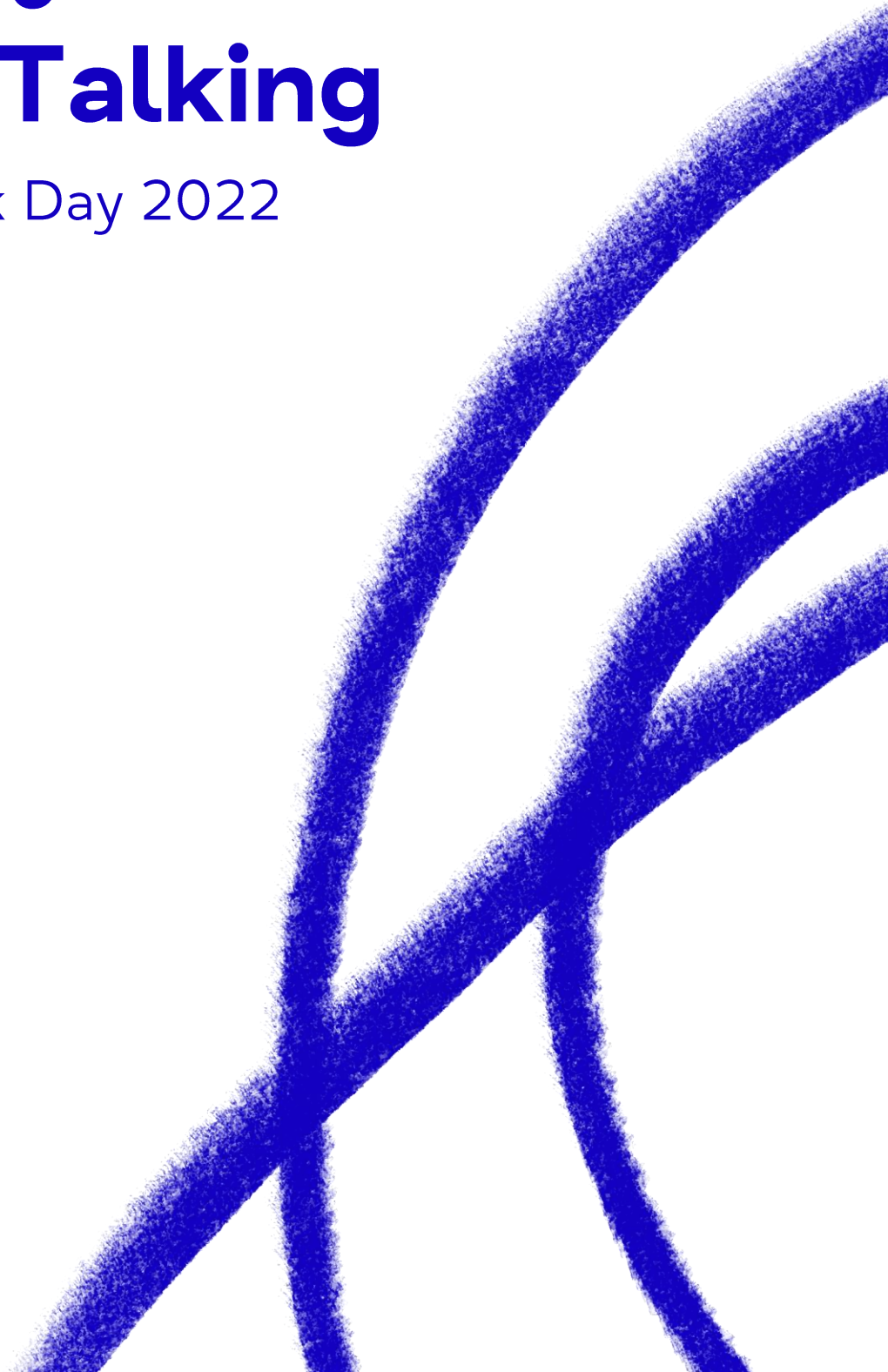


50 Ways to Start Talking

Time to Talk Day 2022





50 Years of Talking

2022 is the 50th Anniversary of Leeds Mind. For our golden anniversary, we are asking Leeds to get talking, because silence isn't always golden...but talking is!

And what better time to start than on Time to Talk Day?

Since being founded in 1972, Leeds Mind has grown to around 100 staff and more than 150 volunteers. Together, we provide mental health services for our community in and around Leeds, including group support, 1-to-1 counselling, creative wellbeing activities, workplace wellbeing support and more. Talking is a valuable tool that we use across all these services.

We want to use the celebration of our 50th year to reach more people right across Leeds and the surrounding areas. We want this year to see more people than ever talking about their mental health – not because more people need to (although this may be the case due to the pandemic), but because people no longer feel the need to hide.

We're starting with our 50 ways to start talking resource, launching on Time to Talk Day (3rd February). It includes talking prompts to use with friends, family, and colleagues; book, film and TV recommendations; and lots of activities that can help you have a better conversation about mental health.

There's lots of information here, so why not start small and select one way to start a conversation about better mental health?

Share this resource with people you know, and help more people discover why **talking is golden.**

50 Ways to Start Talking

There's lots of opportunities in our community in and around Leeds to connect with people and talk about our mental health. Here's a few ideas to get started. Whether it's tips for a simple conversation, activities you can do to make starting a conversation easier, or resources that you can draw on to expand your own understanding of mental health.

For the books, check whether your local library has them. Many of the resources are free online (some will need a TV licence).

1. **Start simple** – ask someone how they are and go from there
2. **Try an Inkwell Arts session** – sharing in [creativity and expression](#) (even if you're a beginner) is a great way to explore your own feelings and share with others
3. **Find your local community centre** – discover what they have on offer. Woodhouse and New Wortley Community Centres currently have Leeds Mind sessions. [Find your local community hub](#).
4. **Grab a cuppa** – lots of people feel more comfortable chatting with a cuppa in hand. Either stick the kettle on at home, or try one of the amazing cafes in our community – for example, [Better Days Café](#) in the Grand Arcade describes itself as a “wellbeing bar”
5. **Find the right support** – it's not always easy to talk about mental health, and sometimes you'll realise you need additional support. [Mindwell Leeds](#) has lots of brilliant services listed
6. **Learn from others' experiences** – ‘It's Not Okay to Feel Blue and Other Lies' is a collection of writing from lots of influential people, from comedians and social media personalities to activists and politicians. It can be inspiring to hear about others' experiences
7. **Embrace the awkward** – talking about mental health can be a relief, but sometimes it's really hard. If you or someone else feels awkward talking about mental health, know that that's OK. Time to Talk's [talking tips can help](#)
8. **Reach further in your social network** – if you don't feel comfortable or able to talk to friends or family, think about the other trusted people in your network – is there someone at work or a fellow parent at the school gates?

9. **Fuel up first** – if you find talking about mental health difficult, think about treating yourself to a healthy, nutritious meal before. There's a close connection between [food and our mood](#)
10. **Leeds Mind is here** – sometimes it can help to talk to someone who doesn't know us as well as friends and family. Leeds Mind has [peer support group sessions](#), where we learn from each other's experiences and help one another. We also have [one-to-one counselling sessions](#)
11. **Pick up the phone** – if your trusted person or people live far away or you're not able to easily meet up with them, just pick up the phone
12. **Get practical support** – sometimes it's not counselling or a GP's support we need. Contact [Linking Leeds](#) to speak to them about where you would like to find support on practical or emotional problems, and they'll connect you to a range of local community services to improve social, emotional and mental wellbeing.
13. **Watch this kids' film (?!)** – the type of films, books or TV that we consume about mental health doesn't always have to be serious or academic. Try watching Disney Pixar's Inside out as a heart-warming and fun way to talk about mental health
14. **Help someone else to help yourself** – it's great for our mental health to help others. [Volunteer with Leeds Mind as a Befriender](#) to be matched with an older person who needs a chat. Volunteer any amount of time, from just one hour a week
15. **Find a running group** – talking about mental health when we're sat down face-to-face can sometimes feel difficult. By doing something else (like running with people) you can pass the time by chatting. You'll be surprised at how easy it is to open up! [RunTogether](#) can help you find a group for whatever your fitness level
16. **Write it down** – If saying something out loud feels like too much of a big step for now, try writing it down to make sense of what you're thinking. Pen and paper, a computer, or even a note-taking app on your phone is fine
17. **Consider your biases** – we all have our own biases and preconceptions – things that we believe to be true, even if we don't think about them consciously or admit it out loud. If you're talking to someone about their mental health (or even thinking about your own) try to leave your biases at the door
18. **Take a seat and talk to someone new** – there's a few benches dotted around our community which have a little sign that invites passers-by to take a seat and have a chat to whoever else sits down. Try the one at Kirkstall Abbey, Hall Park in Horsforth or Nunroyd Park in Guiseley

19. **Watch ‘Our Silent Emergency’ with Roman Kemp** explored the mental health crisis in young men in the UK in [this BBC Three Documentary](#). By hearing from other people’s perspectives, we can be better at looking after our own (and others’) mental health
20. **Speak to your GP** – sometimes we know we need more than a cuppa and a chat. This could be medication, or it could be other support such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Speak to your GP, who will be able to help you explore the best option for you
21. **Promote mental wellbeing at work** – because we spend so much time with our colleagues (and work itself can sometimes be such a source of stress), the workplace is a good place to start a conversation about mental health. If you need support, look into [Mindful Employer Leeds](#)
22. **Explore mindfulness and chat about your experience** – there are free mindfulness sessions on YouTube or on [Leeds Mindfulness Co-op](#). Why not try it and share your experiences with someone?
23. **Read Mad Girl by Bryony Gordon** – This book explores the author’s experience of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). It could help you see things from a new perspective, or understand your own experiences better (or that of others around you)
24. **“There’s always something going on at Hollybush”** – discover local conservation charity, [TCV Hollybush](#). They’re working towards “healthier, happier communities for everyone”. Join in for community gardening and conservation work, and find someone new to chat to!
25. **Start by expressing your own feelings, and others will follow** – If you feel comfortable, you can share your own experiences of mental health. This can help connect with others, and can even encourage them to seek support if needed
26. **Write someone a letter** – Talking isn’t just about what you say out loud. It’s about opening up and sharing. What’s better, you’ll be giving someone the joy of receiving hand-written post!
27. **Don’t try to fix it** – when you’re talking to someone else about their mental health, it can be really tempting to find ways to fix their problems. Instead, try to just listen without judgement and talk about how they feel, rather than what they ought to be doing about it
28. **Find a group or neighbourhood network** – Google ‘community groups’ alongside the area of Leeds you live in and see what’s available. [Leeds Older People’s Forum](#) has a handy search tool

29. **Watch Stephen Fry’s ‘Secret Life of a Manic Depressive’** – The President of national Mental Health Charity, Mind, explores his own experiences of Bipolar (also known as ‘manic depression’). Even better – [it’s available for free on YouTube](#).
30. **Sketch a stress bucket** – if you look up the idea of a ‘stress bucket’ (or ‘stress container’) on Google, it gives you a good visual way to understand the things that make us stress, and the coping mechanisms that work for you personally to deal with them. Try sketching out your own, or do it as a group
31. **Get support from school/college/uni/work** – Most education providers and employers now have some sort of wellbeing assistance programme in place. Speak to someone about what’s on offer at the place(s) you work and learn in
32. **Talk to your kids** – We often shy away from talking to our kids about mental health, believing it is too difficult or too serious for them. But talking to them in an appropriate way can help them grow up knowing how to manage their own wellbeing and they could even give you some insight. Young Minds has some [good resources](#) to help
33. **Go for a walk** – going for a stroll with someone can take the pressure off when you (or they) are trying to find thee words. You can take a break by talking about the landscape or people-watching in a park, then come back to the conversation about mental health when you both feel ready
34. **Find your sport** – Even those of us that think we don’t like or can’t do sport can find a way to get moving in a way which will help with our mental wellbeing. Use [BBC’s Get Inspired](#) to find yours
35. **Ask questions** – help someone open up about their mental health by asking open-ended questions (that’s something that doesn’t just require a yes or no answer)
36. **Watch and listen to other people’s experiences** – [Lippy People](#) is an organisation that uses the power of video to tell stories about people’s lived experience. Visit the website for stories on “Life, Loss, Legacy and Learning”
37. **Get creative with your writing** – You can simply write down thoughts and feelings, or you can get creative. For example, try writing a poem or story. You don’t have to be an expert to pick up the pen, and you could find a way to share your experiences with others
38. **WhatsApp or text** – If talking feels like too much, having a conversation over WhatsApp or text can be an easier first step

39. **Read ‘How to Survive the End of the World’ by Aaron Gillies** – This book gives the author’s personal experience of anxiety, and gives the reader some tools to help with their own
40. **Use social media for good** – there’s lots of information out there about the dark side of social media. While it’s true we should all be careful with how we use it, it can also be a powerful way to connect with others. Try looking for local groups that you could join, or drop someone you know and trust a message to see how they’re doing
41. **Have your voice heard** – there’s ways to share your experience of mental health difficulties to shape mental health care and support in our community. For example, get talking with our [Leeds Mind Impact Group](#) to influence how Leeds Mind delivers support
42. **Really listen** – When we spend lots of time thinking about how to start the conversation, it can be easy to forget to listen properly. Give the speaker your full attention, and look at [‘active listening’](#) to see how you can become a better listener
43. **Host a tea and talk session** – beyond just grabbing a cuppa with a mate, why not set up some time for a group of people to get together and chat?
44. **Watch ‘No Change Without Us’** – this powerful film from Birmingham Mind, in partnership with Coventry & Warwickshire Mind and Dudley Mind, was created in collaboration with its service users, and explores mental health among racialised communities. The film is available for [free on YouTube](#).
45. **Consider getting involved in fundraising events** – Leeds Mind’s [fundraising events calendar](#) gives you lots of opportunities to connect with others and raise both money and awareness for better mental health
46. **Try journaling** – By writing in a journal, we can make sense of our thoughts and feelings, which in turn, can make it easier to have a conversation with others about it. Google ‘mental health journaling prompts’ for ideas on how to get started
47. **Read Matt Haig’s ‘Reasons to Stay Alive’** – Having experienced mental health difficulties and survived trying to take his own life, this author shares his experiences in this hopeful book
48. **Think about the time and place** – if you’re looking to start a conversation with someone about mental health – think about the time and place. For example, if you’re somewhere where you won’t be able to hear properly, consider moving to



somewhere more peaceful, like a park. Small things like this can make all the difference to helping someone (including yourself) to open up

49. **Watch Professor Green's documentaries** – Rapper, songwriter and TV personality Professor Green shares his experiences on issues affecting young people today, including mental health. They're [available on iPlayer](#)
50. **Look after yourself** - talking about mental health can be brilliant and freeing and lifesaving, but it can also be difficult. Look after yourself and be patient with others. If you need any help, feel free to pick up the phone to Leeds Mind, and our friendly reception team can help you explore what support is available (0113 305 5800 or email info@leedsmind.org.uk)



Thank you to Punch Creative, a corporate supporter of Leeds Mind, who produced the 50th Anniversary logo for us.



What is Time to Talk?

Time to Talk Day is on 3rd February 2022. It is run by [Mind](#) and [Rethink Mental Illness](#), in partnership with the [Co-op](#).

The day is about creating supportive communities by having conversations with family, friends, or colleagues about mental health. We all have mental health. By talking about it, we can support ourselves and others.

[Learn more about Time to Talk Day 2022.](#)

Leeds Mind is an independent mental health charity, affiliated with Mind via the Mind federation. We deliver mental health support to the communities in and around Leeds.

Leeds Mind

Clarence House
11 Clarence Road
Horsforth
Leeds
LS18 1LB

T: 0113 305 5800
leedsmind.org.uk

Registered charity number 1007625