



What to do if you're a young person and it's all getting too much

2021 - Dr Prathiba Chitsabesan

Sometimes things can seem overwhelming, and you may feel you can't cope. We are now in our third national lockdown and we have lived through almost a year of the COVID-19 pandemic and social restrictions, which have affected us all.

You might be feeling down and sad – many of your friends and family members may be feeling the same way – and this can be normal at the moment. Those feelings may have become very deep and intense, and you might not know what to do about them.

It's okay not to feel okay, there is hope for you and you can get through this.

You're not alone – many people feel like this at some time in their lives – and more people are likely to be feeling this way at the moment because of the pandemic. Some of you can't go to school, college or university and are studying at home, others are able to attend but the changes to keep you safe make things feel very different and we know it can be hard.

What's important for you to know is that there are lots of ways of dealing with these feelings.

It's absolutely possible to come out the other side and feel okay again.

Here are some warning signs you should look out for:

- deep or constant sadness
- losing interest in daily life
- increasing trouble with sleeping and eating
- feeling helpless or worthless
- harming yourself
- always thinking about death.

If you experience any of these signs, you don't need to suffer in silence. It's not good to spend too much time alone, especially if you are feeling low and vulnerable. It's at times like these that you need to be able to talk to someone.

Who can I ask for help?

We know it's hard, but don't be afraid to ask for help. You may feel that you don't want to burden other people. You worry about what they might think or that they could tell others.

But the truth is this – people care about you and they will want to help you.

First, think about who you would feel most comfortable talking to? Many of us prefer talking to family or friends, or you may want to talk to professionals (staff working at your school or college, your GP, health professional or social worker), support groups, helplines or online discussion forums.

After you have thought about the different people you could talk to, decide who is the best person to talk to for you.

When you speak to them, explain how you feel and what support you would like. Sharing your worries with someone you trust can help you see your problems in a different way and understand that harming yourself or taking your own life is not the way through this. They can help by spending time with you, talking things through or giving you help. They can also help you get professional support in a way you feel comfortable with.

Where can I get help?

There are 24/7 crisis lines available in England if you, or someone you love, is having a mental health crisis. These crisis lines are available to people of all ages, and you can [find your local helpline](#) on nhs.uk.

You can also talk to your GP by giving your GP practice a ring – and you can ask to speak to a GP who you know or trust. You can also speak to your hospital/community doctor or nurse, if you have one, who looks after you.

Remember, if you feel immediately unsafe and it is an emergency, you can call 999. But this might not be the right thing for you, which is why there are a range of options available.

As well as the above, there are also other places where you can get help and advice. Some help is provided through websites, and others through text, phone or email. Please save the details in your phone so you have the information always easily available to you.

- [Public Health England's Better Health – Every Mind Matters](#) website provides support, including tips on how to improve your mental wellbeing.
- [YoungMinds Crisis Messenger](#) provides free crisis support if you are having a crisis – this is available every day of the week, at any time day or night. You just need to text YM to 85258. All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors. Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.
- [Papyrus \(Prevention of Young Suicide\)](#) provides advice and support for young people who feel like they want to take their own life, and all their advice is confidential. You can ring their helpline – HOPELineUK – on 0800 068 41 41 or you can text them on 07786 209 687.
- [Samaritans](#) are an organisation you can ring at any time of the day or night. They will help you and listen to how you're feeling. You can ring them on 116 123. You can also email them jo@samaritans.org
- [Childline](#) will help you if you're under 19, and you can confidentially call, email, or chat online about any problem, big or small. Their freephone 24-hour helpline is 0800 1111. You can [sign up for a Childline account](#) on their website and you will then be able to message a counsellor anytime without using your email address. Or you can have a one-to-one chat with an [online advisor](#).
- [SHOUT](#) provides free, confidential, 24/7 text message support in the UK for anyone who is struggling to cope and anyone in crisis. Text SHOUT to 85258. This service is free on all major mobile networks.

Other types of support

If you are an autistic person, the National Autistic Society have helpful [advice on their website](#) on how to deal with this uncertain time with the coronavirus.

Life can be scary and it's okay not to feel okay. Remember that you matter. You don't have to suffer and there are people who want to help you. You can get through this and feel okay again.