

# minding your mind



**A Mental Health Resource**



Youth Work Ireland  
Galway



# Foreword

We welcome this youth mental health resource booklet, which is the result of much consultation and input through Youth Work Ireland Galway working in partnership with young people. Such engagement and participation is a clear indication of the strength and vibrancy in the youth work area. This approach has shaped the development of this booklet so as to ensure that it is youth friendly in terms of its content and layout, as well as of practical benefit to its readers.

The overall aim of this mental health resource is to promote positive mental health, address issues that young people today are commonly experiencing and to encourage those going through a difficult time to reach out for support. Therefore, this is a resource that young people and their families can draw upon not only to help them to cope when they encounter challenges, but also to help to build their resilience and better mental health on an ongoing basis. This is in line with Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone (2020), which states that: *Positive mental health builds resilience so that people can adapt to challenges and adversity, get the most out of life and maintain a positive sense of wellbeing and self-worth, combined with a sense of control and self-efficacy (p. 25).*

This policy also highlights the vital role that the Voluntary and Community Sector play in providing mental health support services for the communities in which they work, and by doing so, are responsive to the needs, preferences and circumstances of those communities. In addition, it underlines the importance of supporting the national mental health promotion agenda at local level, through collaborative efforts that are effective.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all those involved in the development of this resource, as promoting the mental health and wellbeing of our young people is of key importance. We look forward to supporting its wide dissemination.

**Charlie Meehan**  
**Head of Mental Health Services, HSE,**  
**Community Healthcare West**

While mental health, particularly for young people, has been receiving more attention in recent times we still often don't stop and examine exactly what we mean when we use the term. Similarly we don't always spend time examining exactly what are the precise issues confronting young people and listen to their voice on this topic. This guide is an important step to redressing that imbalance. From the outset focussing on self-knowledge sets an important context and examines the idea of youth as a time of change which can of course present challenges and everyone has to make their own way and take their own path.

How we reflect and communicate with ourselves is hugely important in this journey. Where possible positive thoughts and perspectives will prevail in the right context and with the right support. Galway Comhairle are to be commended for undertaking the research and following through on it to produce this excellent booklet. It is highly practical and gets in to the real detail of what mental health is about, how it looks and crucially, how it feels! We should not ignore that mental health issues can have a physical impact which we need to identify. Similarly we need to deal with the modern obsession with body image and focus on true value in people.

This booklet time and again goes in to the real practical ever day issues for young people, dealing with relationships, the stresses of family and other personal issues, dealing with identity the emotions that can overwhelm us all, money, education and much much more. Most of all though the booklet provides positive and simple actions that all young people can engage in to help them meet these challenges. All of this and the unprecedented times Covid has brought. Its clear we are now on the way out of that crisis just as young people can find their way out of the challenges they encounter.

As somebody with years of involvement with youth work I can certainly attest to the central role youth work plays in building resilience and strengthening young peoples mental health. It brings young people together in a non-judgemental safe space. It is often the little subtle things that distinguish youth work from other types of activities young people engage in. The atmosphere and situations created by good youth work stay with young people for a long time and the relationships and experiences stand to them in all sorts of areas.

**Deborah Fakeye, President,  
Youth Work Ireland**

# Introduction

This resource was borne from young people and youth workers coming together to explore how to support young people's wellbeing. There are many guides available on supporting mental health and wellbeing, but the aim of the discussion was to provide a resource for young people and their parents and guardians with practical tools and strategies to overcome everyday stresses and support mental wellbeing with easy to understand and engaging content.

The resource is designed in sections where the reader can choose which part they want to focus on. Some sections are directed towards parents and guardians and some to young people. But also, the resource can be used by all ages. Readers can find practical advice and guidance that can offer insight and information into how they are feeling and help develop positive coping strategies to deal with difficult times that we sometimes face. Youth Counsellors from our Youth Counselling Service contributed and consulted on parts of the resource. There is guidance and a brief explanation on what is counselling and what is talk therapy and its benefits and information on how to access the free Youth Counselling Service for young people 12-21 years. This service is provided by qualified and accredited Counsellors in Galway City, Loughrea, Tuam, Ballinasloe, Gort, Athenry and Connemara.

We hope you find this resource useful and can dip into it when times become stressful and that the 'just a thought' boxes in some sections can be a guide to support your mental wellbeing. This resource would not have been possible without the collaboration of young people, counsellors, and youth workers to produce a resource that is practical and easy to navigate. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this resource.

**Deirdre Bermingham**  
**Managing Director**  
**Youth Work Ireland Galway**







There are a lot of things going on, both on the inside and the outside which can impact the lives, mental health, and wellbeing of young people. The good, the bad and everything in between. Sometimes these things are visible, but many are not.

# Knowing me

The lovely thing about humans is that we are all different, we are unique. Yet we spend so much time comparing ourselves unfavourably to others – we accept silly rules that we should all be the same, in looks, clothes, feelings, hopes and dreams. This just isn't possible because we all are different! So, rather than forcing yourself to fit somebody else's mould, why not spend some time figuring out who you are and build a lifestyle that brings out the best you? Teenage or adolescence is all about change. It is the journey from age 12 to 25 where a young child is transforming into a young adult, learning how to be in an ever-changing world. Becoming independent involves learning new life skills and ways of doing things, but it is also about understanding yourself, and learning how to manage your life. This all takes time and there will be lots of hiccups along the way – this is a normal part of life. As Albert Einstein said, "A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new." Another interesting thing about adolescence is that young people all go through it at their own pace. Because we are biological creatures, we all grow, physically and mentally, at the rate we need to, not at the same rate as everyone else. Yet, we give ourselves a hard time because we are not the same as everyone else. The secret here is to (a) stop bashing yourself up about something you have no control over and (b) get to know yourself so that you can live your best life. This is what we hope this booklet will do – get you started on your path to knowing, supporting, and encouraging yourself.

# Self Talk

We all have that voice in our heads that provides a running commentary on our life, and we call this self-talk. This self-talk provides a way for the brain to interpret and process daily experiences.

Self-talk can be beneficial when it is positive - calming our fears and helping us feel confident. Unfortunately, our self-talk often tends towards negativity, for example *"I can't do anything right"* or *"I'm an absolute failure."* When you allow your self-talk to run on a negative track, it can be demoralising and upsetting, can lower your mood and discourage you from trying things. The good news is that you can train your self-talk to be more positive! This can help to lift your mood, allow you to feel better, encourage you to participate and achieve more.

So, how do we do this? We can assess the situation – become aware of your self-talk – is it positive or negative?

Was that comment that just passed through your mind helpful or unhelpful? How did you feel after it?

In order to overcome toxic self-criticism, you must pay close attention to when negative thoughts arise. When they do occur, it is important to try to challenge these thoughts by asking yourself *"how true is this really?"* We can then reframe that into a positive statement. For example, if you're about to do something and you become aware that your self-talk is saying things like *"you'll never be able for that"* or *"why did you agree to do this, you're hopeless"*, stop and, if you're near a mirror or a window, look yourself in the eye, smile and say *"I can do this"* or *"I'm looking forward to this and I know I can do it well"*. All the better if you can say it out loud.

It can be difficult at first to say things which we may not believe, but the more often you become aware of negative self-talk, the easier it will be to adjust it. Likewise, the more often we speak positively, after a while you won't need to be consciously making the effort, positive self-talk will become a habit! Acknowledging how we talk and how we feel, and what is true and what is not, are key in helping us in the long term. Remember, most of us would not allow anyone else to speak to us as badly as we allow ourselves to do it!



# Youth Surveys

In 2020, the Galway County Comhairle na nÓg committee surveyed young people throughout Galway city and county about their opinions on the mental health and wellbeing of young people, and to discover more about supports available to young people and how they could be improved.

- 59% of young people surveyed believed there is still a stigma surrounding mental health
- 53% of young people surveyed were unaware of youth support services in their local area
- 60% of young people had either good, very good or excellent mental wellbeing
- 19% reported that their mental wellbeing was poor
- Young people expressed inconsistencies regarding mental health education in Galway

## Survey recommendations

- More needs to be done on reducing the stigma surrounding mental health and wellbeing among young people
- Implementation of regular wellbeing classes in the school curriculum
- Improved mental health supports available to students within school
- Community mental health campaign

**Planet Youth** is an initiative that works to improve health and life outcomes for young people, and which examines a

number of areas relating to young people including family and social circles, health and wellbeing, substance use and social environments. It is a five-year plan, and the following figures are from the Planet Youth Survey in 2021.

- 37.7% of females and 55.9% of males in Galway rated their mental health as good or very good. There were no representative figures given for young people who identified otherwise in relation to their gender.
- 27.1% of females and 15.1% of males in Galway rated their mental health as bad or very bad. There were no representative figures given for young people who identified otherwise in relation to their gender.

The impact of the global pandemic on the mental health of young people is evident if we compare the figures from the 2018 Planet Youth Survey, where the percentage of young people rating their mental health as good or very good was significantly higher than in 2021, with an average of around 10% difference. There was also an increase in the 2021 figures of about 5% in young people rating their mental health as bad or very bad, when comparing to the 2018 figures.

Both the Comhairle Committee survey results and the Planet Youth results show similar trends regarding how young people rate their mental health.

These reports can be found online at [www.youthworkgalway.ie](http://www.youthworkgalway.ie) and [www.planetyouth.ie](http://www.planetyouth.ie)



# Anxiety

At its core, **anxiety** is an uncomfortable feeling of fear or stress.


Most people experience it at some point at differing levels. Anxious about the future, an upcoming event, the wellbeing of a loved one, and so many other reasons can interplay to cause anxious feelings. But sometimes, we can experience anxiety that doesn't go away, doesn't necessarily have a rational reason or explanation, and stays in every aspect of our days. It can come out of nowhere or weigh on you for a longer period of time.

Regardless of whether it is a fleeting moment of anxiety relevant to something going on, or a longer-term feeling, it is important to be aware of how anxiety presents. People often describe sensing something is 'off' or feeling uneasy or that they are worried that something bad might happen. Feelings of anxiety often come with sensations in your body like

- Feeling hot, sweaty, or flushed
- Heart beating faster and becoming aware of heart beating or feeling it ringing in your ears
- Breathing changing; becoming shallower and faster
- Tight feeling in the chest, or discomfort in the chest area
- Sick feeling in your stomach, such as butterflies, nausea or feeling an urgency to use the toilet
- Headaches and tension.

These are just some examples. Everyone is different and can experience anxiety in different ways.





**Panic Attacks** are generally more intense than periods of anxiety and can cause a major disruption in your day. They usually occur out of the blue without any obvious triggers.

Symptoms of Panic attacks can include

- Heart palpitations, pounding heart
- Excessive Sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Sensations of shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Feeling of choking
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or abdominal distress
- Feeling dizzy, unsteady, lightheaded, or faint
- Feelings of unreality or being detached from oneself

- Fear of losing control or going crazy
- Fear of dying
- Numbness or tingling sensations
- Chills or hot flashes

### **managing these anxious feelings**

It may not be possible to get rid of your anxiety completely, but you can find different ways to support and work through anxious feelings.

### **Talk to someone**

Talking to someone you trust might help. Whether you want someone's help to change it, or you just want to get how you are feeling off your chest. Seek out a close friend, or the One Good Adult in your life which might be a help. There are also loads of professionals and organisations out there to help.

## Try a grounding Technique

Trying to break the cycle of these anxious thoughts can be difficult, especially if you are in the middle of them. Trying different grounding techniques can help break this thought in the moment and get to a point where you can move forward. Some examples can be found on page 29.

## Diet and Exercise

Regular exercise can help you in different ways, whether it is letting off some steam and releasing some tension, or the release of serotonin – a good mood hormone! What you eat or drink can really impact on your mood and how you feel, there are foods that you enjoy, but there are also foods that make you feel good! Avoid caffeine and energy drinks as they can make you more anxious.

## Understanding your anxiety

Understanding what you are going through, that you are not the only one to experience these feelings, what causes these feelings and what can help – these are all things that can help us manage our anxiety! There is so much information out there which can help, some of which can be found in our tips, tools, and resources section!

## Just a thought!

Are there different triggers or patterns that regularly cause you to experience anxious feelings? Try identifying some of these patterns or triggers and experiences, and by learning to manage them, it can help to better manage your anxiety.

# Body Image

Body image issues can affect people of all ages and genders. Body image describes how a person feels about their own body and appearance. It includes how you see yourself, how you think and feel about how you look and how you think others see you.

Whether we like our bodies, dislike them, or are somewhere in between, these thoughts and feelings can influence how we interact with others and the way we live our lives, affecting the way we feel about ourselves in general!

We are bombarded with images from the media of unrealistic body ideals for everyone, which can make it very difficult to feel comfortable in your own skin. Many of these images have been edited and photoshopped and are not a true representation of the person in the photo. On the flip side, when more natural and candid shots are in the media, they are subject to criticism and critique! Both scenarios can cause us to compare ourselves unfavourably with others and have an impact on how we view ourselves.



# Supporting a better body image

## Reduce negative influences on body image

Consider the negative influences on body image in your life and how you can reduce their impact – this could be social media, negative comments from peers, societal perceptions, and magazines!

Don't be afraid to unfollow those accounts on social media (Or even take a social media break!) Also, be aware of the different stereotypes portrayed in the media about how people look and the kind of people they are!

## 'Check In' with your body

What would you do and how would you treat yourself if you were a true friend to yourself?

Start to respond to what your body needs, and you will begin to build a positive supportive relationship with your body.

## Turn your focus away from body image

Try to stop judging body shapes or making appearance comments and consciously not remarking about what others are wearing and how they look! Instead shift your focus instead to personality traits, abilities, or achievements. Remind yourself of the qualities you admire in friends and family. Consider your own strengths, achievements or skills and remind yourself that your worth is not determined by your appearance.

## Accepting who you are

Society overwhelms us with perceptions of how we should look, but often doesn't acknowledge the amazing human someone is regardless of their body. A positive first step can be to tune into your body and how it is feeling, to trust the messages your body sends you and to decide to give your body what it needs.

## Just a thought!

Why not write a letter to your body thanking it for all the things it does? (Enables you to get up, to walk, to lift your siblings / nieces / nephews, lets you dance and wiggle and feel good, smiling, wiggling your nose and your ears)



# Can't sleep



## Just a thought!

Creating a wind down or night-time routine can be helpful getting our bodies into sleep mode. Putting our phones on Do not Disturb after 10pm, greyscale mode or putting blocks on apps after a certain hour can help us to limit our screen time at night.

The recommended number of hours of sleep needed each night for teenagers and young adults is 8-10 hours. However, this isn't always the case and people struggle to sleep for a few reasons.

- **Blue light** – in a nutshell, blue light is a natural wavelength of light which is all around us. The sun emits blue light and that is why being in the sun can leave us feeling energised! However, most of our electronic devices emit blue light, which can increase our alertness and mental sharpness. Helpful during the day, but too much of it may keep your brain awake when it really needs to wind down.
- **Talking all night** - *"You see your friends all day, why do you need to talk to them all evening?"* Sound familiar? Yes, ordinarily in school, youth reach or clubs we can spend time with our friends. Often, this time is structured and there is another focus – you can't have a proper conversation in double maths! Building relationships and talking with our friends and peers is an important part of our lives, but is the small talk conversation you are having that is keeping you up until 1am or 2am more important than good quality sleep?

- **Too much caffeine** - Caffeine is a natural stimulant, it increases alertness and can give you a boost when you are tired. Too much caffeine can cause our minds and bodies to be over stimulated and we are unable to wind down at the end of the day, which can leave us tossing and turning. Energy drinks not only provide high levels of caffeine but also sugar highs which can cause us to peak and crash energy wise.
- **Your mind doesn't stop** – A 2020 study suggests that the average person has around 6200 thoughts every day. It is no wonder we always feel like we are on the go. And this doesn't stop at night, sometimes our brains go into overdrive at night and keep us awake. Trying to silence these thoughts is not the easiest thing!

Our bodies need sleep. It allows us to recover after the training session we had that day, it helps us organise the information and thoughts from the day and it can leave us feeling refreshed. You expect your phone to be fully charged after plugging it in, why don't we expect ourselves to be recharged after a good sleep?

# covid-19



It is a strange time for all of us! The impact of Covid-19 is ever changing and managing it is going to be a real part of our lives continuing into the future.

It is important to take a break from the news and social media updates. Yes, we may want to know the newest updates, but it can be overwhelming watching and consuming the news about Covid-19 all day every day. Instead, why not limit to watching the news once per day, or not reading every Covid-19 article you see. And be sure to choose only trusted sources for your news updates.

In this time, there are also many restrictions and new ways we must live our lives which sometimes we don't have that much control over. It can be easy to be discouraged and demotivated to do things, but sometimes readjusting our focus can help. Take time and stop focusing on what you can't do, and instead refocus on the things you can do.

Maybe you can't train with your football team, but you can still kick a ball in your garden, local park or on the street. Or you could take up a different hobby, maybe painting, baking, coding, reading, whatever you feel like and you can do in a safe manner!

During this global pandemic, the recommendation has been social distancing and staying safe. But going from seeing and interacting with people in our everyday lives, to now keeping our distance, changing to video calls and chats over a wall is a challenge for many of us. There is also a lot of focus on mental health. Looking after your mental health is always important. But with Coronavirus spreading, we now face more and different challenges to our wellbeing. Some of the stressors that we now face include:

- Uncertainty about the future
- Loss of routine
- Isolation from social distancing
- Losing loved ones
- Spread of misinformation
- Worry about the actions of others
- Boredom
- Fear of catching Coronavirus

## **Just a thought!**

You are not alone. It is a strange time for all of us. New time and ways to engage and interact with others. Remember that even pandemics don't last forever.

# Family

## Parent / Guardian Relationships

It can cause a lot of stress for young people to constantly see their parents or guardians arguing and it is a difficult space to be in. If the disputes result in violence, this can be both upsetting and frightening. If the rowing results in separation, a new set of dilemmas emerge – being pressured to take sides, having to live in two different places, damaged relationships with cousins etc. All these challenges can cause anxiety, poor sleep, low mood, and a sense of hopelessness.

Family relationships can always have ups and downs, sometimes the downs are more frequent than the ups! Often, we can negotiate our way out of these dilemmas, but sometimes we need a bit of extra help.

It may be that you feel under pressure to keep family business a secret, whether you are ashamed and do not want others to find out or you are under pressure from someone else not to tell and keep the secrets of the family. This is an unfair burden on you, and you should remember that these responsibilities do not fall on you within the family, and you should try to find someone you trust to talk about these. We talk about the One Good Adult on page 38, maybe this will help to identify someone for you.

## Sibling Rivalry

It is normal for siblings to argue and compete, but some can take it to a level that causes upset and difficulty. Looking at what happens, what starts it off, how it develops and how you feel can be a starting point for figuring out next steps. While it isn't possible for you to change your sibling, you may be able to protect yourself more, work to minimise or avoid areas which cause friction or pressure, and get support for what is going on, whether that is from a parent or guardian, or someone else.



## Bereavement

Losing someone we love is painful and there can be a big impact on a family depending on the closeness of the relationship and the nature of the death. This may be your first time experiencing such loss within your family, so it is important that you take care of yourself. It is natural to feel upset, want to cry or feel angry – allow yourself to express these feelings, but try to do it in a non-destructive way. Talking is the best way to cope with loss. A friend or family member who is willing to listen and allow you space to cry can be a great help.

## Parental / Guardian Expectations

Sometimes we can feel that the expectations which are put on us by the adults in our lives are what they think is best for young people, and this can result in some high expectations or standards without considering how this impacts on the young person. Some expectations and standards are a result of the way people were brought up, societal expectations and the ideas of others, and this can be felt across generations from parents and guardians to the young people in their lives. While intentions may be good, it can sometimes feel unfair or like a pressure which young people have no control over. Having a calm conversation where you can tell them how you feel and how you think you should do things can often give a better outcome than an argument.

## Just a thought!

If you find it hard to talk to your parents, guardians, family, or other people in your life about how you feel, why not consider writing them a letter. This way, you get to tell it all, in your words, without their interruptions or you becoming upset before you get your point across.

Sometimes in families, there may be instances and experiences of verbal, physical and emotional abuse. This is known as domestic violence. It can happen between parents and guardians, between guardian and young person, or between siblings. This is not an acceptable situation, and we all have the right to feel safe in our homes. If you are aware of domestic violence, there are services and supports out there. Check out our Get Support section on page 36 for some pathways for finding information.

# Friendships & Relationships

In a healthy relationship, regardless if it is platonic, romantic, professional, or otherwise, you should feel:

- Positive and comfortable about yourself
- Confident
- Loved, wanted, needed, and useful
- That your views and opinions are respected, even if you disagree on something

In an unhealthy relationship you could be left feeling:

- Confused
- Angry with yourself or them
- Trapped and / or scared
- Depressed and worthless

Here are some things to look out for if you think you might be in an unhealthy or toxic relationship:

- They constantly put you down and make you feel bad about yourself
- You are arguing one day, and things are great the next
- They often make you feel guilty
- They are jealous of your other friends
- You feel like it is your responsibility to fix things
- You change yourself to please them
- You worry about setting them off and feel like you have to watch what you say
- You feel anxious or unwell when you know you are going to see them
- They text and call you constantly
- You have lost confidence in yourself
- They break your trust

In general, we are social beings. Whether introverted, extroverted or a balance in the middle, we have relationships and connections with people who we may feel comfortable with. Most of the time, we choose the people we keep in our lives, but of course there are instances where we have less control such as when it comes to school or work colleagues, or others in different social groups. Sometimes these relationships are not as positive as we once believed. Identifying the traits of healthy vs toxic relationships is important for maintaining our wellbeing and sense of self.





Knowing what relationships are healthy and those which are unhealthy is important for our wellbeing in the long term. If you think one of your relationships is unhealthy or toxic, some ways to approach it are

- Talking to the person about what is going on and the way you are feeling
- Knowing when to walk away – sometimes people are not willing to listen or change their behaviours and then it is time to cut ties which can be very difficult especially if you have been close for a very long time
- Moving on – explain why you want to end the friendship or relationship and ask them to respect your decision
- Some relationships are ones which we can't remove ourselves from, such as family, employer, or school personnel. In these cases, it is important to find balance and ways to protect ourselves. This may be through limiting contact or hyping ourselves up before we meet.
- Making time for yourself – look after yourself. These times can be emotionally draining and making time to do the things you enjoy can help your wellbeing
- Building healthy relationships – surround yourself with people who make you feel good and set boundaries with the people in your life so that they understand what you are comfortable with.

### **Just a thought!**

Take some time to take stock of your relationships in your life. If you have some that don't make you feel good, compare them to the lists above and think about how you could make a change in these relationships.



# Identity

Who am I?

What makes me me?

Throughout our lives we are constantly discovering different aspects of our identities, our likes, dislikes, our characteristics and personality traits, sexuality and gender orientation, our background, culture, and heritage and so much more. On top of this, we are evolving and changing as we grow and experience things in life.



Trying to figure out who we are and what makes us tick can be quite easy and straight forward, but for many of us there are things which we question, things which impact us and those around us. There are things we can figure out for ourselves, and this can help to validate a feeling in our minds, but sometimes there are aspects of our identities which society expects or wants to know or wants us to label or categorize.

It is easy for society to label people, but we should know that who we are goes much deeper than a label.

Two areas of reference to identity which are prominent in discussion in society are gender and sexuality, and racism and discrimination.

## Gender and Sexuality

When it comes to gender identity and sexuality it essentially breaks down to:

**Gender Identity:** How we feel in our minds/on the inside about our gender.

- Traditionally gender is assigned at birth by examining a baby's genitals; penis means male, vulva means female. Gender is not binary of either male or female, and someone's gender does not need to be based on their genitals or sex characteristics. Gender is composed of many different factors which help form us into the people we are. Cis gender is a term used when how you feel in your brain matches your biological sex characteristics, but not everyone feels this way.

**Sexuality / Sexual orientation:** Who we like

- There are so many terms out there to identify who we like, and some may use completely different terms even if on paper, they are attracted to the same kind of people. It is very individualistic and is down to how the person feels about other people and what their attraction is based on.

## Racism and Discrimination

Ireland is trying to be an open and accepting country and has made strides in equality over the years; yet it is not without its downside and racism is very much present in pockets of Irish society.

Racism is prejudice or discrimination against people of a particular race or ethnic group and has a devastating impact on the lives of those targeted, in physical, psychological, and social ways. Racism undermines people's dignity and forces them to change their usual behaviour and daily routines and can have a negative impact on someone's wider family and entire community.

In Ireland, the Travelling Community is a recognised ethnicity, and they experience racism, discrimination, marginalisation, internalised oppression, and a lack of real opportunities to progress personally, socially, emotionally, and economically with their settled counterparts. Young people from the Traveller community, like those in the settled community, have individual needs and contexts which need to be addressed in a manner that is appropriate to the Traveller community. There should not be a 'one size fits all.'

### Just a thought!

Take time to identify and make a list of the things that make you you! Acknowledge all the different aspects and unique bits of who you are!

**Racism and discrimination are unacceptable in any society. It needs to be highlighted, confronted, and dealt with, and made known that it has no place in our lives.**



# Loneliness

There is a difference between being alone and being lonely. Some people are happy spending big chunks of time on their own; they might work alone or prefer solo activities like running or reading, instead of group activities. Loneliness is a lack of connection and communication with others. We can be surrounded by people but still feel lonely.

## Volunteer

Sharing your time and skills for a cause you believe in is a fantastic way to make friends. You will meet like-minded people and find volunteering very satisfying. And it is one of the 5-a-day for your mental health!

## Just a thought!

Take time to think about the people who are around you and in your life, how close do you feel to these people? Who makes you feel comfortable? Are there ways we can meet and engage with new people in our lives?

## What you can do if you feel lonely

Think about whether you want more time with friends or family, or whether you want to meet new people you have more in common with.

## Find your tribe

Figure out who would share the same interests as you. Friendships naturally form over shared passions. You might have to do some digging around first. Team sports can introduce you to an instant social circle. But it doesn't just have to be a sports team – is there a local Dungeons and Dragons group? A photography group, drama group etc.

## Pets!

Animals are great for dispelling our loneliness when we do have to spend time alone. If you don't have a pet and your living situation doesn't allow for it, offer to walk a friend or neighbour's dog. If you are considering getting a pet, make sure you think about all the different things involved and that you have the space in your life for a pet and all that is required!



# money



Worrying about money can put a huge strain on our mental health and well-being, whether it is personal financial worries, or those of our families and loved ones.

Trying to balance and find information about ways to support our financial situation can be difficult, but there are a number of services and supports available.

Different areas which are thought to indicate financial difficulties include not having adequate clothing or food, having to go without heating and so on. For a young person, some additional factors could be:

- Not being able to afford to go to college or further education
- Not being able to afford to leave home and move into your own space
- Feeling discriminated against or judged
- Not experiencing the everyday things that young people have in their lives
- Having to get a job to help your parents or guardians get by

## Just a thought!

Take some time and evaluate where you spend your money, where your income comes from. Are there areas you can save on, are you eligible for tax returns or additional supports? You can get different apps to help you budget and keep track of your spending, one is called Pocket Expense (and it is free!)

If you are in debt, the Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS) can help you. You can meet an advisor who will give advice and guidance on what to do. MABS can also help with your budgeting and get you into a better money management practice. Whether you are under 18 or over 18, MABS can offer support and assistance in different areas, whether you are struggling financially or looking for tips to manage your finances better. This information is available, along with loads of downloadable resources from their website.

If you are out of work, there may be social welfare payments that you are entitled to. You may also be eligible for free training courses which would improve your chances of getting a job. Make an appointment with your nearest Citizens Information Centre.

The Citizens Information Centre can help you with a range of information on supports including accessing social welfare payments, rent supports, SUSI college grants and so much more!



# Pressure

*"Pressure, pushing down on me, pressing down on you..."*



Pressure. Great song, not so great when it comes to our lives. We can feel pressure in many different aspects of our lives, especially when trying to figure out who we are, what we want and how we want our lives to be, as well as other pressures like school, family, friends and peers, social expectations, relationships... the list goes on! From fitting in, conforming to expectations, competing in hobbies and sports, achieving in exams, and living up to family expectations or older siblings, it can be hard to cope. There are various steps you can take to cope with being under pressure; here are some suggestions.

## Just a thought!

What are some ways you can blow off some steam / relieve pressure? Take a moment to assess if these are healthy or harmful actions, can you adapt some of these tools, techniques, and actions you use?

### Identify your triggers

What are the different areas or things in your life that cause you to feel under pressure?

### Organise your time

Sometimes, pressure comes about when we feel we have so many things to do, yet not enough time. Have a schedule and routine to get some of the "have-tos" done in life will not only relieve some pressure, but it will also help you identify time for the things you want to and enjoy doing!

### Lighten the load

Finding balance and trying to juggle everything can be a bit much. Remember that it is okay to drop some things from your life, whether a temporary break or more long term and permanent, when you are feeling under pressure.

### Address some of the causes

Are you struggling with a certain subject in school? Why not talk to your teacher and explain what is going on! Is your team or any other extra-curricular activities taking up all your free time? Why not take a break for a week! Are some friendships feeling too much? Maybe taking a break from certain people will allow you time and space to reflect.

### Accept the things you cannot change

Let's face it, sometimes there are things that we cannot change. But that doesn't mean we cannot have an impact. Taking the time to reflect and evaluate what you can and can't do about certain situations may help relieve some of that stress and pressure. For example, climate change is a major issue facing us all today, but not one single person can "fix" this. Think about the small actions and changes you can make, and accept you are part of a bigger picture.

# Nothing, but I am still struggling

Looking at things such as how your time is spread between study/work, family, friends, relaxation, fun? This can be out of balance for a short time for example, if you have got exams, but overall, there should be a bit of all of these in your life.

How well do you look after your body? When you are physically struggling it also puts pressure on your mental state. Here is a sample grid to help you check where you are at and where you want to be!

Sometimes there may be nothing specifically wrong in our lives, yet life can still seem a struggle. This is a good time to do a check through the things that keep us going and see if a tweak is needed here or there. We can feel off balance because of things in life which are out of our control, but having a look at the balance in your life can be helpful to identify a starting point for us to work on.



	Ideally – each day	Currently	Goal
Sleep			
Exercise/activity			
Water			
Food			
Relaxation			
Fun/laughter			

When you do make these changes, give them a little time to have an impact and then see if they have made any difference.

When we are younger, there is often peer pressure associated with using substances like alcohol, drugs, cigarettes and e-cigarettes or vapes to fit in and be part of the accepted norm. These pressures in society can have a greater influence on us when we are struggling. Decisions like these can often have longer term unexpected consequences and impacts on our health and wellbeing. Sometimes when we are in a lull of nothing is wrong, but I am struggling, we can be tempted to engage in these sorts of negative habits and behaviours as a way to feel better. Being mindful of the choices we make in relation to alcohol, smoking and drugs is key, and considerations like “Is this something I want to start?” knowing that with addictive substances, it can be very difficult to stop later, can impact our wellbeing in the long term. Remember however that short term benefits you may feel from these substances can lead to long term difficulties. Once you have made any adjustments and if you feel that nothing has improved, it might be worth talking to your doctor or a mental health professional. They can help you dig a little deeper to find the problem and put you on track to solving it. Remember, there are lots of supports and there is no need to feel you must do this alone. Check out pages 34-36.

### **Just a thought!**

Sometimes when we are feeling out of whack, it can help to think about the things that bring us joy! Why not make a “Things that make you happy / things you do every day” list? Do you have someone you can talk to about how you feel? On page 38 we spoke about ‘One Good Adult’. Who could be that person for you?





# Tips, tools, and resources

## 5-a-day for your mental health

We all know we are supposed to have our fill of fruit and veg every day, but there is another 5-a-day which is equally as important. The 5-a-day for your mental health and wellbeing focuses on five areas; Connect, Be Active, Give, Take Notice and Keep Learning; and are easy things you can do in your daily lives to improve your mental wellbeing.

### Connect

Connecting is good for your wellbeing. Taking time to talk to people close to you and to build relationships with your community is important. Sharing how we feel with others also helps us to feel more understood. Connecting is not only important for emotional support but it also helps us to develop a sense of belonging, self-worth and reduces isolation. Why not start small and share a smile or a simple hello!

### Be Active

Regular physical exercise makes us feel good and is associated with lower rates of anxiety for all age groups. Improved self-esteem is also a key benefit of physical activity. When you exercise, the body releases feel-good hormones called endorphins. Regular exercise is proven to reduce stress, ward off anxiety and feelings of depression. It also boosts self-esteem and improves sleep. Small steps help us in the long run so why not go for a short walk, or even cut the grass!

### Give

Seeing yourself as being part of a community or group and doing something for that group can be incredibly rewarding and can create and build connections with the people & community around us. Is there something happening locally that you can help with, or are there skills you have which you can share with others?



## Take Notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness. Being aware of nature and what is taking place in the present directly improves your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities. Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations. Why not take a tech free hour, unplug from devices and enjoy your walk, chat or activity without distractions?

## Just a thought!

Take 5 minutes to identify different things in your life which may fall under the different 5-a-day categories! Are there areas you could improve on? Start small and build it up!

## Keep Learning

Embracing new experiences can be fun and can enhance self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. Taking the opportunity to engage in different types of activities can result on improved levels of wellbeing. Learning new things can make you feel more confident as well as being fun! Is there a skill or hobby you would like to pick up? Look for someone who can share their skill or look for an online tutorial!





# Things that may help & Grounding Techniques

Grounding techniques are strategies or tools to help you reconnect with the here and now, help calm you and separate you from different emotional states like anxiety, or situations you may be experiencing.

Here are a few grounding techniques you can implement into your life, some can be done anywhere

## 5-4-3-2-1

This is a grounding technique which taps into our sense, and you go through a series of questions.

1. What are FIVE things you can see?
2. What are FOUR things you can touch?
3. What are THREE things you can hear?
4. What are TWO things you can smell?
5. What is ONE thing you can taste?

You can change these up and can touch more things, smell less etc. An alternative option for one is to "Take ONE big deep breath".

Try to identify different things for each option as it will take longer and take your focus for a longer space of time and may help your mind and body calm.

## Square Breathing

There are lots of different breathing techniques which may work for you. This is just one of many options. Square breathing is called so simply because you do your breathing on a count of four.

### 1. Breathe in, Count 1, 2, 3, 4

- Breathe in deeply for a count of four, focusing on your breath and the feeling of your lungs expanding

### 2. Hold 1, 2, 3, 4

- Hold your breath in your lungs for the count of four

### 3. Out 1, 2, 3, 4

- Breathe out for a count of four

### 4. Hold 1, 2, 3, 4

- Hold your lungs empty for a count of four

### 5. Repeat

- Repeat this process until your breath is in check and you feel steady and calm.

## Challenging Negative Thoughts

We are our own biggest critics. Sometimes it is hard to see the good things when we are so focused on the negative thoughts. Why not challenge those negative thoughts?

### 1. Pick a negative thought that is in your mind

- Examples could be *"I'm doing nothing with my life"*, *"I'm bad at school because I failed my history test"*, *"I'm terrible at sport because I let two goals in last match"*

### 2. Take a few minutes to think about things in your life that disprove your statement

- Example – *I am bad at school*
  - i. I am great with practical subjects
  - ii. I don't need history for my chosen career
  - iii. I have a C+ average in history normally
  - iv. It was a difficult test and most of the class failed
  - v. I am well liked in school by peers and teachers

### 3. Taking the time to challenge these thoughts can sometimes be hard, but it is important to see the positive sides of ourselves and not just focus on the negative things.



## Brain Dump

Sometimes there can be so much going on in our brain that we just feel the need to empty it. Why don't we?! Free your mind from those thoughts, busy thoughts, anxious thoughts, annoying thoughts etc. Get some paper & a pen and just write! Don't think about it, just write, and follow where your brain goes. Once you have got it all out and feel like you are done, throw it away, dump it, rip it into tiny pieces if you want! The main thing is to practice the art of getting rid of things in our brain.

A different way to do this is depending on what is going on in our minds; maybe we are trying to make decisions; write the thoughts you are having and use this paper to sort through and process the different things going on in your brain.

It is important to note that if it is all negative things that is going on in your brain, it's maybe not the best to read it, and to just dump that one!

## Coping Toolkit

There are several techniques, tools and tricks we have each found help us over the years with different things. Developing your personal toolkit can help you in times. This could be different songs that calm us or make us feel better, different grounding techniques like those mentioned. Who are the people we can reach out to? Maybe it is a letter you wrote to yourself when you were feeling good reminding yourself about all the good things about you. Writing down and identifying these tips and tricks can be helpful for you when you may need them.

Why not create a praise file? Sometimes people say great things about you, whether it is in the paper about something you were involved in, a message that was sent to you, or even a photo of a time you felt great! Including these things might be helpful to pick us up when we aren't feeling so good!

## One Good Adult

What does One Good Adult mean? Essentially, it is emphasising that having at least one good person, who provides support and consistency to young people can be beneficial for wellbeing, mental health and development. This relationship has a positive impact on self-belief, confidence, coping skills and optimism about the future.

This One Good Adult doesn't necessarily have to be a parent or guardian. It could be an older sibling, an aunt, uncle, or grandparent. It could be a teacher, a coach from your hobbies, a neighbour, or a youth worker.

Identifying the One Good Adult in your life can be monumental in manoeuvring through life's ups, downs, and everything in between! Why not go back to page 22 and do the activity about finding those closest to you.

## Apps

There are so many apps out there which can help us to look at different areas of our health and wellbeing. From mood diaries to mindfulness and meditation apps, apps for managing different struggles such as anxiety or low mood, as well as apps for managing our digital wellbeing, the possibilities are endless. Many apps have free versions, but they can seem quite limited compared to the paid versions, though there are often offers and deals you can get on them, whether from in the apps themselves, or getting reimbursement through health insurance or school or work initiatives! There are loads of apps out there, have a look and see what might work for you!



# Problem Solving

Problem-solving and decision-making are part and parcel of everyday life. It can range from “what’ll I watch on telly tonight?” to “I’m really unhappy with my course/ relationship/ job”.

There are loads of tools to help you with this, you just need to pick one that suits you best and practice on small stuff until you get the hang of it. Then you have got a technique to help you with the big stuff! One commonly used technique is creating a pros and cons list. Why not give it a go, here are some steps!

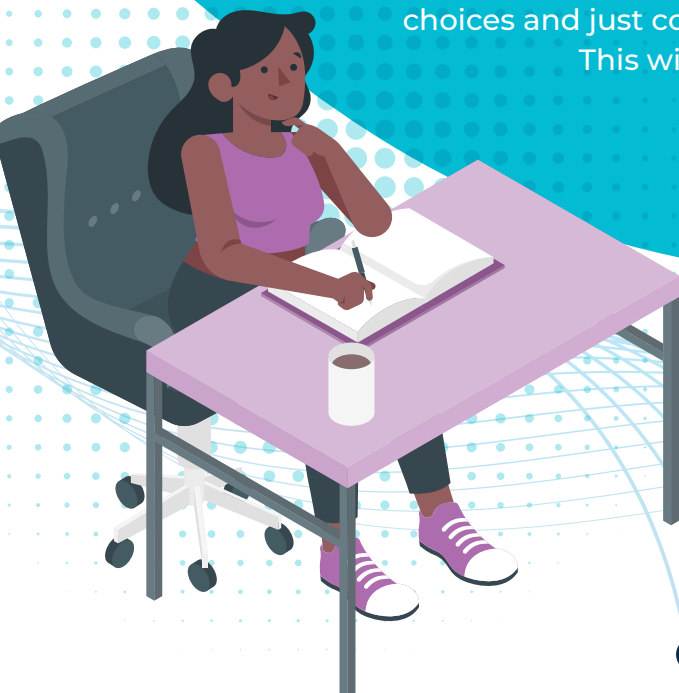
## **Grab a page and pen and start writing:**

- What is the problem/situation?
- What possible choices do I have? Be sure to include even the ridiculous or outrageous ones and the ones you don’t think you will take. This is an information gathering part, not choice-making!
- For each choice you have written, write down what would be positive (Pro) and what would be negative (Con) about that choice. Don’t make any judgements at this point – you are still gathering information.
- Have as many choices, Pros and Cons as you can think of.
- Sit back and have a look at what you have written. Examine the choices, pros, and cons. What feelings do they bring up for you – strong reaction, don’t care?

It is not necessary to make a decision there and then. In fact, it is more helpful to keep your page handy and mull over it for a while. If you can’t make a final decision, perhaps you can eliminate some of the choices and just concentrate on the options left. This will make it simpler.

## **Just a thought!**

There are other techniques to try which could include, lists, making a mind map can help to show your options more clearly, or thinking about our decisions and going through all of the possible outcomes right through to the end! This can help you to make a more informed decision.



## Having Difficult Conversations

Sometimes we all have to have that difficult conversation – the one we have been dreading for ages. Regardless the topic of conversation, how you frame having the conversation is important. Try to choose a setting in which both you and the person you want to talk to will feel comfortable. Here are some thoughts or tips to consider when preparing to have a difficult conversation.

### Be honest about how you feel

Having a difficult conversation with someone needs a lot of mental space. If you brought a topic up with someone and they become upset, it can be easy to ignore some points you wanted to make. Try to stay calm in these situations and remember what points you wanted to make. Although these points may be hard for someone to hear it is important that you can express yourself honestly in order to try and resolve the situation.

### Accept your emotions

Getting emotional when you try to speak about something does not mean that you are not ready to discuss the topic. If someone becomes dismissive of what you are saying because you are crying or upset, it is not your fault. You cannot force someone to listen to you if they are not ready.

### Agree to listen to one another

Try and start the conversation with some ground rules. Agree together that you will let each other speak without interrupting and really try to listen to what the other person is saying.



### Choose a time that is right for you

There may be an important topic you want to speak to someone about, but you feel you just aren't ready to talk about it yet. Timing can be important when it comes to having difficult conversations and you should try to trust your instincts to know when you are ready.

### Other ways to help the conversation

- Use 'I' statements rather than 'you'. For example, saying "I need to be listened to better" will go down much better than "You never listen to me".
- Come to a compromise. You may not get what you want exactly, but by the end of the discussion you should feel that both of you have gotten something from the discussion and have come to some type of agreement.
- Get some outside help. If you can't solve the issue, you may need a different perspective in the form of a counsellor, a friend, or a work colleague. There is nothing wrong with needing professional help and it may be of great value to you.



# What is Talk Therapy or Counselling?

Talk therapy or counselling are terms that, if you have not heard of or experienced them before, can cause feelings like apprehension, overwhelm or disinterest. We wanted to shed light on what counselling is and can do for a young person. Talk therapy or counselling is:

- A safe place to talk and be listened to
- A place to talk through stuff and figure things out.
- Not a place for a lecture or a telling off; support instead is offered if you would like it.
- Counselling involves having someone to talk to who cares, who won't tell you what to do, but will try to listen to help you figure out and understand for your own self what is going on.
- Counselling involves a place/person to go to for a while that's not school, not family, not friends but your own space for you.
- A counsellor is someone to talk to who treats you with respect and does his or her best to try and listen carefully to what you have to say.
- A counsellor is someone with a lot of training who doesn't judge, and who just tries to aid your own understanding about what is happening in your life.
- Some would say that choice is important in life. Counselling is a choice, not a 'have to'. For those who want to try it, it can oftentimes be helpful to moving on, understanding a problem or simply just act as a place to be for a while away from other stuff going on in life.
- Counselling could help you find a way to make choices that suit you.



Youth Work Ireland  
Galway's youth counselling service is built with young people in mind, and we wanted to share with you the process for young people in accessing our service.



Youth Work Ireland  
Galway

Young people are initially referred to the service. This can be self-referral, a parent or guardian, a teacher, GP, or other person who knows you! Our Counselling Service coordinator will contact your parent or guardian to chat through what the service is and talk about the service offered. There is some paperwork which needs to be filled out, and once the paperwork is received, we can work towards getting you an appointment as soon as possible. Young people typically receive six sessions with a counsellor, and we send on all six dates and times of the sessions so you can know and plan in advance for attending the service.

When attending an in-person appointment, young people are greeted by youth work staff or the counsellor themselves and are brought to our comfortable counselling spaces. There are no psychiatry couches, no doctors in white coats, no blotches on paper, it is a safe space for you to chat with a qualified professional. The young person is always in control and can decide what to talk about and at their own pace.

With Covid-19 restrictions, many counselling services have been operating online. For Youth Work Ireland Galway's counselling service, we facilitate these sessions through mediums such as Zoom, WhatsApp or on a phone call. On the day of the 1st appointment, the counsellor will check in and see which medium you would prefer to chat through. They will then coordinate the time to call or getting the video call details to you for your session. After logging on and connecting online, these sessions operate as an in person one would, offering a time and space for you to chat.

It is important to remember that counselling or talk therapy, or any other support you may seek is not about you being "broken" or needing to get "fixed". You don't need to be "fixed", but you may need support. This is a space for you to work with the things you are dealing with and find new ways to manage and support them.

**Everybody needs support sometimes.**

# Get Support

Sometimes the many aspects and life experiences can get too big to manage by yourself, and sometimes you might need professional help. It is ok to need help. Your GP service, a qualified counsellor, or accessing a number of other services which are available could be very helpful for you. There may be other good local services in your area! Try seeking some out. If you need some help, your local youth worker and youth information centre might be able to offer some assistance!

There are several online services available for young people to get support.

- o The **Youth Information Chat** service is a partnership between youth information centres around Ireland and **SpunOut**. Experienced youth information workers are available to discuss several different areas you may want support on. You can chat with them through **www.spunout.ie**
- o **50808** is a free 24/7 text service, providing everything from a calming chat to immediate support for people going through a mental health or emotional crisis - big or small.
  - Text HELLO to 50808 to start a conversation, any time - day or night.
  - You can visit **www.text50808.ie** for more information.
- o **LGBT Ireland** runs a helpline and an online chat service seven days a week, which can be accessed by visiting their website **www.lgbt.ie**
- o **Childline** offers free call services, text services and live messaging with trained volunteers for you to chat with. • Freephone 1800666666 • Send a text for free to 50101 Visit **www.childline.ie** to use their free instant messaging chat service
- o **West Be Well** is an initiative communicating key mental health messages in Galway, and the west of Ireland. You can visit **www.westbewell.ie** for more information.
- o **Jigsaw** have a wide range of information, resources and services to support youth mental health, which can be found on their website **www.jigsaw.ie**

**If you or someone you know are in need of immediate assistance, call 999/112 for emergency services.**

## Youth Work Ireland

**Galway** has youth projects in Galway City, Westside, Tuam, Loughrea and Ballinasloe. Contact details for these projects can be found on our website **www.youthworkgalway.ie**

Youth Work Ireland Galway's free Counselling Service is available for young people aged 12-21 and you can find information on our website or by contacting our counselling service coordinator by email on **counselling@youthworkgalway.ie** or by phone on **086 024 7763**.

# As an adult, how can I help?

As adults, if we genuinely want to support young people, then we need to find out about their lives, issues, hopes and concerns – in other words, get to know them! While all adults were themselves once young, we weren't young in the 21st century. So, how to do this?

## **Develop empathy and compassion for young people**

To make a genuine connection with someone, we must try to understand their situation and perspective. This is much more than just knowing facts and information. It is about understanding how and why they feel how they do, and having a real desire to help and support them.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another and compassion is empathy with a desire to help make things better. Our ability to be empathic to young people is not fixed; it can be consciously developed.

## **Cultivate curiosity – find out about their lives**

- Engage in small talk and ask them about themselves, how they are, and what their life is like.
- Follow youth focussed social media sites and TV programmes,
- Read about adolescence and improve your understanding.

## **Step out of your comfort zone**

Broaden the circle you move in, try new activities that allow you to mingle with

young people. If you already do this, then try to be more present, really listening with genuine interest.

## **Examine your biases**

We all have biases, and they impact our capacity for empathy. Often without knowing, we judge others on the way they look and how they live. This is not intentional, often it is a consequence of our upbringing. However, once we become aware of it, we will find it much easier to change. Some ways to broaden our mindset can include finding opportunities to mix with people from other backgrounds, talking to young people about the important things in their lives and while recognizing the similarities we share, be interested, without judgment, in the differences.

## **Walk in the shoes of others**

Try to understand what it is like for young people. Spend time with young people and understand their worries. What gives them happiness? What are their dreams?

## **Having difficult, yet respectful conversations**

While it can be hard to challenge or be challenged by alternative points of view, a few simple lessons can help:

- Listen and don't interrupt.
- Be open to new and different ideas.
- Apologise if you have hurt someone's feelings by what you have said.
- Research the issue. Understand where a point of view has come from and how it affects the people involved.

# One Good Adult

Having a dependable adult in life is a significant support for the mental wellbeing of young people. This type of person is referred to using the term One Good Adult. The My World Survey, a national study of youth mental health in Ireland, strongly confirms that the presence of one good adult is important to the mental health of young people. This relationship is shown to have a positive impact on the self-belief, confidence, coping skills and optimism about the future in young people.

The 'One Good Adult' is not necessarily a parent or guardian, it could be a grandparent, teacher, youth worker, sports coach or someone who is available to a young person in times of need. The one good adult for young people is that person they can talk to when there is something on their mind; someone to rely on, and trust to help them out in times of difficulty.

## How to be 'One Good Adult'

Think about a friend you trust and depend on. What is it about them that makes them your 'go-to' person? What do they do that lets you value them and confide in them? Maybe it is things like having and feeling a connection with them; they listen to you; they care about you; they offer advice, guidance, and support without judgement; you have fun and laugh together. These very same aspects will help you be that 'One Good Adult' to a young person.

Some tips to help you on your way to being that 'One Good Adult'

- Create a comfortable space between you and the young person with easy, conversational questions
- Share stories about yourself too and let them see your vulnerable side
- Watch your body language – a relaxed pose and friendly gestures can help people to feel at ease, which may help them to feel okay to open up. Smiling and eye contact indicate interest.
- Listen to what they are saying, and actually hear what is being said! Never underestimate the power that being listened to and knowing that they are not alone can have on young people.
- You may not always agree with or like what you are hearing but remember to keep an open mind. Being judgemental will only close down the conversation.
- Do not worry about not knowing the answers. Listening, sharing the burden, and guiding a young person to where they can get additional help is often enough.
- Do not worry if you don't understand everything they are sharing. Asking others to explain and clarify what they are saying means for them, whether relating to feelings or slang, can help us engage better with people.

Having 'One Good Adult' can be life changing for a young person but being 'One Good Adult' can change your life too!



# youth Information

On behalf of the Youth Information Centre, we hope you got some benefit from this resource. Access to quality information presented in an understandable fashion and freely available is the basis for good decision-making, future planning, being able to seek help and to live life to the full. We think this has been achieved in this resource, which is the result of a collaborative process between youth information, youth work and most of all, young people.

While many areas of life have always had an impact and influence on the lives of young people, the pandemic created and amplified pressure points in the lives of young people. The many innovative responses from different sources, including youth work, have helped alleviate these pressures. The Youth Information Service strives to deliver a fluid response to the changing needs of young people, through its engagement with ERYICA (European Youth Information & Counselling Agency), Eurodesk (European Information Network), Spunout.ie and most importantly, through ongoing collaboration with young people and those who support them.

**Helen Butler and Rachel Maher**  
**Youth Information Centre**  
**Youth Work Ireland Galway**

## **To contact the Youth Information Centre**

**Email:** [youth.info@youthworkgalway.ie](mailto:youth.info@youthworkgalway.ie) or  
[helen.butler@youthworkgalway.ie](mailto:helen.butler@youthworkgalway.ie)

**Facebook & Instagram:** @YouthInfoCo.Galway

## **To find out about Youth Work Ireland Galway and our projects**

Visit our website [www.youthworkgalway.ie](http://www.youthworkgalway.ie)

**Facebook & Instagram:**  
[@YouthWorkIrelandGalway](https://www.facebook.com/YouthWorkIrelandGalway)



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES

Galway



Seirbhís Sláinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt

Building a  
Better Health  
Service



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth



**gretb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin  
Galway and Roscommon  
Education and Training Board

**TÚSLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency



**National  
Lottery**