

Welcome to

# Early Help for Mental Health

This is Devon's new dedicated service for school staff.



Our aim is to:

Consider what is mental health?

Consider how we learn to be mentally healthy?

Consider how we can support our children developing a positive approach to managing their mental health.

Look after ourselves as our role as parent changes.

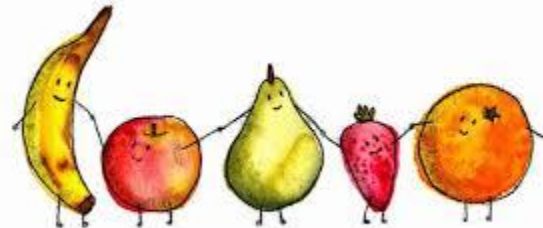
# What is Mental Health?

# Mental Health: A definition

‘The strength and capacity of our minds to grow and develop, to be able to overcome difficulties and challenges and to make the most of our abilities and opportunities’



*How do we learn to BE physically healthy?*



# Successful Physical Health Promotion Campaigns?

Is this the normal magic to sustaining good physical health?

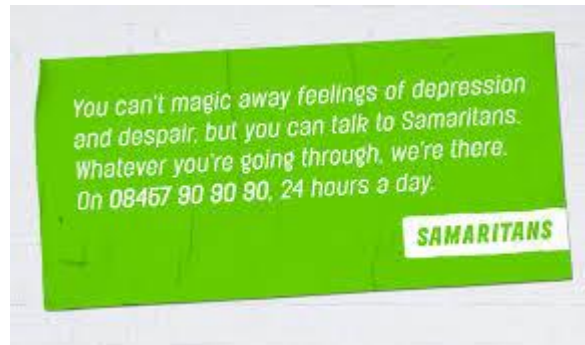


*How do we learn to BE mentally healthy?*

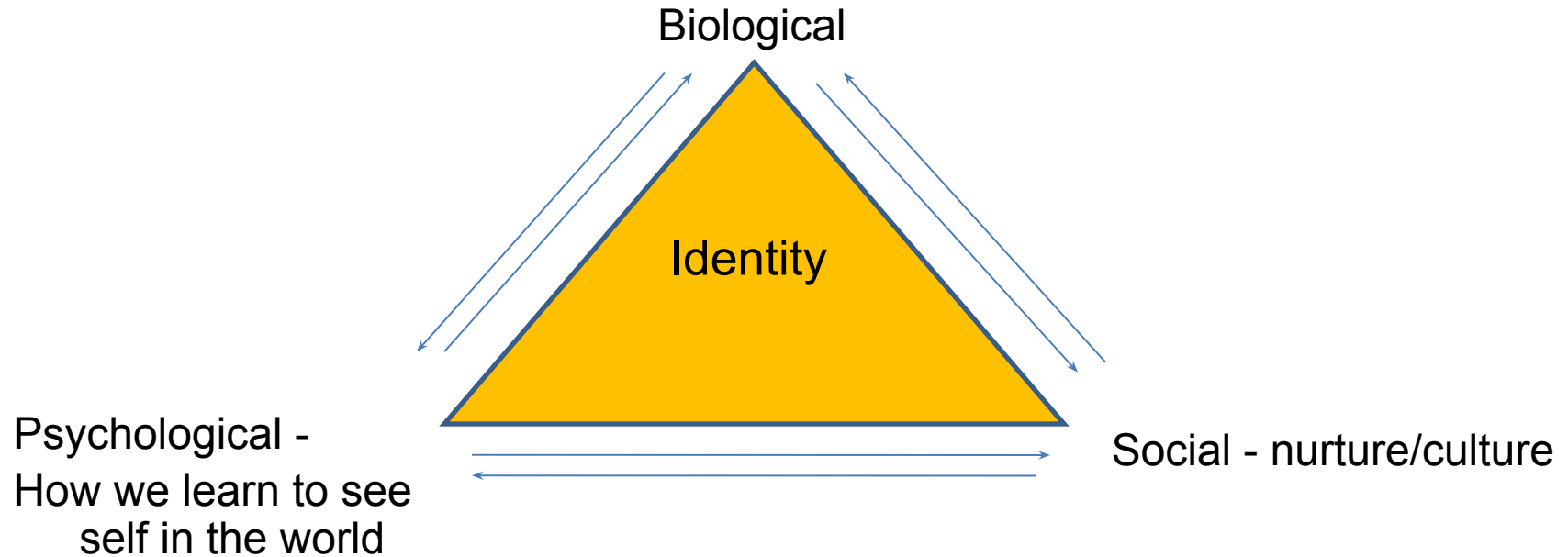


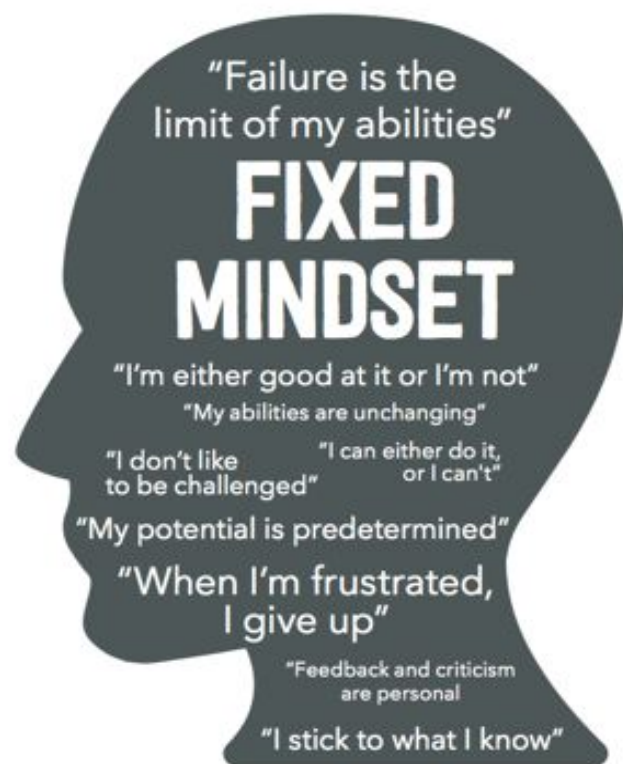


## Successful Mental Health Promotion Campaigns?



# A Bio-Psycho-Social model



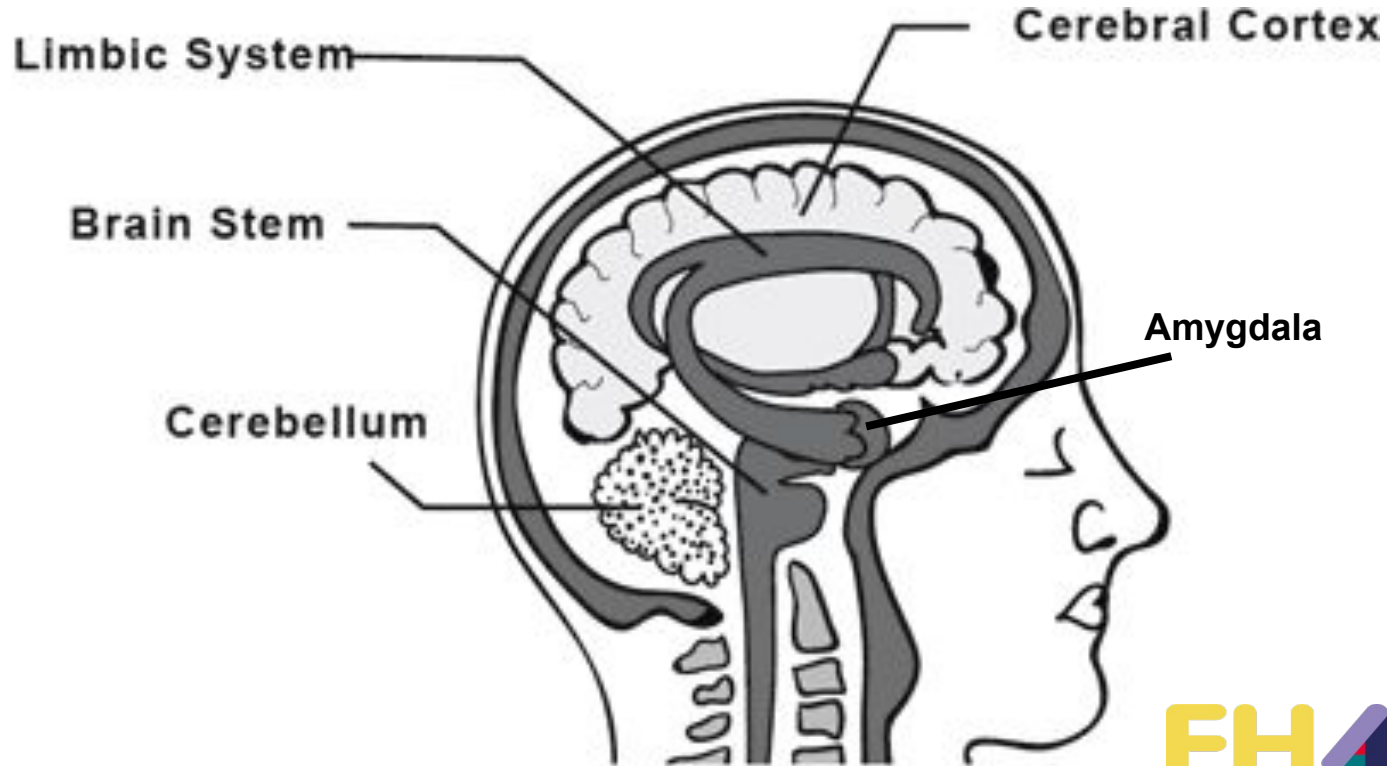


# Emotional functioning

- There is a mismatch between emotional and cognitive regulatory modes
- Brain structures mediating emotional experiences change rapidly at the onset of puberty
- Maturation of the frontal brain lag behind by several years
- Young brains are left with powerful emotional responses that they cannot easily regulate



# This is where the limbic system sits within the brain:



# The Limbic System has the following functions:

- It is the centre for emotion control (inc. fear and aggression)
- It controls reproductive and other survival behaviours
- It influences memory
- It influences hormonal release and the autonomic nervous system.



# The amygdala:



- Is pea-sized! But a very important component of the limbic system...
- The amygdala assesses and responds to direct, automatic, unconscious, sensory stimuli received from the thalamus - just as it is received from the environment, raw and unprocessed.
- Therefore it is all it has to work with for a brief moment, to determine an emotional response.
- The result is a rapid but not always appropriate response.
- There are also secondary and tertiary amygdala inputs...



# Simple scenario to demonstrate the workings of the amygdala

Your friend decides to play a joke on you. She hides behind the door, intending to jump out and surprise you. When you enter the room, she does just that, making a loud noise as she does so.

*The primary and secondary amygdala inputs* would happen so close together they would appear simultaneous - you would become aware of the sudden appearance of someone jumping out and a loud noise.

This could be anyone or anything, a potential threat to safety. In a purely automatic defensive strategy, you are likely to attempt to move out of danger and perhaps lash out physically.

Along with perhaps some terse language or a scream, there could be some very rapid physical changes - e.g. cardiovascular system would show a dramatic rise in pulse rate and blood pressure.

But very quickly, the *tertiary amygdala input* will allow some recognition of who this person is and what their intentions were. Your response would then be modified once the tertiary input has established the true nature of the surprise.

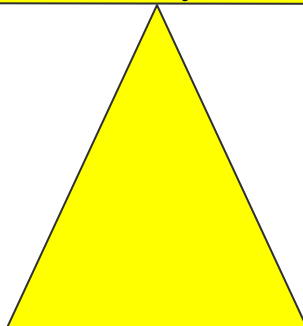




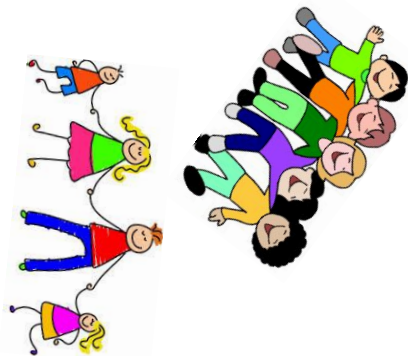
Positive

Steady

Negative



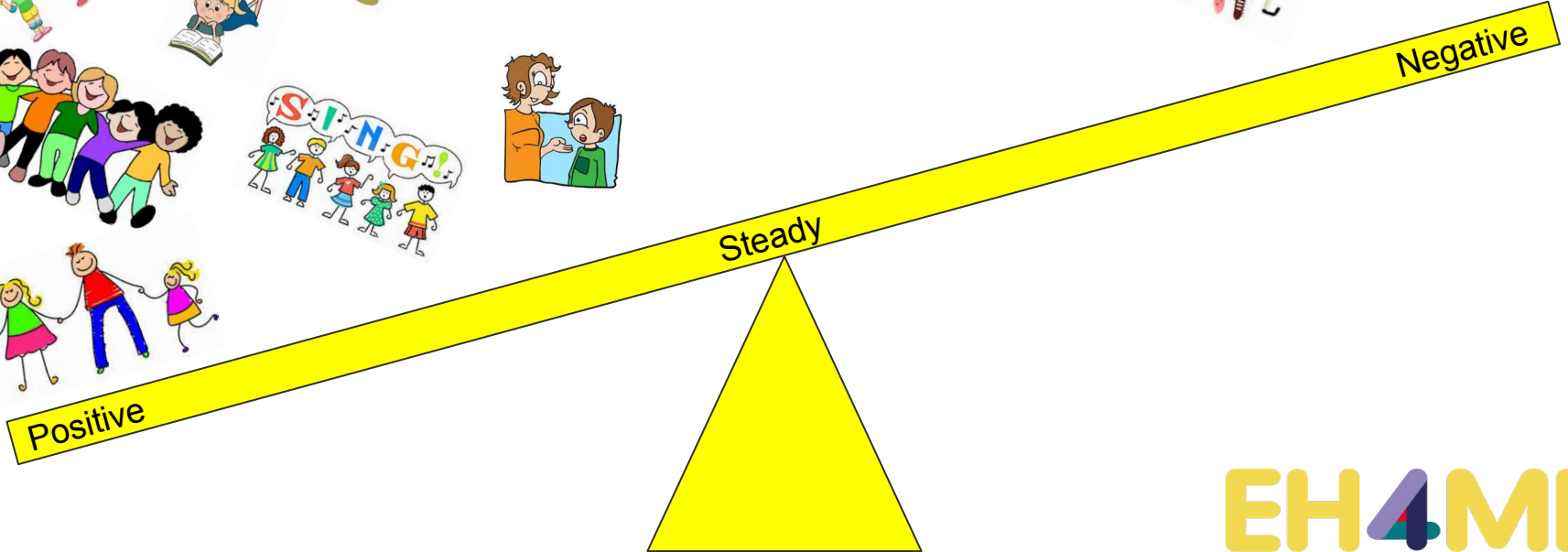
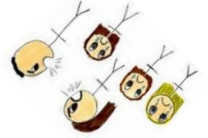
Positive



Steady



Negative





## Ostrich Style

**'Burying head in sand'**

Avoid thinking or talking about problems.

Signal given: too busy and unavailable to support.

**'Swerving'** the issue.

## Kangaroo Style

Protective

wanting to keep everyone safe, as if in a pouch.

Too accommodating and controlling

Inner rescuer at play.



## Jellyfish Style

Wobbly, see through, and reactive to a prod.

Being in a raw emotional state, with all feelings close to the surface.

May be swept away by currents of emotion and beliefs.

Intense and visible reactions.

# How are we Being?

# And communicating that Being?



## Dolphin Style

A calm, warm, nurturing style

Guiding, coaching, encouraging and subtle.

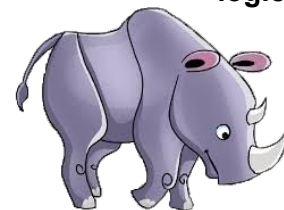
Think of calmly swimming alongside and gently nudging in the right direction occasionally.

## Rhinoceros Style

Attempts to persuade and convince the person to change by argument

As if charging at and trying to smash through the behaviour and beliefs using logic.

Rushing in to make change.





**Do you need to put a lid on your  
'inner rescuer'?**

**And explicitly notice out loud how  
the child or young person is able  
to help themselves...**



## *Our very own Normal Magic*

To repair, recover and sustain good mental health these are musts:

Talk about your feelings.

Ask for Help.

Take a Break.

Eat Well.

Stay Hydrated.

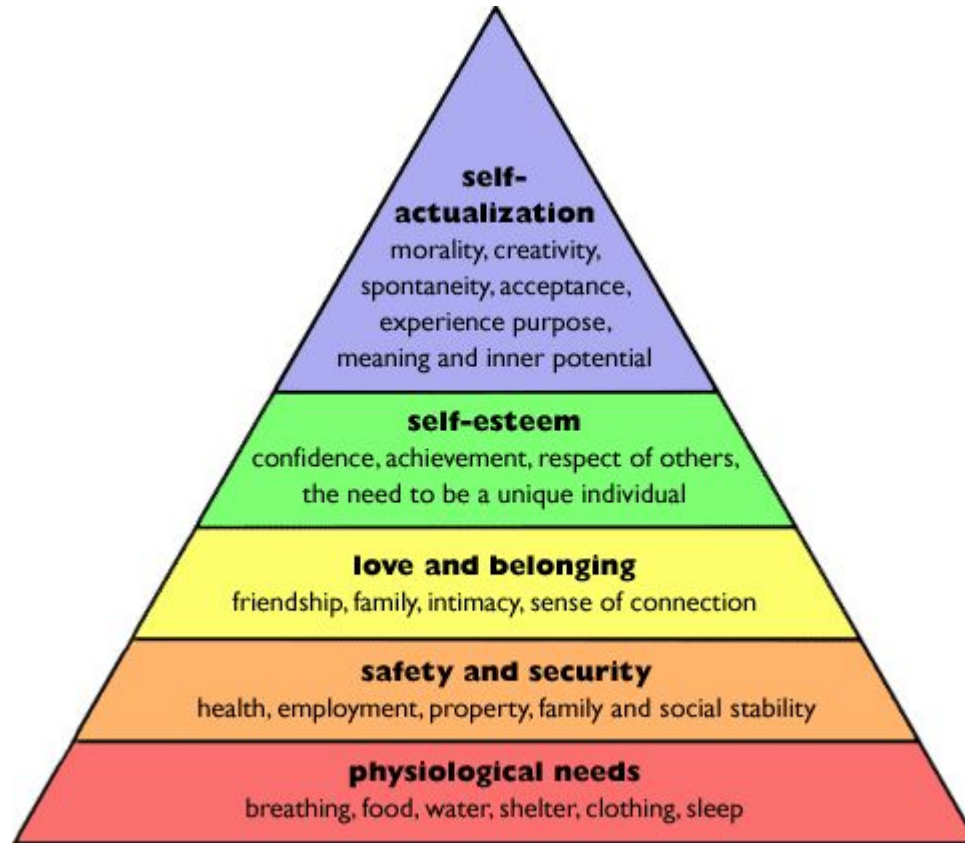
Keep in Touch with People you Care About.

Stay Active in Mind and Body

Do Something you are Good at and Enjoy

Actively Care for Others

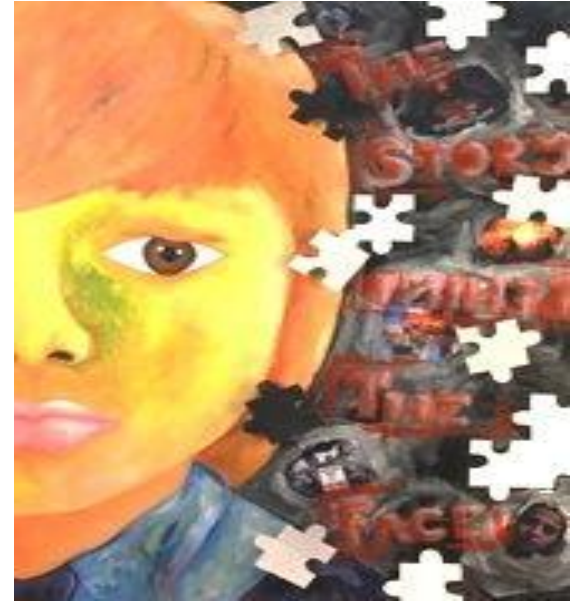
Be Proud of your very Being



## Some things young people tell us

- Notice our distress and be helpful!
- Stigma affects us all – it's about time we were able to talk about how we feel
- Growing up is difficult – support us when change happens in our lives
- See beyond our labels
- Don't let us get lost in the system
- We are the experts on us, start listening to us

*(Children and Young People's Manifesto: YoungMinds 2009)*



**M** = ME! How you are BEING is crucial to successful listening. Check the lid on your inner rescuer.

**A = Active Listening**

**G** = Generate their “what next.”

**I** = Inspire and be Inspired

**C** = Compliment - notice and feed the qualities of the Growth Mindset.

# Let's have a think about the impact of what we say...

*“Not you again...”*

*“I haven't got time for your nonsense today”*

*“Stop thinking about it”*

*“Don't worry about it, it'll be alright”*

*“Don't be silly...”*

*“Don't be stupid, we've talked about this”*

**How does that leave you feeling...?**

## Validate their experience and need for support

How do you know your young person is feeling heard by you?

*“I hear what you are saying...”*

*“You’re very good at explaining what’s going on for you...”*

*“I’m pleased that you’ve come to me to figure this out...”*

# What about the impact of...

*“I’m really proud of you for noticing that you feel like...”*

*“Well done you for recognising you’re feeling like...”*

*“Thank you for sharing that with me, I like being here for you...”*

**How does this response make you feel?**

## **Help them without helping them!**

**Encourage problem solving.**

**Notice out loud to the child or young person what they are doing well in that process.**

**This will help to install the belief within the child or young person that they can cope in the situation and will help them to rewrite their self-image.**

## Tips: Inspire and be Inspired

Whatever your child/young person has suggested as their calm down and moving on method..

Go with it! Even if you think there are better choices....they are learning the 'right' answers for themselves and they won't learn it if you keep giving them your answer!

*“Wow...I love that idea, it's one of your 10 a day! I really am inspired by your efforts today”*

*“That sounds like you now have a plan....I love a plan from our 10 a day.”*

*“It sounds like you know what your brain needs to feel looked after and rested, you have reminded me how important it is to look after our mental health - thank you.”*

*How do you bring the formula into our everyday conversations?*

*We go the extra mile and rain noticing and praise on our next generation whenever they are trying or achieving looking after their mental and physical health.*

*Some typical phrases that talk to the Growth Mindset of our children and young people in everyday conversations might be:*

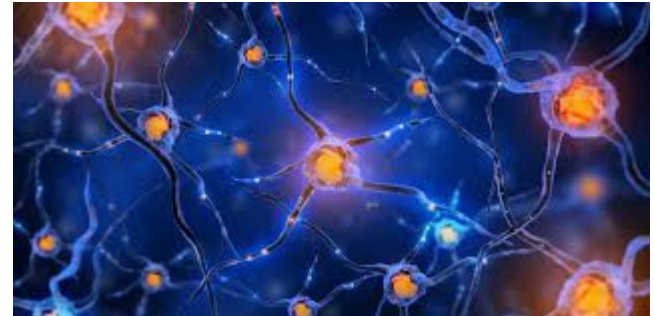
*“You have really worked hard at working that out”*

*“I love how you ask for others ideas when you are stuck.”*

*“I notice you are great at thinking about solutions when problems pop up.”*

*“I like that you have chatted that over with your friends too”*

*“Thank you for your kind words.”*



# Wellness Recovery Action Plan

I know when I feel good because I notice myself to be:

I know when my mood needs balancing because I notice myself to be:

Things I know help me balance my mood are:

To keep my mental health balanced my daily maintenance plan includes:

These are the people I choose to contact when I need help or distracting:

This is how I rest my brain and relax:



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Do Something you are Good at and Enjoy

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Be Proud of your very Being

**Thank you!**

Reminding your young person there is  
always someone there to talk to:

Young Devon  
Kooth

For parents:

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

*“I’ve learned that people will forget what  
you said, people will forget what you did,  
but people will never forget how you  
made them feel”*

*Maya Angelou*