



♥ Taking Care of You: A Self-Care Support Booklet ♥

For when things feel heavy, and you need a little help

This booklet belongs to: _____

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Getting Help in an Emergency

If you're in danger, feeling unsafe, or worried that you might hurt yourself badly:

 Call 999 — Ask for the police, ambulance, or fire service; they are there to help you stay safe. You won't be in trouble for asking for help.

 Text SHOUT to 85258 - This is a free, confidential **24/7 crisis text line**. You'll be connected to someone trained to help you stay safe and feel supported.

 Call Childline on 0800 1111 - You can talk to a counsellor about anything, big or small. It's free, private, and open **24 hours a day**. - You can also chat online at [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

 Go to A&E - If you've hurt yourself and need medical help, or feel like you might — go straight to A&E or ask someone to take you. Doctors and nurses are there to care for you, not judge you.



You Are Not Alone

Asking for help takes courage — but you don't have to go through this by yourself.

There are people who *want* to help, and *can* help.

My Personalised Safety Plan

Having a safety plan can help you feel more in control when things get complicated.

It's a way to remind yourself of what helps, whom to reach out to, and how to stay safe.

You can fill this in as you go through the booklet.

Some parts you'll come back to later — that's okay. This page is here near the front, so it's easy to find when you need it.

1. How Do I Know I'm Struggling?

Signs I notice in my thoughts, body, or behaviour:













2. What Helps Me Cope Safely?


Things I can do that help me feel a bit better or more in control:













3. Who Can I Talk To?


People I trust and can reach out to when I'm not okay:


Friend or family member:

 Name: _____ | Phone: _____


 Name: _____ | Phone: _____


Trusted adult at school:

 Name: _____ | Phone: _____

 Name: _____ | Phone: _____

Support helpline or online chat:

 _____

 _____

4. Get Help from Professionals

If I feel in danger or need help fast:

- Emergency number: 999
- NHS advice (non-emergency): Call 111
- Crisis text line: Text SHOUT to 85258
- Childline: Call 0800 1111 or visit [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

My Reminder to Myself

A kind message I want to remember when I'm struggling:

 _____

 _____

 _____

 _____

Understanding Emotions

Everyone has emotions — they're a normal part of being human.

Sometimes they feel small, like a quiet whisper. Other times, they feel huge, loud, or completely overwhelming.

If you're self-harming, it might be because some of those big emotions feel too much to handle. That doesn't mean you're weak — it means you're dealing with a lot, and your mind and body are trying to cope.

Emotions Can Be Like Waves

They rise up...

They peak...






Then, over time, they pass.

Even the strongest feelings don't last forever — even if it feels like they will.

Learning how to notice your emotions, name them, and understand where they come from can help you feel more in control.

Why Do I Feel This Way?

There are so many reasons why emotions show up. You might be feeling:

-  Sad because something has changed or feels unfair
-  Angry because you've been hurt or not listened to
-  Anxious because something feels scary or out of your control
-  Guilty or ashamed about something you've done or felt
-  Numb, because everything just feels too much

All of these feelings are valid. You don't have to ignore them or push them away. They are signs that something needs care or attention — not punishment.

Naming the Feeling

Sometimes it's hard to know exactly *what* you're feeling — and that's okay.

You can start by asking:

- What's going on in my body? (tight chest, fast heart, tired, heavy?)
- What thoughts are going through my mind?
- What happened just before I started feeling this way?

Even just saying:

“I’m feeling something and I don’t quite know what it is yet” is a good start.

Where Do Emotions Come From?

Emotions come from your brain and body working together to keep you safe.

For example:

- Anxiety tells you there might be danger
- Anger shows up when something feels unfair or out of control
- Sadness happens when you lose something or feel alone

Even though they can be uncomfortable, emotions have a purpose. They're not your enemy. They're signals, not facts.

How Emotions Feel in Your Body

You might notice:

- A tight chest
- Sweaty palms
- Fast breathing
- Nausea or butterflies
- Feeling shaky, frozen, or “out of it”
- Wanting to lash out or hide away

These are physical signs of emotions like fear, anger or sadness. Learning to spot them is the first step to understanding what you need.

Try This

Draw or write about how your emotions feel in your body.

- Where do you feel sadness, anger, or stress?
- What colour or shape might each emotion be?

You can use this to create your own emotional map later in the booklet.



You Are Not Your Emotions

You might feel angry, but *you are not an angry person.*

You might feel sad, but *that sadness doesn't define you.*

Coping Strategies: Healthy & Unhealthy

When life feels overwhelming, your brain and body try to cope — to survive, to calm down, or to block out pain.

But not all coping methods are helpful in the long run.

Some may seem to work in the moment, but end up making you feel worse later.

This section helps you notice what you're already doing to cope — and find safer, kinder ways to get through tough moments.

Why People Self-Harm

Self-harm can be a way to:

- Release intense emotions (like anger or panic)
- Feel *something* instead of numbness
- Have control over pain
- Express emotions you can't put into words

You are not weak, bad, or broken if you self-harm. You've been trying to survive something painful — and this was your brain's way of helping you cope.

But there are safer, more healing ways forward.

Unhealthy Coping Strategies

These are ways of coping that might feel like a quick fix but can lead to more pain or harm over time:

- Hurting yourself (cutting, hitting, burning, etc.)
- Using drugs, alcohol, or vaping to numb out pain
- Skipping meals or overeating

- Shutting everyone out completely
- Taking big risks when you're feeling low
- Saying unkind things to yourself or punishing yourself

If you've used any of these — you're not a bad person.

It just means you're hurting and doing your best to survive.

But there *are* safer ways, and you deserve support in finding them.

☑ **Healthy Coping Strategies**

These are things that can help you stay safe, feel calmer, and process emotions without causing more harm:

- Talking to someone you trust 💬
- Using grounding techniques (like 5-4-3-2-1) 🧘♂️
- Squeezing ice cubes or snapping a rubber band on your wrist (if you need a physical release)
- Drawing, writing, journaling, or creating art 🎨
- Listening to music that matches or shifts your mood 🎧
- Going outside for fresh air or a short walk 🌳
- Using distraction: a game, video, show, or fidget toy 🎮
- Creating a safe space or comfort box
- Practising breathing exercises or mindfulness 🧘♀️
- Weighted blanket or wrapping in a hoodie



What Works for *You*?

Coping is personal — what helps one person might not help another.

This booklet will help you build a list of safe coping tools to try when things feel heavy.

Try This: My Coping Plan

Draw two columns:

What I Do Now	What I Could Try Instead
Example: Cutting when I feel overwhelmed	Hold ice cubes / rip paper / draw on skin with red pen

You don't need to get it perfect — it's about building a *toolkit* that works for *you*.



Remember

Coping is a skill, not a personality trait.

It takes practice, patience, and support and you're allowed to ask for help while you're learning.





My Coping Toolkit

This is *your* space to build a set of safe, helpful tools you can turn to when things feel heavy, stressful, or overwhelming.

You don't need to have it all figured out. Just choose a few ideas that *might* help — you can always change or add more later.




Things I Can *Do* When I'm Struggling

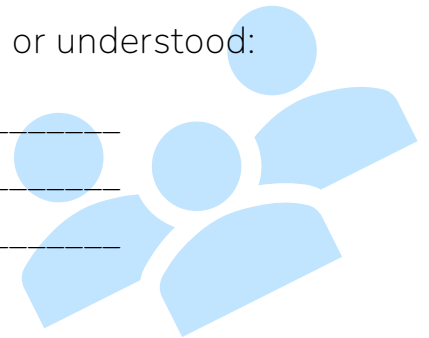
These are activities or actions that might help me feel calmer or more in control:

-  _____
-  _____
-  _____
-  _____

People I Can Talk To





These are people I trust who help me feel safe, heard, or understood:

-  _____
-  _____
-  _____




Things That Help Me Feel Safe or Comforted


These could be objects, smells, sounds, or textures that make you feel calm (like a hoodie, soft toy, playlist, blanket, or scent):


-  _____
-  _____
-  _____
-  _____

Things That Help Me Distract Myself

Distraction doesn't mean avoiding feelings — it means giving yourself a break until things feel more manageable.

 _____

 _____

 _____

Journaling Ideas

Writing things down can help you understand your thoughts, release emotions, and feel less alone. You don't have to write full sentences — just scribbles, bullet points, drawings, or whatever feels right.

Prompts to Try

- Today, I feel _____ because...
- Something I'm proud of (even if it feels small)...
- One thing I wish people understood about me is...
- A time I felt safe was when...
- Right now, my emotions feel like _____ (colour, weather, animal?)
- If my feelings could speak, they would say...
- Something I want to let go of is...
- What I need most right now is...
- One kind thing I can say to myself is...



Reminder

It's okay if you're still figuring out what helps. This toolkit is just for
you.

You can come back and update it anytime.

My Emotional Map


Our emotions don't just live in our heads — we often feel them in our bodies too.


This page helps you notice *where* you feel different emotions and *what* they feel like, so you can understand yourself better and spot when something's building up.

What I Notice


Write or draw about how emotions show up for *you*:


When I feel anxious, I usually notice:

 _____


 _____

When I feel angry, I often feel it in my:

 _____

 _____

When I feel sad, I might:

 _____


 _____

When I feel numb or disconnected:

 _____

 _____

When I feel calm or okay:

 _____


 _____

Colour Your Feelings

Use colours, patterns, or doodles to show where you feel each emotion in your body outline.

You can label or code them like this:



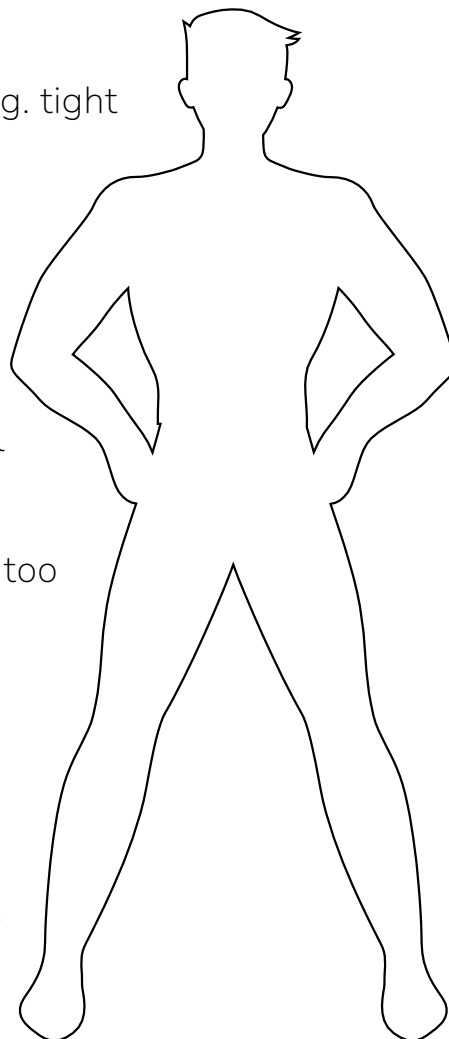
 What do these emotions feel like? (e.g. tight chest, butterflies, heavy limbs, racing thoughts)

Why This Matters

When you learn how your emotions feel in your body, you can:

- Spot early signs before things get too big
- Use coping tools earlier
- Be kinder to yourself when something feels off

This map is just for you. There's no right or wrong way to feel.



Mindfulness: Being in the Moment

Mindfulness means paying attention to what's happening *right now* — in your body, in your surroundings, and in your thoughts — without judging it.

You don't have to sit cross-legged or "empty your mind."

You just have to notice what's here, one moment at a time.

Mindfulness can help you:


- Slow down racing thoughts 🐢
- Calm strong emotions 😬
- Feel more in control 🌱
- Be kinder to yourself ❤️

Try This: 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

A quick way to bring yourself back to the present when you're feeling overwhelmed.

Look around you and name:

- 5 things you can see 👁️
- 4 things you can feel ✋
- 3 things you can hear 👂
- 2 things you can smell 👃
- 1 thing you can taste 🍷

 How did that feel? Write or doodle here:

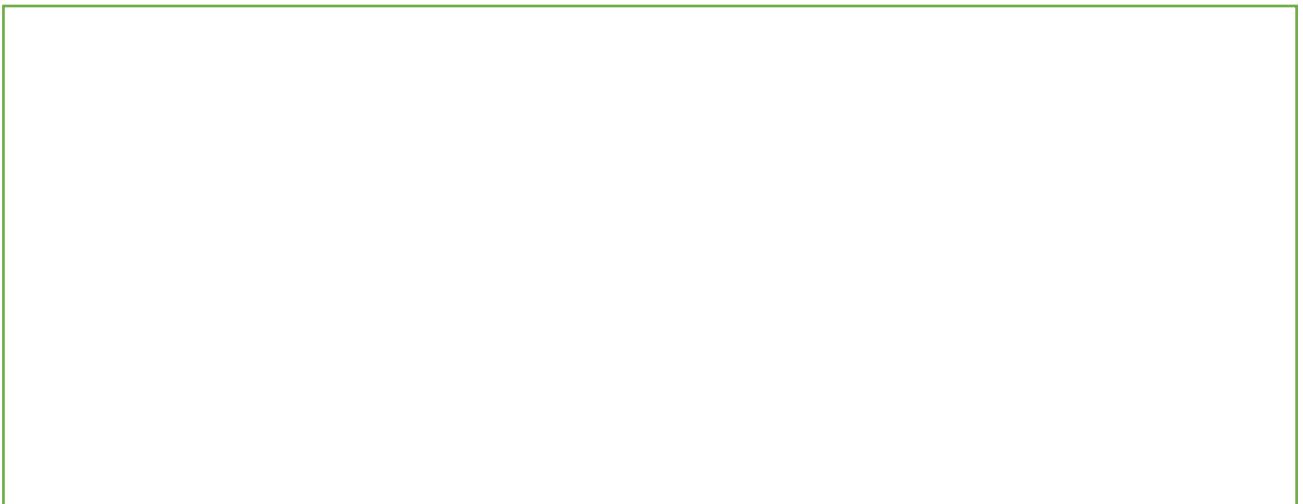


🌸 Try This: Square Breathing ☐

Use your finger to trace a square in the air or on the page as you breathe:

- Breathe in for 4 seconds
 - Hold for 4 seconds
 - Breathe out for 4 seconds
 - Hold for 4 seconds
- (Then repeat)

You can draw your own breathing square here and use colours that feel calming to you.



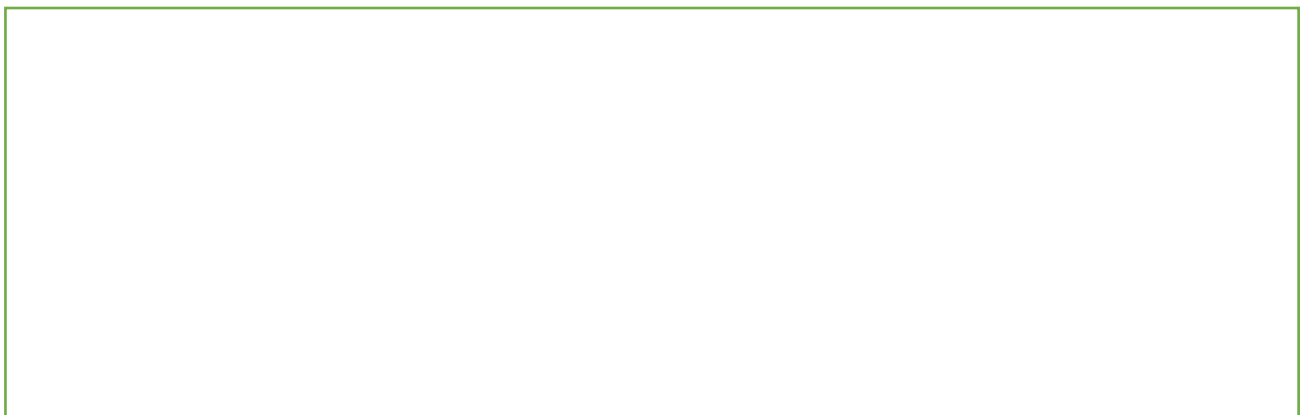
🌸 Try This: Mindful Touch

Pick an object near you (like a stone, fidget, or soft fabric).

Notice everything about it — its texture, temperature, shape, weight, colour.

Spend 1–2 minutes just exploring it with your senses.

✎ You can stick or draw a favourite object here:



Try This: Sound Hunt

Close your eyes and listen for 30 seconds.

What sounds can you hear around you? Near and far?

 What did you notice?

Mindfulness Isn't About Being Perfect

You might still have thoughts racing or emotions popping up —
that's okay.

Mindfulness is about *noticing*, not *fixing*.

Every time you try, you're building a tool that helps you feel
more grounded and safer.

Managing Urges to Self-Harm

If you're feeling the urge to hurt yourself, stop and breathe — even just for a moment. Urges are like waves: they rise, peak, and pass.

These pages are here to help you *ride the wave* safely.

Pause and Ask:

- What am I feeling right now?
- What happened before this feeling came up?
- Is there something I need — comfort, distraction, support?

You don't have to figure it all out — just slowing down is a big step.

Try These Alternatives:

If you need to *feel something*:

- Hold ice cubes
- Snap a rubber band on your wrist
- Scribble hard with red pen
- Squeeze a stress ball or pillow
- Put your hands in cold or warm water

If you need to *calm down*:


- Breathe slowly (try square breathing)
- Listen to music or sounds you love
- Wrap up in a blanket or hoodie
- Take a shower or wash your face
- Focus on 3 things you can see and hear


If you need to *let it out*:


- Write or draw how you're feeling
- Rip paper
- Scream into a pillow
- Throw ice cubes at the ground
- Do exercise or go for a fast walk

Make a Plan


What can I do instead of hurting myself?


 _____

 _____

 _____


Who can I message or call?


 _____


 _____

 _____

Where can I go to feel safer?

 _____

 _____

 _____

Positive Affirmations

Affirmations are short, kind things you can say to yourself — even if you don't fully believe them yet.

You deserve kindness from others — and from yourself.

What Do Affirmations Do?

- Shift your focus toward hope and strength
- Remind you that feelings don't define your value
- Help you build new thought patterns over time
- Support your desire to care for yourself instead of harm yourself

You don't have to say them out loud (but you can!). You can whisper them, think them, write them, or even decorate your room or planner with them.


Try These Affirmations


Here are a few to start with — choose the ones that speak to you or write your own:


- I am allowed to take up space.
- I don't have to be perfect to be worthy.
- I am doing the best I can, and that's enough.
- This feeling is temporary. I can ride it out.
- I am not my mistakes.
- I deserve care, even when I'm struggling.
- I am learning to be kind to myself.
- It's okay to rest.
- I am more than what I'm going through.
- I can get through today.


Create Your Own

Write four affirmations that feel true, helpful, or hopeful to you:

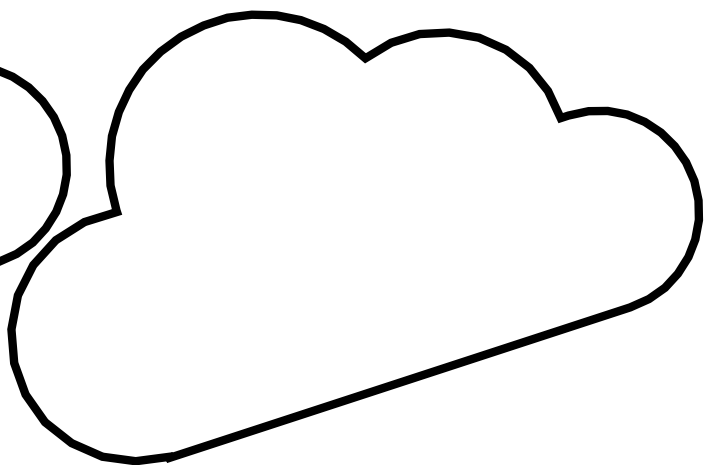
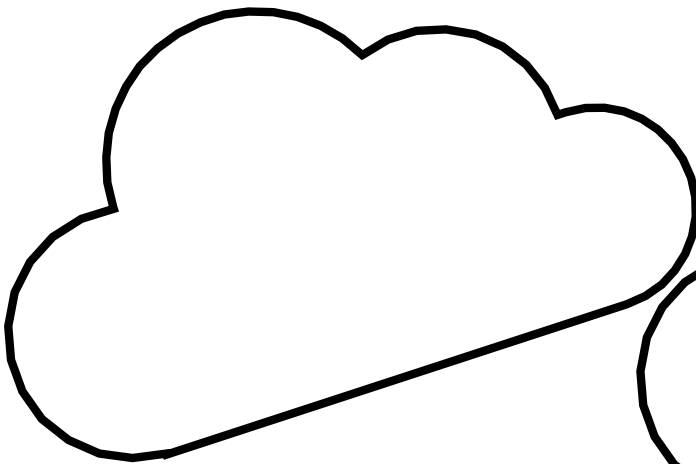
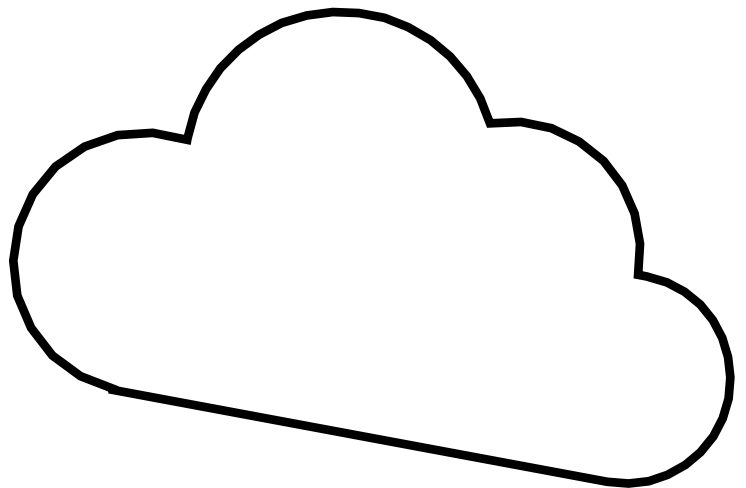
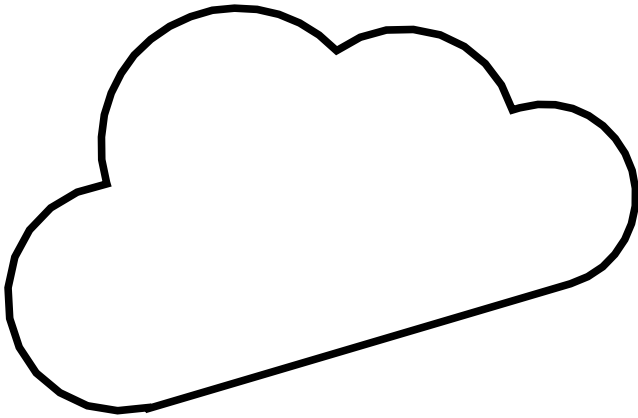
1.  _____

2.  _____

3.  _____

4.  _____

You can turn these into little reminder cards, decorate them, or put them somewhere you'll see them when you need a boost.



My Self-Care Page

Self-care means doing things that help you feel safe, calm, and supported — especially when life feels heavy.

You don't have to earn it. You don't have to wait for a "good day."

You *deserve* care simply because you exist.

Self-Care for My Mind

Things that help me feel more focused, calm, or less overwhelmed:

 _____

 _____


 _____


 _____


Examples: Listening to music, doing a puzzle, journaling, talking to someone, turning off my phone for a while.


Self-Care for My Emotions

Things that help me express or soothe my feelings:

 _____

 _____

 _____

 _____


Examples: Crying without feeling bad about it, drawing, hugging a pillow, watching a comfort show, writing about how I feel.

Self-Care for My Body

Things that help my body feel better, rested, or more cared for:

 _____

 _____

 _____


 _____


Examples: Taking a shower, stretching, eating something nourishing, wearing comfy clothes, going outside for fresh air.

Self-Care I Can Do on Really Hard Days

When I feel low or at risk of self-harming, these are small things I *can still* try to help me stay safe:

 _____

 _____

 _____

 _____

Examples: Wrapping up in a blanket, texting someone, holding ice, breathing deeply, looking at something comforting.

A Kind Reminder to Myself

 “ _____ ”

(Write a kind message to yourself here, or pick one from the affirmations page.)

A Closing Message for You

If you've made it to the end of this booklet — thank you.

Thank you for showing up for yourself, even when things are tough.

Thank you for your bravery, your honesty, and your heart.

This booklet isn't about being “fixed” — it's about learning to care for yourself, step by step.

It's about building a little bit more safety, space, and softness inside your world.

There will still be hard days — that's okay. But now, you have tools, support, and reminders to help you through them.

You are not alone.

You matter.

You are worthy of care, even when you don't feel okay.

Words to Hold Onto

Here are some gentle quotes to keep with you — write your favourites on sticky notes, decorate your space, or return to them when you need a moment of hope:

“No feeling is final.”

— Rainer Maria Rilke

“You have been trying to survive for so long. Now, you are allowed to rest.”

— Nikita Gill

“Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise.”

— Victor Hugo

“You don’t have to believe everything your thoughts tell you.”

— Unknown

“Healing doesn’t mean the damage never existed. It means it no longer controls your life.”

— Akshay Dubey

“You are not behind. You are not broken. You are becoming.”

— Brianna Wiest

“Small steps are still steps. You are moving forward.”

— Morgan Harper Nichols

“One day you’ll tell your story and it will be someone else’s survival guide.”

— Brené Brown

“You are allowed to ask for help. You don’t have to carry this alone.”

— Unknown

“Your feelings are valid. You are not too much.”

— Unknown

“Healing isn’t linear. Some days you’ll bloom, some days you’ll just breathe — both are okay.”


— Unknown


Looking Back: What I've Learned About Me


You've made it through this support booklet — and that's a really big deal.


Take a moment to pause and reflect. You might not have noticed, but just by reading, thinking, or writing, you've already taken steps to care for yourself.


Things I've Learned About Me

-  One emotion I understand better now is:


-  One healthy coping strategy I'd like to try again:


-  One thing I can do when I feel overwhelmed:


-  Someone I feel a little more able to talk to now:

-  A kind reminder I want to keep in mind:

What I'm Proud Of

-  One brave thing I did while using this booklet:

-  One page or section that really helped me:

-  Something I wrote, tried, or read that surprised me (in a good way):

What I Want to Keep with Me

 A quote, idea, or tool from this booklet I want to remember:

 A message I want to give myself for the next hard day:

Final Thoughts

Healing doesn't mean everything feels perfect.

It means you're learning to care for yourself in new ways — one choice, one moment at a time.

And that's something to be really proud of.

Shout	Childline	YoungMinds
 Text SHOUT to 85258	 Call 0800 1111 or visit childline.org.uk	 Advice, and help with self-harm
		

Mental Health Glossary

A guide to words you might come across in this pack (and beyond)

Affirmation

A short, kind phrase you say to yourself to help build confidence, hope, or calm.



Example: “I’m doing my best, and that’s enough.”

Anxiety

A feeling of worry, fear, or nervousness. It can make your heart race, stomach feel sick, or thoughts spin. Everyone feels it sometimes — it doesn’t mean you’re weak.

Coping

Anything you do to deal with difficult emotions or situations. Coping can be healthy (like talking, drawing, walking) or unhealthy (like hurting yourself or shutting down).

Crisis

A time when emotions feel too big or unsafe to manage on your own. You might feel out of control, hopeless, or like you're at risk of harming yourself. In a crisis, it’s okay — and important — to ask for help straight away.

Depression

A mental health condition that can make you feel really low, numb, hopeless, or tired for a long time. It’s not “just being sad.” And it’s not your fault.

Dissociation


Feeling “spaced out,” numb, or like you’re not really in your body. This can happen during or after a stressful or overwhelming experience.

Emotion Regulation

Learning how to notice, understand and manage your emotions without getting overwhelmed by them. It’s a skill that takes time to grow.

Grounding

A calming technique that helps bring your focus back to the present moment — especially when you’re feeling anxious, panicky, or disconnected.

 *Example:* Noticing 5 things you can see, 4 you can feel, etc.

Mental Health

How your brain and emotions are doing. Just like physical health, mental health can go up and down. Everyone has mental health — and it’s okay to talk about it.

Mindfulness

Paying attention to what’s happening right now — your breath, your surroundings, your thoughts — without judging it. It can help you feel calmer and more connected.

Panic Attack

A sudden rush of intense fear or discomfort. You might feel like you can’t breathe, your heart is racing, or something bad is about to happen. It feels scary, but it’s not dangerous — and it *will* pass.

Self-Harm

When someone hurts their own body on purpose to cope with emotional pain or overwhelming feelings. It doesn't mean you're attention-seeking or broken — it means you're in pain, and you deserve support.

Shame

A heavy feeling that tells you “something is wrong with me.” It often comes with thoughts like “I'm not good enough.” Shame isn't the truth — it's a feeling, and it can be healed.

Support Network

People, services, or places that help you feel safer, stronger, and cared for. Your network might include friends, trusted adults, school staff, or helplines.

Trigger

Something that suddenly brings up strong emotions or memories — often linked to something difficult you've experienced. Triggers can be sounds, smells, places, or even thoughts.

Wellbeing

Your overall sense of how you're doing — emotionally, physically, and mentally. Looking after your wellbeing means giving yourself rest, care, and kindness.