of anxiety. Some symptoms include trouble breathing, trembling, feeling faint, sweating and nausea. Be aware that most of these symptoms can also be symptoms of other conditions or problems, so you may not always be experiencing a panic attack. It's important to keep in mind that, although panic attacks are frightening, they're not dangerous and an attack will not cause you any physical harm. Here are some helpful things to try to keep in mind if you or someone you know is having a panic attack. Panic attacks and anxiety in general.

Square breathing

Follow the instructions to control your breathing.

5-4-3-2-1 sensory exercise

Name ...

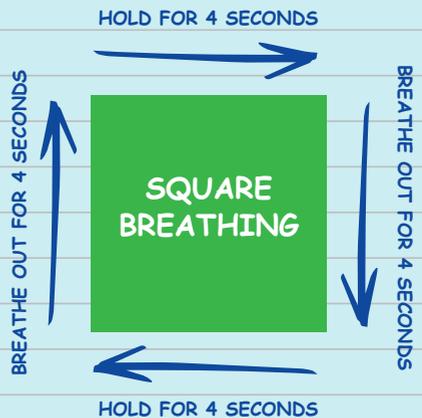
5 things you can see

4 things you can smell

3 things you can hear

2 things you can touch

1 thing you can taste



If your anxiety is overwhelming or getting difficult to manage, you may need further support to manage your anxiety. You can do this by getting help and advice from some of the places mentioned in the help yourself section.

RE Due wed 11th!!

DEPRESSION & FEELING DOWN

Everyone feels down sometimes and that is completely normal. You may just need some time for yourself doing things you enjoy to make you feel better. However, it's not okay to bottle things up so if you do feel down, speak to a trusted adult or, if you would like further help, call **Childline on 0800 1111**. This is a free and anonymous number.

Ways to try and feel better:

- go for a walk
- talk to people
- eat your favourite foods
- watch your favourite tv show

Depression - a serious mental illness that effects how you feel.

Depression is clinically diagnosed by a doctor. Remember, if you are feeling down you may not have depression.

If you need further support, take a look at the help yourself section where there are useful links and websites.

Low in Longbenton

"I have been feeling low for a while now and I can't tell anyone about it because I'm embarrassed about it. I haven't slept and I'm worried about my family/friends' reactions."

Auntie Suzie

You can't bottle up your emotions. Nothing should stop you from sleeping and it certainly shouldn't affect your learning. Don't feel embarrassed as what you are feeling is normal and everyone feels like this sometimes. Speak to someone about how you're feeling, it will help.

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

Sometimes, our friends will go through difficult phases of their lives or have some struggles with their mental health. It's important that we take care of our friends as we don't want their mental health to worsen!

Identifying when a friend might need help:

Here are some signs that your friends may be showing if they are struggling:

- **Withdrawal or self-excluding** (for example, your friend may not be hanging out with you as much, or stop going out and doing group activities which they may have done before)
- **Changes in behaviour** (for example, acting carelessly or trying to change themselves to fit in)
- **More irritable** (for example, may be angrier than usually or more upset than usual)
- **Lack of interest in activities they previously enjoyed** (for example, your friend who likes netball doesn't go to netball club anymore or doesn't want to play netball anymore)
- **Change in eating habits** (for example, they may eat more/less food than usual)
- **Decline in schoolwork** (for example, may be doing worse in tests than usual)
- **Talking negatively about themselves or others** (for example, saying that they are bad at certain subjects in school a lot)
- **Change in sleeping patterns** (for example, sleeping too much or too little)
- **Attention Seeking** (for example, acting out in class)
- **Darker jokes, especially online** (for example jokes that could be viewed as offensive or sensitive)

Remember - There is only so much you can do. It's important that you talk to someone qualified if you are really worried about a friend and when you are concerned about their safety. You are not responsible for someone's mental health!

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

Don't use that list to diagnose your friends, as many of these signs may link in with other issues. It might always be that something isn't wrong, and that people are having an off day. Either that or the issue may be too personal, and they may not want to share with you. But it's always good to check in on your friend and show that you are always there for them!

You could also use these signs to keep an eye on your own mental health. If you notice you are becoming more isolated or your mood is off with others, maybe you should think about why this is and perhaps look at working on this.

How to start difficult conversations:

Starting "awkward" conversations is never easy and it's very easy to overthink, freak out or dread starting them. But of course, you don't need to worry, there are simple ways to start off a conversation. Thank goodness it's not rocket science!

- "Hi, how are you?"
- "I've noticed you've been acting off lately. Is everything okay?"
- "Do you want to talk about it?"
- "I'm always here if you want to talk"
- If they act out remind them to take a break or walk away

Concerned in Cullercoats

"My friend has been acting unusual, I think they need some help but I am unsure of what to do and who to ask."

Auntie Suzie

Try to talk to your friend first and ask them about it before getting other people involved. They may just be having an off day or could just be tired or stressed. Talk to them about it and if they do need help, then you can direct them to some of the activities in this booklet or some of the websites in the back. Also, keep an eye on them and make sure they know they can always come and talk to you.

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND Are U OK?

Sometimes the easiest thing to do is to distract yourself with fun activities that can help you and your friends. Picture the scene, you're with your friends and you're brainstorming something to do. Stuck on ideas? Well, you could:

- **Help others:**

How could you do this?

- **Laser tag:**

Are there any other fun games to play?

- **Art/painting:**

What things could you paint?

- **Exercise:**

What kind of exercise would you and a friend enjoy?

- **Go outside:**

Are there any parks nearby? A beach?

- **Go shopping:**

Is there anything on your wishlist?

- **Do some sport:**

What fun sport could you play with a group of friends?

Draft up some answers to these questions and you can come back to this list whenever you need a distraction.

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

Are U
OK?

There are many benefits to helping others. Evidence shows that helping others creates happy feelings that will leave you feeling less stressed and relaxed. Here is a list of some of the wholesome benefits of helping others, this is no means the whole list:

- **Boost your self esteem**
- **Help you feel better**
- **Helps them feel better**
- **Gives them a support network**
- **Its good to check up on your friends**

Try it out.

Make some notes on how it makes you feel to help out your friends.
Maybe ask them how they feel now too.



How to help yourself ☺

As well as looking out for others, we also need to look out for ourselves as mental health affects everyone and we all should take time for ourselves. Here are some useful links and numbers to call, to help you look after your own mental health.

Useful links:

- **Kooth** - www.kooth.com
- **Headspace** - www.headspace.com (there is also an app)
- **Childline** - www.childline.org.uk
- **Young Minds** - www.youngminds.org.uk
- **Anxiety UK** - www.anxietyuk.org.uk (for anxiety)
- **Hope again** - hopeagain.org.uk (for bereavement)
- **FRANK** - www.talktofrank.com (for advice and info on drugs)
- **Hub of Hope** - hubofhope.co.uk
- **Me and my mind** - www.meandmymind.nhs.uk
- **On my mind** - annafreud.org/on-my-mind
- **Relate** - relate.org.uk (for advice on relationships)
- **Young Stonewall** - youngstonewall.org.uk (LGBTQIA+)



How to help yourself ☺

Sometimes, music can really boost our mood or even just validate our feelings too. Here is a list of song recommendations. There are some that have some inspirational lyrics, some to sing along to and others just to hopefully make you feel a bit better. Yes, some of them may be cliché but check them out below.

- **Extraordinary Being** - Emeli Sandé
- **Love My Life** - Robbie Williams
- **Thursday** - Jess Glynne
- **This Is Me** - Keala Settle
- **You Gotta Be** - Des'ree
- **Unstoppable** - Lily-Jo
- **Soldier, Poet, King** - The Oh Hellos
- **I Will Survive** - Gloria Gaynor
- **Don't Worry Be Happy** - Bobby McFerrin
- **Best Day Of My Life** - American Authors
- **Sunkissed** - khai dreams
- **Freaks** - Jordan Clarke
- **Thank You For the Music** - ABBA

Whether you listen to our suggestions or not,
take 5 minutes out of your day to really listen to this:

Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen)

Quindon Tarver, Josh Abrahams



