

# Somerset Youth and Community Service

## Emotional health - it's good to talk



**Aim:** To start to discuss ways of maintaining good emotional health

### Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the session the participants will:

- ➔ Identify things that may worry them and identify different coping strategies
- ➔ Understand how talking can help and how they can be a good listener for others
- ➔ Have contacts for Childline and Samaritans

**Group size:** 6 - 10

**Time:** 1 hour      **Venue:** small room or quiet space

### Materials:

- Flipchart and marker pens
- Childline and Samaritans cards

TIME	WHAT	WITH
5 mins	Explain the aims of the session.	
5 mins	<p>Start by asking the group to describe a typical young person – start by asking for a name (try for one that isn't gender specific, like Pat or Jo) and then ask them to describe the sorts of things that Pat may like doing – could be talking to friends, playing sport, shopping etc – write these on one half of a sheet of flipchart paper, headed 'likes'.</p> <p>Then ask what they think Pat might worry about – this could be school, the way they look, relationships, school, their future, bullying, friends etc. Write down the worries on the other half of the flipchart and then ask how Pat may be feeling about his / her worries – they may say sad, anxious, scared etc.</p> <p>Say to the group that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's normal to experience difficult feelings.</li> <li>• Problems will make you feel things too. Problems change and the feelings you experience may change too.</li> <li>• This is very normal and part of life. Sometimes we struggle when we are having problems, but there are always ways you can find strength to help yourself feel better, and you can also help your friends do this too.</li> <li>• Pat experiences some of the same things you do. It is important that Pat tries and finds ways to cope when things get tough and is able to deal with his/her problems.</li> </ul> <p>Talking is a great way to do this and it is a great way of making sure you stay emotionally healthy.</p>	Flipchart and pens



TIME	WHAT	WITH
5 mins	<p>What is emotional health?</p> <p>Have a discussion. Then sum up by saying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional health isn't like physical health, which remains quite constant unless you catch a cold or have an accident</li> <li>• Emotional health can change a lot (daily or even hourly) and it is hard to see when someone around you might be struggling with their emotional health.</li> <li>• There is a definite link between physical and emotional health.</li> <li>• Ask for a few examples where physical health can affect emotional health.</li> <li>• Everyone, including Pat, has moments when they feel OK and happy, then something may happen and suddenly Pat may feel a bit down or sad (give an example appropriate to age).</li> </ul>	
5 mins	<p>Ask the group to list the sorts of things that they can do to make themselves feel a better when they are down – write them on your flipchart.</p> <p>These things can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing football</li> <li>• riding your bike or getting some exercise</li> <li>• listening to music</li> <li>• playing a video game</li> <li>• watching a film</li> <li>• having a bath</li> <li>• shopping</li> <li>• meeting friends</li> <li>• talking to friends</li> </ul> <p>The main point to get across is that everyone feels bad at times but that there are coping strategies to help them feel better - anything to help you relax and take your mind off what is bothering you. Make sure you don't let inappropriate strategies (fighting, drinking etc) get on the list!</p> <p>Tell the group that you're going to focus on talking as a great way of making yourself feel better, and as a way you can help your friends feel better, when they're unhappy.</p>	Flipchart and pens
5 mins	<p>Explain that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talking is a great way to improve your emotional health - especially when something is bothering you.</li> <li>• Everyone needs to talk. It is important to talk about your feelings and to understand that having problems are very normal and a part of life.</li> <li>• We all experience problems, but we all react differently to problems, even when they appear to be the same problem. We all cope differently.</li> </ul> <p>Stress that If you don't talk, no one knows. If no one knows, you can't get help.</p>	Flipchart and pens



TIME	WHAT	WITH
	<p>Ask for examples of who they can talk to and write on the flipchart. These could include brother/sister, friends, teachers, youth workers, counsellors, aunts/uncles, parents etc</p>	
10 mins	<p>Ask 'why might you not talk to someone?' and 'what would happen if you talked to the wrong person?' – answers could include that they don't trust them, they might laugh, tell someone else, be very unsympathetic.</p> <p>Talk about confidentiality – explain that as a youth worker, you can keep most things confidential, but if you feel that the young person is at risk of serious harm (for example, being physically or sexually abused) you might have to tell someone else. Allow a discussion about the sorts of things you can keep secret and the sorts you'd have to pass on. Stress that teachers and other professionals are in the same position as you.</p> <p>Ask 'who would you talk to about something that was happening that you felt might be 'serious harm'? Answers will probably include friends and family. If they are, ask if you think these people will keep it secret if they're worried about you?</p> <p>Tell the group that if they have a problem (and not necessarily a serious one), they can ring ChildLine (0800 1111) or Samaritans (116 123). Samaritans &amp; ChildLine can listen to you just like all the other people listen, but can keep what you say confidential, even if it is very serious. However, this is only the case long as you don't say who you are or where you're from. Stress that they need to check this when they call them – before they tell them anything.</p> <p>Give each young person a card with the numbers on.</p>	Childline and Samaritans cards
5 mins	<p>Explain that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listening is a very powerful part of communication. For example, we have two ears, and only one mouth. Some say, we should use them in that proportion!</li> <li>• It is important that we all take the time to listen when someone is talking to us. This could be your best friend, your parents or even you teacher.</li> <li>• There are two basic types of listening and when you are talking to someone about your feelings, you want them to listen to you using the best type. The two types of listening are: active and passive.</li> </ul> <p><b>Active listening</b> - is essentially feeding back the speakers words to them as a question. This is good as when you are speaking to someone who is actively listening to you - they ask you questions and get you to open up more about your feelings. You do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarising – to show your understanding</li> <li>• Clarifying – asking about things you don't understand 'tell me more about...'</li> <li>• Reflecting – repeating back what people have said to you, to encourage them to go on</li> <li>• Reacting – showing your empathy</li> </ul>	Flipchart and pens



TIME	WHAT	WITH
	<p>Write these on the flipchart as you explain them.</p> <p><b>Passive listening</b> - is basically someone who isn't reacting to you. This isn't necessarily bad, but when you are talking to someone about your feelings, it is better for them to actively listen to you. This will help you open up and talk about your feelings.</p> <p>Stress that listening is just listening – it's not problem solving!</p>	
10 mins	<p>Tell the group 'It's best to listen actively – it helps the person sort out their feelings and what they want to do (if anything).' And tell them they're going to have a go.</p> <p>Split the groups into pairs (and label themselves A &amp; B) and let them choose one from the following scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You've just split up with your boy / girlfriend</li> <li>• Your parents have been rowing a lot lately</li> <li>• Your mum / dad's new partner has been picking on you</li> <li>• Your friends aren't talking to you anymore</li> <li>• Your worried about your brother / sister, who has left home</li> </ul> <p>Firstly, Person A is going to talk about their pairs' scenario and Person B is going to just passively listen for three minutes. Then person B is going to talk about the scenario and Person A is going to actively listen for three minutes.</p>	
5 mins	<p>Bring the group back together and ask them how the different types of listening felt. Hopefully they will say being actively listened to was more helpful and comfortable.</p> <p>End by saying that being there for friends to listen them when they're unhappy, and talking to you friends when you are unhappy is a really good way of looking after your mental health. Remind them of the Childline and Samaritans numbers.</p>	Childline and Samaritans cards



**TALK TO US**

116 123(UK)  
116 123 (ROI)

jo@samaritans.org

07725 909090

www.samaritans.org

Chris, PO Box 90 90  
Stirling FK8 2SA

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at local events and festivals

**SAMARITANS**

**ChildLine**



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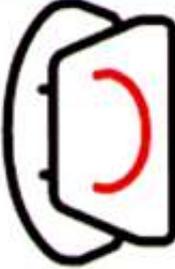
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