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**C** **o** **p** **e**

West Yorkshire  
Health and Care Partnership



 **Mind Leeds**

**The Book of Cope was created by Leeds Mind  
volunteers and residents from West Yorkshire as part  
of the Suicide Prevention Coproduction Project (2022-  
2024) [www.leedsmind.org.uk/spcp](http://www.leedsmind.org.uk/spcp)**

Thank you all for your openness, bravery and resourcefulness in making this project happen, and breaking down mental health stigma everyday. You are what Leeds Mind is all about.

**A special thank you to our supporters and contributors:**

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If you see bit.ly with some numbers and letters after it, this is a shortlink. Type this into a web browser, and you will see the web page we're referring to.



# Introduction

The Book of Cope is a helpful guide to coping with life at the most difficult and stressful of times. There are many guides available but none so far have detailed coping strategies so illustratively and with so many examples of how they can be put into practice. Each section focuses on the Five Ways to Wellbeing ([bit.ly/49AFj5d](https://bit.ly/49AFj5d)) that can help with the most difficult and distressing feelings and thoughts. It's not meant to be a replacement for seeking help but it is meant to be a companion to aid in the development of your own coping strategies and to maintain your wellbeing.

This helpful guide is for anyone who wants help to maintain or improve their wellbeing. This can be for people experiencing occasional difficult thoughts and feelings to people with the most pervasive and distressing thoughts and feelings. It's best used as a way to cope with those times through the many distraction techniques on offer that can help ground and reset the mind. This book can also be used in combination with other support and therapy in helping create your own bespoke coping strategies.

It is a little book made by people with big hearts who genuinely care and have lived through difficulties themselves. From the volunteers and staff at Leeds Mind ([www.leedsmind.org.uk](http://www.leedsmind.org.uk)) who created the book to the many contributors who informed each page, we wanted to share our own coping techniques so that you have the best chance of creating your own successful coping strategy.

We wish you well.





“

I texted an old friend today. Sounds strange that it was hard to do, given how close we've been. Turns out it was the best timing and just what he needed. He's already planning a visit, which I'm now really looking forward to.

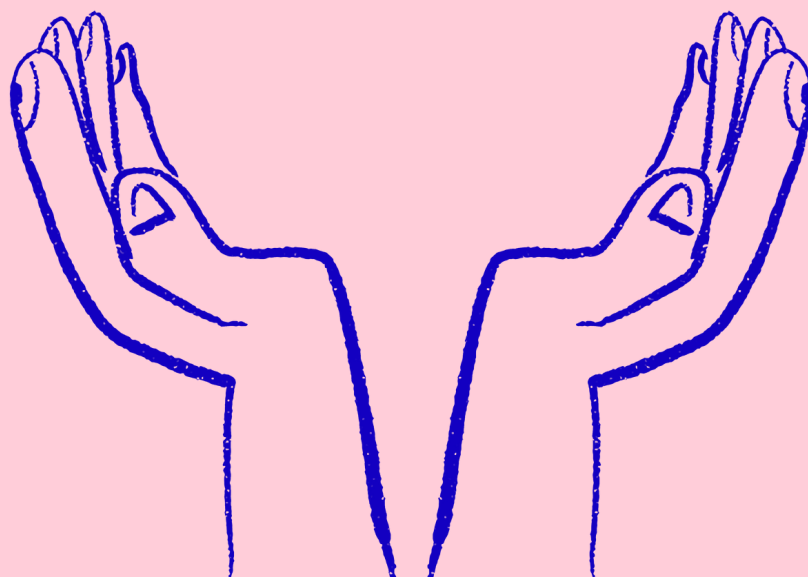
”

# Connect

There is strong evidence that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and important to functioning well in the world.

Connecting with others can help us have a greater sense of belonging and reduce feelings of loneliness.

Connection looks and feels different to everyone. In this chapter, people from West Yorkshire share what helps them to feel more connected and stay well...



## Karen from Kirklees

This page was inspired by the contributions of Karen Littlewood, a single parent who, now their child is a bit older, was looking to get their independence back.

I made the step to start coming to a coffee morning

...it gets me out and gives me a routine

I've got friends I can talk to and have a laugh with

# Taking that first step

Karen acknowledges it is very scary to take that first step, but also recognises how much has changed as a result and how proud she is of what she's achieved.

Read about Karen's scary first step above, and then use the blank foot prints to either reflect upon your own scary first step or plan what your scary first step might be.

(Please photocopy this page before using if it's a shared copy)

Find things to do in Kirklees at [livewellkirklees.co.uk](http://livewellkirklees.co.uk); Wakefield at [communitywakefield.org](http://communitywakefield.org); Leeds at [mindwell-leeds.org.uk/wellbeing-groups-and-activities/](http://mindwell-leeds.org.uk/wellbeing-groups-and-activities/); Bradford at [mylivingwell.co.uk/physical-activity/move-more-get-active-in-your-community/](http://mylivingwell.co.uk/physical-activity/move-more-get-active-in-your-community/) and Calderdale at [healthymindsalderdale.co.uk/activities](http://healthymindsalderdale.co.uk/activities)

## Belén from Leeds

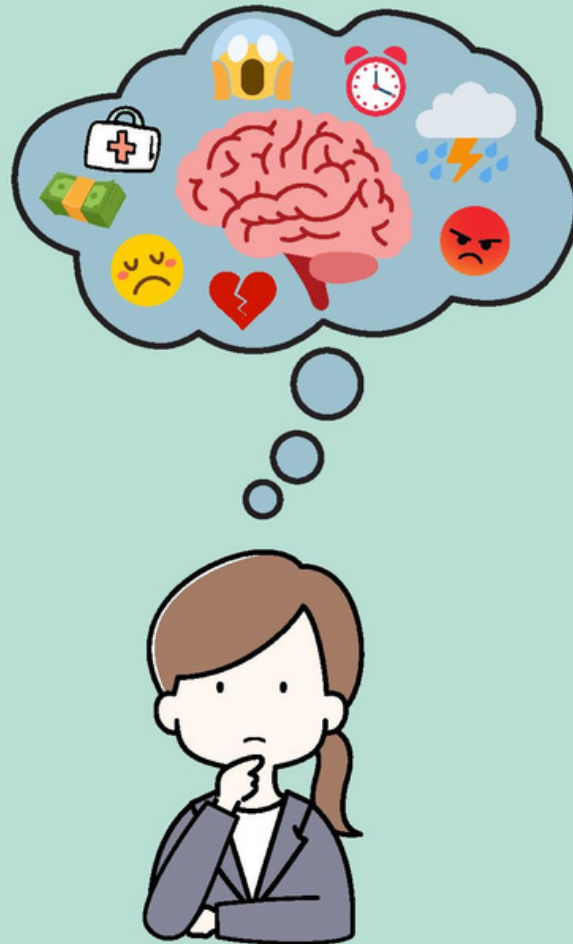


“What helps me with my mental health is to connect with people, to spend time with my friends and do things for the community. People give me energy. I also love staring at the sea and listening to the sounds of nature. People connecting to people, and people connecting to nature is what helps me the most.”



Denise says that...

**“The worst thing is  
to keep it inside”**

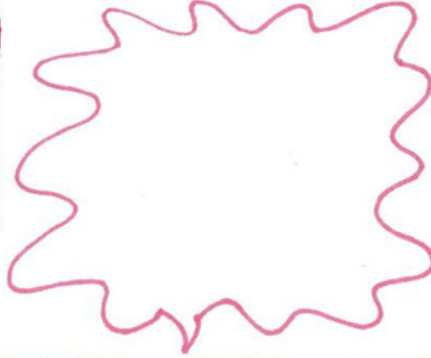


It can sometimes be really difficult to talk about your feelings. It's common to feel worried about upsetting people you care about, and feel nervous about what people will think, or how it might affect your relationships.

You may feel more comfortable opening up to friends or family ([bit.ly/3T0TQQz](https://bit.ly/3T0TQQz)) than professionals, or you may find it easier to approach a professional (such as your doctor) first. There's no right or wrong way round. But the people closest to us can often be a valuable source of support.

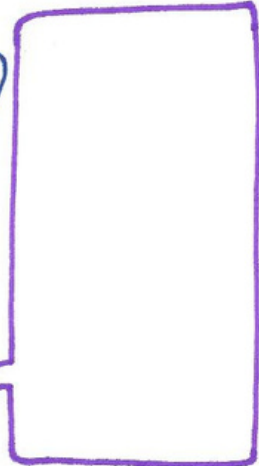
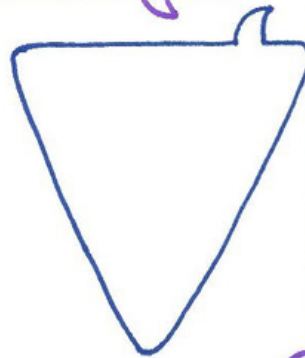
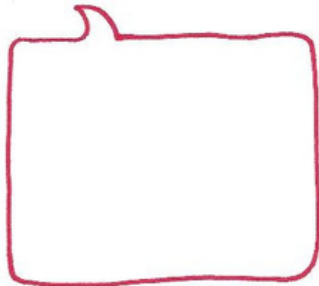
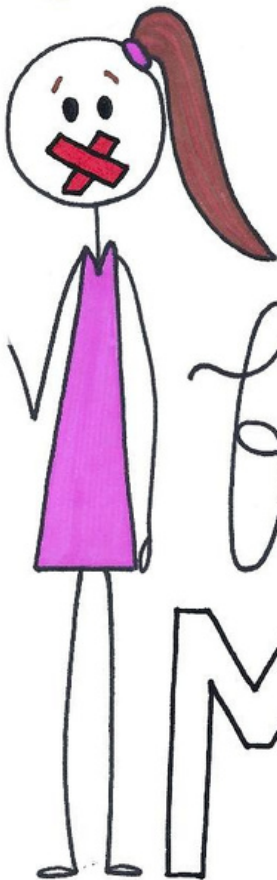
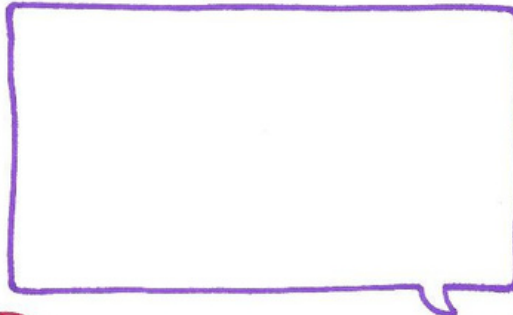
# Stephanie from Kirklees

This page was inspired by the contributions of Stephanie Huntington. Read about what helped Stephanie to find her voice again after lockdown, which she found lonely and isolating, and a stroke, which left her struggling with her speech. Use the blank speech bubbles to note what has helped, or what may help, you to find your voice again.



I pushed myself to take the first step and called my community church where I met other people

I found people I could trust and that made me feel safe. I get a lot out of the community, and finding my voice again has been a powerful journey

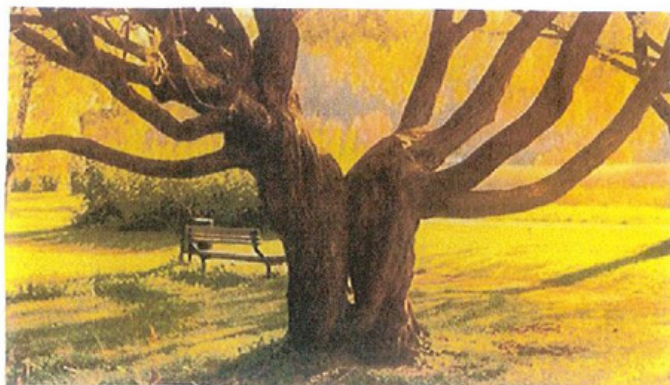


binding

MY voice



## Thoughts from Yvonne



Yvonne

I'm a carer and it can sometimes have an impact on my own mental health.

It is important to find your community and lean on your friends. I also need to find time to be on my own sometimes. I usually go for a little walk...there's a special bench I like to go to and sometimes have a good cry. It's okay to let yourself feel things. Crying can be good because it means you aren't bottling it up.



## Zainab from Bradford

“You might feel like no one understands you, unless they have been through what you have been through. So, sometimes the best support is to find people who have been there too”.



Zainab’s wellbeing tip sounds a lot like [Peer support](https://bit.ly/49Rh9mQ) ([bit.ly/49Rh9mQ](https://bit.ly/49Rh9mQ)). Peer Support is when people use their own experiences to help each other. There are different types of peer support, but they all aim to:

- bring together people with shared experiences to support each other
- provide a space where you feel accepted and understood
- treat everyone’s experiences as being equally important
- involve both giving and receiving support.

Lots of people find peer support improves their wellbeing and helps them cope with mental health challenges. Do you think Peer Support could work for you?

Use the directories on the [‘Support across the region’](#) ([page 41](#)) to find peer support in your area!



I have learnt that there are many things in life you are unable to control. However, taking a walk or simply opening the front door and taking a fresh breath of air just seems to bring me back to the moment and I realise that this moment or moments will too pass just like several moments before where I thought they wouldn't. Even moving from one room to another is better than not moving at all. Remember take each step even if it a small step to being active



# Be Active

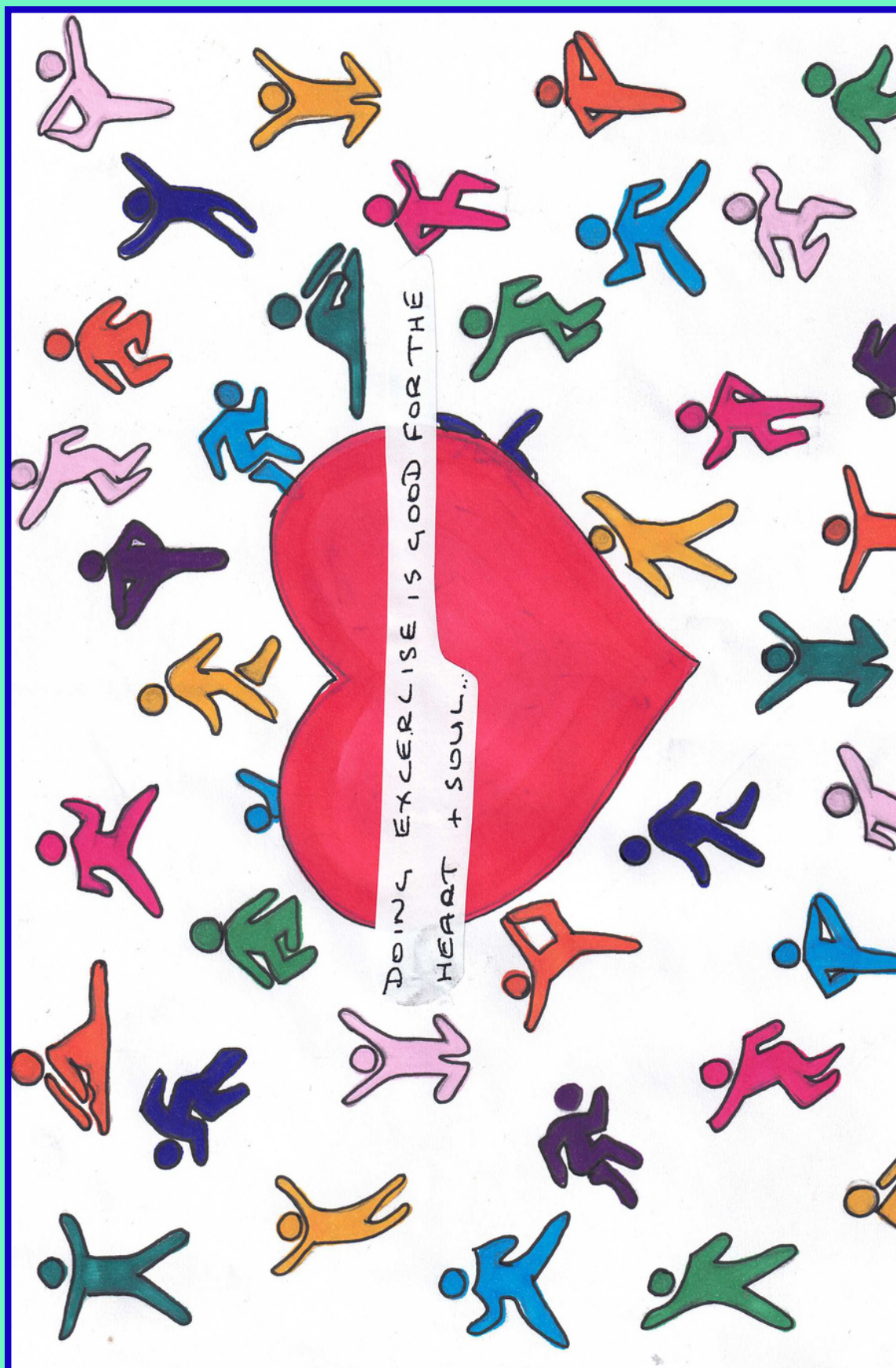
Finding ways to move your body is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Try to build physical activity into your daily routine, if possible. It doesn't have to be anything big. If you aren't used to being active, start off small and try to find something you enjoy.





## Denise M's thoughts on being active



## Emlyn's thoughts on music...





# HOBBIES & INTERESTS

CURRENT OR PAST HOBBIES OR INTERESTS	MEANS OF ENGAGING WITH THESE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Looking after a small holding</li><li>• Meeting new people or spending time with friends and family</li><li>• Helping and supporting others</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visiting agricultural shows</li><li>• Coach trips, hosting family or travelling to them, pub trips</li><li>• Volunteering</li></ul>
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This page was inspired by the contributions of Royston Hoyle.  
Read about how Roy has taken action to instigate activities that match with his hobbies and interests, before reflecting on interests you have and considering how you might go about doing more of what you enjoy and what's important to you.

**Kathryn enjoys:**

## Cold Water Therapy



I love cold water swimming. It helps bring my attention to the present and is better than coffee in energising me.

**Kathryn's really sold the idea of diving into the chilly waters for some fun-filled cold water swimming! But remember: safety first! We suggest looking into joining a swimming club for some added support in navigating this chilly pursuit safely.**

## Jean Margaret's thoughts on being active...

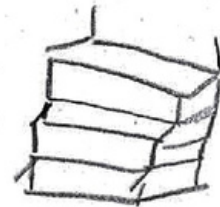
Go for a little walk.

Look at some trees

Look at the intricacy  
of a leaf.



Go up a bit of a hill or some  
steps and feel your heart and  
breathing working to keep you alive.





I received a beautiful book of art as a gift. To really appreciate it, I decided to have it open on a new page each day and spend some time practising ‘slow looking’. This time allows my mind to wander and create questions, looking for meaning in everything I see. I love being absorbed like this and I love coming back to the image later and finding something new that I hadn’t noticed.



# Take Notice

Reminding yourself to take notice can help you to be aware of how you're feeling. It can help you understand what triggers your feelings of stress or anxiety.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your wellbeing and that savouring ‘the moment’ can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you.





## Fliss from Calderdale



**“Being connected to nature grounds me and gives me great comfort. It reminds you that you’re part of something bigger, that you aren’t alone. Caring for nature and respecting the environment reminds me to care and respect myself too. We are all part of it.”**



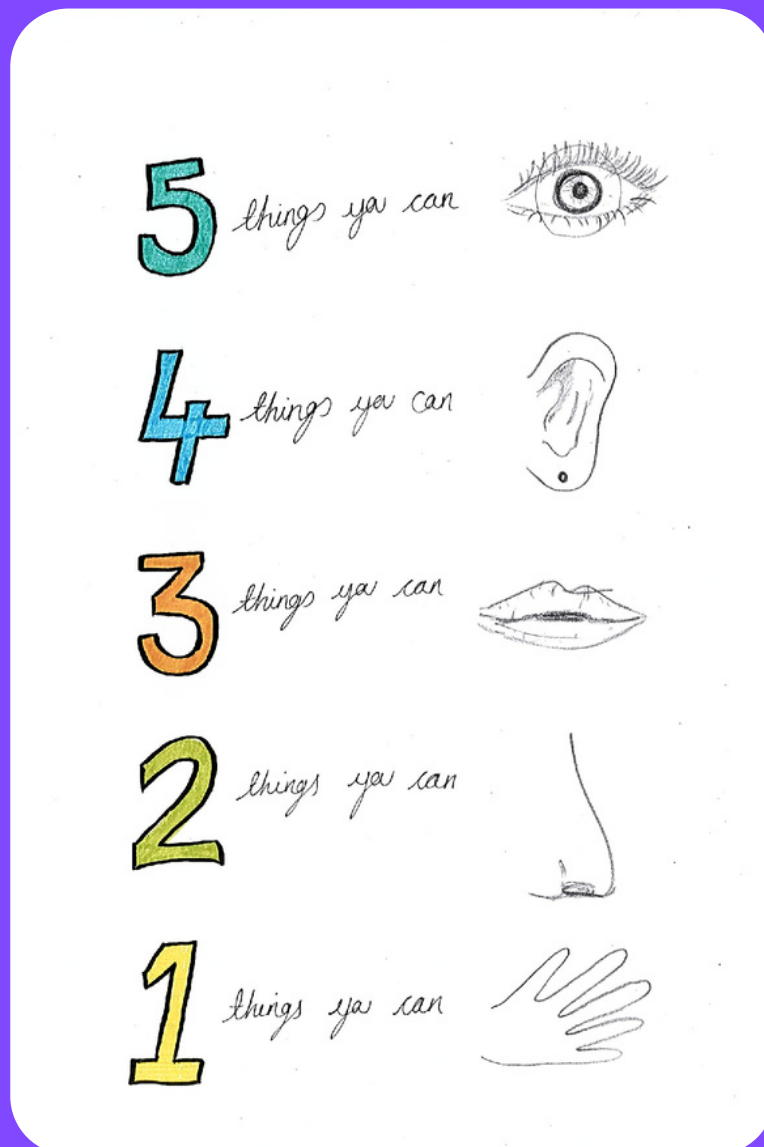
## What ‘taking notice’ means to Dorothy



“I’ve spent my life working in care, so I’ve listened to other people all my life. What I like now, is finding solitude in nature and enjoying peace and quiet. I like spending time being present in nature. I try to really listen to the birds, the trees rustling and water flowing. It’s really peaceful. I also like getting lost in a book.”

## Jennifer uses a grounding technique...

The 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 technique ([bit.ly/4bVNHOU](https://bit.ly/4bVNHOU)) is one of the easiest mindfulness strategies for managing stress and anxiety, as it can be done almost anywhere and at any time. Using the five senses to ground you in the present moment, pick 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can taste, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can feel.



More than just a quick fix, the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 technique is a mindfulness exercise that can help you get a handle on your state of mind, especially when dealing with social anxiety or situations where you need to calm down quickly. The beauty of this method lies in its ability to shift your focus and engage your senses, helping you to relax.

## Hajira from Bradford

sometimes when life throws up challenges, we feel so alone. But, always remember that no matter how alone you feel, there will always be someone here to help you. And the most important thing is, if you are struggling, don't think too much about the future. Take things slow and take one step at a time. It doesn't matter about tomorrow, focus on the present.





## Helen from Kirklees



**This piece represents water and music. Music made from the sounds of nature and flowing water, sounds that bring about stillness and calm, allowing me to stop and listen.**







“During difficult times I find it useful to get back to the basics of self-care which all too often get relegated to last place during difficult times... eating well, getting a good sleep routine back, connecting with others, doing activities that used to nourish me and give me a sense of pleasure such as walking in nature, yoga, spiritual practices, gardening, and meditation.”



**“I like spending time with my friends and family, but I need to be on my own sometimes to recharge and recover. Time alone helps me to reflect, relax and focus on myself and what I need.”**



At its worse, depression made me feel paralysed and unable to motivate myself. My friend showed me how to cross stitch and gave me a pattern and the fabric and thread. Suddenly I had something to do with my hands and concentrating on the pattern kept my mind off the darkness in my head. I found myself looking forward to time sat cross stitching. The learning and improving skills helped my confidence and seeing the end result was a real boost.



# Learn

Learning a new skill in a group can be enjoyable, and help boost your confidence. To find out what's on in your area, you could contact your local Mind. Or ask at your local library or community centre.

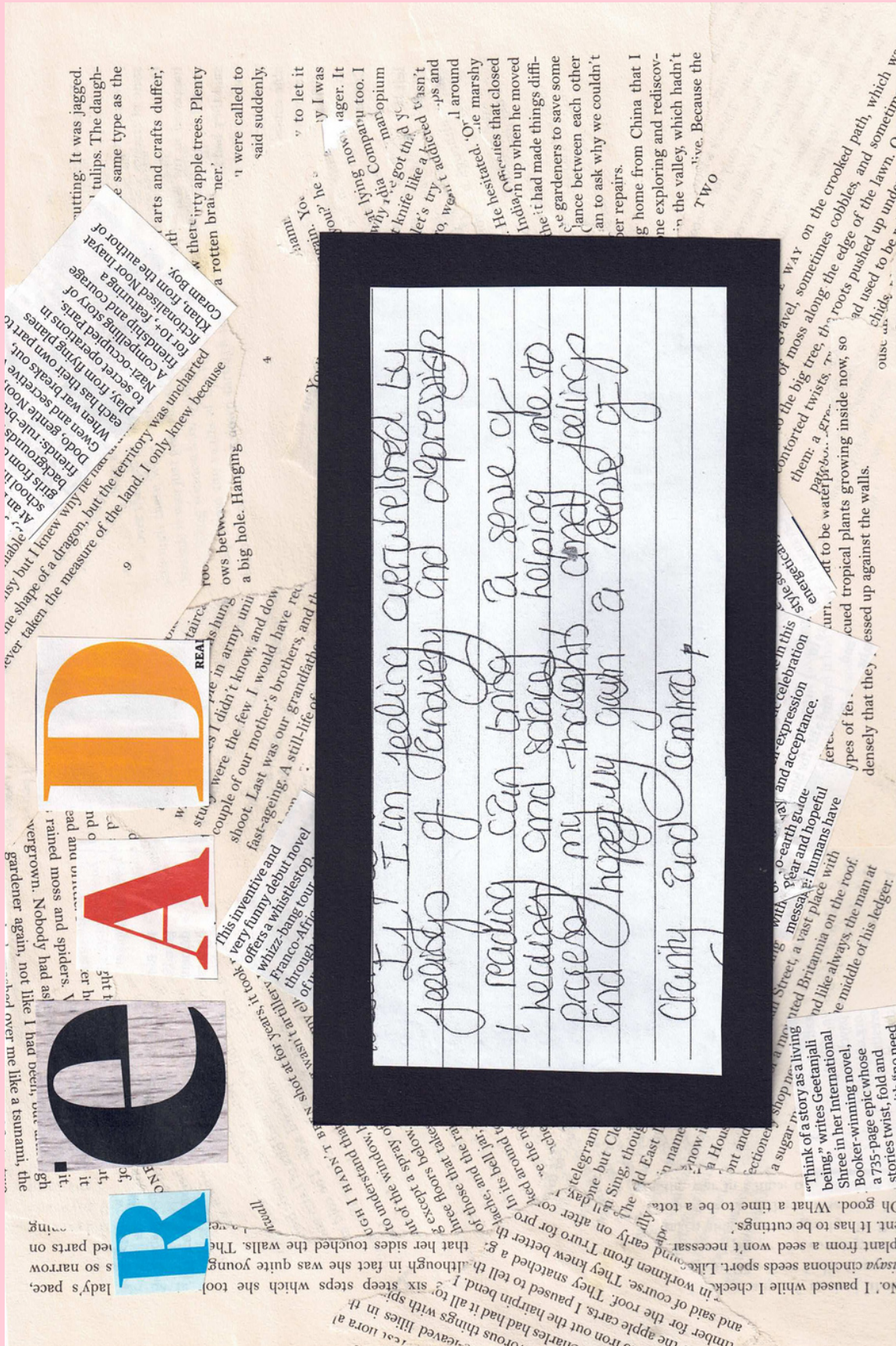
You may also be able to learn new skills or join clubs online. This could be a good option if it's difficult to get out and about.

You may find it helpful to do something creative, like drawing, taking photos or baking. This might help distract you from difficult thoughts or feelings. Or it may help you to understand yourself better or express difficult things in a safe way. Being creative can also feel calming or rewarding.





# Anita M on why reading is important to her





## Debbie from Leeds

My name is Debbie, a Leeds Mind volunteer who has worked on this Book of Cope. I have lived experience of struggling with suicidal crisis and several mental health diagnoses over a period of 10 – 15 years and have sadly found very little that has helped me to cope with the overwhelming thoughts and feelings I experience daily. That was, until I read a book that changed everything. 'Rising Strong' by Brené Brown has enabled me to look at recovery in a completely different light, and I therefore wanted to share some of the key messages from the book that have made the biggest difference to me in the hopes it makes a difference to some of you too.

RISE  
STRONG

I have reflected in recent years that one of the reasons I am struggling so much now is that I have been constantly running away from anything and everything I have been feeling. In 'Rising Strong', Brené talks about how, to bring about positive and meaningful change, we must be willing to lean into discomfort, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and curious about what is causing the thoughts, behaviours and feelings that are negatively impacting our lives. This is what I have always been so scared to do, but with the strategies she shares in this book I have been able to work on changing this. She makes the task feel manageable and achievable, as opposed to just a pipe dream, and slowly I am beginning to pay attention to my emotions and the story I am making up about various situations in my life.

By rumbling with these stories, I have been much more successful in recognising what I am making up about my struggles, challenging the confabulations and assumptions that go along with this, and determining what is truth, what's self-protection and what needs to change. Of course, this is something that requires practice, and lots of kindness and self-compassion during the process, but doing this work has enabled me to respond to situations in ways that are aligned with my core values and make more mindful, authentic choices. Brené truly believes that everyone is doing the best they can in any one moment, and this extends to us too!

Here are the prompts that I now work through when a conversation or a situation leaves me feeling overwhelmed emotionally and wanting to engage in negative, self-sabotaging behaviours. These can be written down, or spoken out loud, and I have found that the latter, whilst pacing the room, is the best combination for me to be as honest and as unfiltered as possible.

## ...Debbie continued

- The story I am making up is...
- The emotions I am feeling are...
- My body is feeling...
- The thoughts I am experiencing are...
- My beliefs about this situation are...
- My actions have been...

What more do I need to learn and understand about:

- The situation: what do I know objectively and what assumptions am I making?
- The other people in the story: what additional information do I need and what questions could I ask that may help?
- Myself: what is underneath my response and what am I really feeling?

I often find, when I have addressed all of the above prompts and questions, that there is a key theme that I am rumbling with, which may include any one or more of the following:

Grief / loss

Forgiveness

Shame

Perfectionism

Blame / accountability

Trust

Failure

Hope

Regret

Identity

Criticism

This self-examination is often the hardest part to work through because I have spent years ignoring the problems, **only doing more of what isn't working to avoid the really hard work** associated with this practice. I cannot say that rumbling with these themes is easy, but disengaging from all of this for so long, as a means of self-protection, has **only resulted in my emotions owning and defining me**. So, moving forwards, I intend to be as curious as possible with regards to what I am thinking and feeling and the stories I am making up to **break the cycle of always believing what my brain tells me** so that I can be my most genuine and authentic self and handle situations in ways that align with my core values. And I really hope that you can use some of the prompts above to make a start on doing the same.

All my love,

Debbie  
x



## Helen



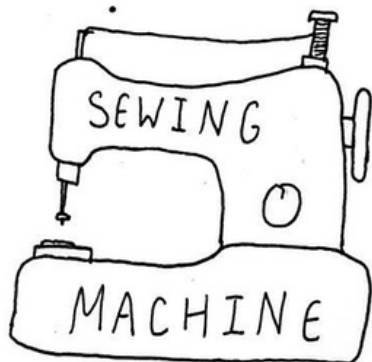
“I struggle with anxiety, and getting public transport can be difficult for me, but it’s a necessity. I’ve found a good coping strategy for me is to take a small puzzle book on the bus and use it as a distraction. I set myself the challenge to finish a puzzle before the journey ends.”

## Morven from Leeds

Morven FROM LEEDS!

I LOVE TO SEW

And I love my...



Sewing allows me to unwind and challenge myself creatively!

It allows me to fully immerse myself in the task and create something I can be proud of. It allows me to face and overcome small challenges, feeling the success and serotonin afterwards. This helps me take a step back and see I can overcome mental blocks and turn things around when I feel like giving up. Sewing also allows me to escape the mess of thoughts in my mind and clear my mind.

## Jean Margaret's thoughts on radio and reading

I enjoy listening to Radio 4 on BBC Sounds - there are lots of short programmes on health and wellbeing and on all sorts of topics. Sometimes there's a play which can be entertaining - the surprise can be nice



# READ!

Use the library.

It's free, you can sit and stay for a while. You can usually use a computer. You can also use e-books on your phone or tablet. Library staff will show you how.



## Ronnie

Cooking good food and learning new recipes can be a great way to look after your wellbeing.

Ronnie says it's "restorative, comforting, cheap and fun".

When in doubt

Get the lentils out!





I gave away my old winter coat to a homeless charity today. I found it difficult to let go, but the thought that it's going to keep someone in need as warm as I know it can, well that gives me a bit more warmth inside too.



# Give

Doing things for others can have a positive effect on our wellbeing. You could find ways to support a cause that's important to you. For example, by signing petitions, donating to charity shops or foodbanks, or showing your support on social media.

You could also try doing small acts of kindness for people you know or for strangers. This could be things like holding a door open for someone, making someone a cup of tea, or posting a nice comment or review online.

Volunteering is another great way to give back and feel good. Using your time to help others can give you a sense of purpose, help you meet people and boost your self-esteem.



## Chloe & Tom Mooney

- Today is going to be a **GOOD** day.
- I am confident and capable
- Some days, I am tired, but that's okay. I know I can get through it.
- I **DESERVE** to show myself kindness.
- I cannot control outside circumstances, but I **CAN** control how I perceive the world and how I deal with my emotions.
- You're so much **STRONGER** than you think.
- You have made a lot of positive changes. You are doing great. **KEEP GOING!**

Chloe and Tom Mooney use positive affirmations to support them throughout the day. As their way of giving to others, they wanted to share their affirmations with you, in the Book of Cope.

“You are **UNIQUE**, you are **AMAZING**, you are **YOU!**

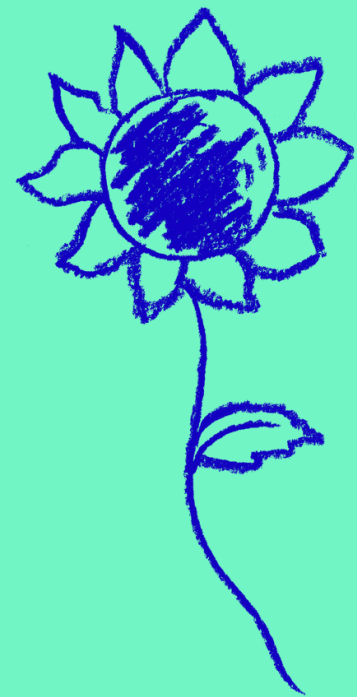
There are always people who will be there to support you.”



## Lorraine's thoughts on mindset

“When struggling through difficult times, I find it helpful to remind myself that I have already survived many hard periods in my life. This shows that I have the ability and skills I need to get through this difficult time but also reminds me that difficult periods don't last forever.”

During times of difficulty it is easy to look around and misinterpret everyone else's lives to be trouble free or easier or better in some way, but one thing I have learned is that nobody has a perfect life. We will all face a mixture of trouble free and difficult times, and if we look beneath the surface, most people who appear to have a carefree life are working hard to put a brave face on things. Therefore we need not feel alone or ashamed or inadequate, as the human struggle is something that unites all of us.



“You aren't alone, and there will always be someone there to listen.”

# Read how Maz keeps well and gives to others





## How Elijah gives



**“I moved to Yorkshire during Covid, so it was hard to meet new people to start with. I needed to get out, so I started to volunteer at my local food bank. It was a difficult time, so volunteering and helping the community helped to channel some of my anxieties and feel useful.**

**Since then, I volunteer two days a week at the community centre and cafe. Giving back makes me feel good, and I really feel part of my area now.”**

**Find volunteering:** [volunteerwakefield.org](https://volunteerwakefield.org) [doinggoodleeds.org.uk](https://doinggoodleeds.org.uk)

[vsalliance.org.uk/opportunities](https://vsalliance.org.uk/opportunities) [volunteeringbradford.org](https://volunteeringbradford.org) [tslkirklees.org.uk](https://tslkirklees.org.uk)



## Myriam

“ I struggle with words when I’m talking out loud. I want friends and family to know how much they are appreciated, so I like to spontaneously write cards to them. Sometimes as a thank you, or just to say ‘I think you’re great!’. It makes them feel good, but it helps with my own wellbeing too. ”



# Final thoughts from us...

“ Thank you to all those who created the lovely artworks, texts and tips for this book - we truly appreciate you sharing the ways in which you have coped during your most difficult days. Thank you to all of you who have taken the time to read through this booklet.

We each have experiences that are entirely unique to ourselves, and so each of us find different ways to cope. Perhaps you are finding it difficult to cope at the moment, or perhaps you are starting to take some steps to make things more manageable - regardless, we hope that this book has given you some ideas and methods you can use when you most need them. For times when this is not enough, then please look at the resources on the next page.

In the words of Lorraine: "We need not feel alone or ashamed or inadequate, as the human struggle is something that unites all of us".

# What's your cope?

**Draw, write or create below!**

(Please photocopy this page if its a community copy)



**Want us to hear about it?**

**Or did any of the strategies in the book resonate with you?**

**Tag us @LeedsMind on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram**



# Support across the region

There is lots of support around West Yorkshire but sometimes it can be hard to know what's out there. Here are the local directories that you can search by type of support.

For a central resource across all of the areas, visit [Hub of Hope](https://hubofhope.co.uk/):  
<https://hubofhope.co.uk/>

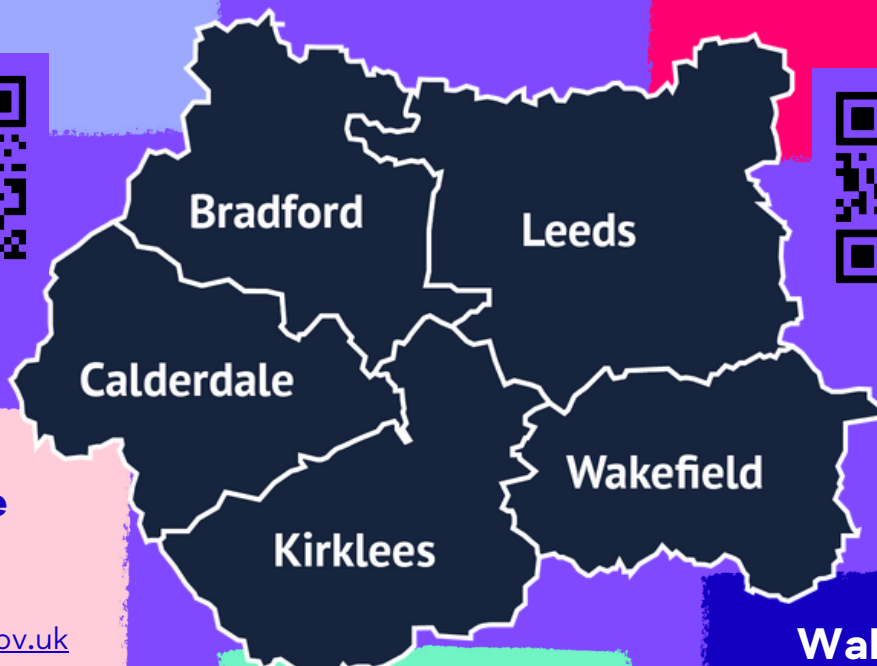
## Healthy Minds Bradford

[healthyminds.services/](https://healthyminds.services/)



## Mindwell Leeds

[mindwell-leeds.org.uk](https://mindwell-leeds.org.uk)



## Calderdale Council

[new.calderdale.gov.uk/benefits/money/health](https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/benefits/money/health)



## Kirklees Council

[kirklees.gov.uk/beta/mental-health/index.aspx](https://kirklees.gov.uk/beta/mental-health/index.aspx)



## Wakefield Council

[wakefield.gov.uk/health-and-advice/mental-health-and-wellbeing/](https://wakefield.gov.uk/health-and-advice/mental-health-and-wellbeing/)



# Support for you

For a detailed directory of the support available to you in West Yorkshire, you can visit the West Yorkshire Suicide Prevention website: [www.suicidepreventionwestyorkshire.co.uk](http://www.suicidepreventionwestyorkshire.co.uk)

**For urgent mental health support, see below:**

## **West Yorkshire 24 Hour Mental health Support Line**

You can phone the West Yorkshire 24-hour mental health helpline, free, on [0800 183 0558](tel:08001830558). It provides confidential support, advice and information to anyone over 18 who is concerned about their mental health or worried about a family member or someone they care for.

## **Samaritans**

[Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org). Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you. Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Freephone: [116 123](tel:116123)

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

## **Stay Alive App**

The [Stay Alive App](https://bit.ly/4bWiIlc) (bit.ly/4bWiIlc) is a pocket suicide prevention resource for the UK, packed full of useful information to help you stay safe.

## **Shout**

[Shout 85258](https://www.shout247.org) is a free, confidential, 24/7 text-messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258.

**Check out our lived experience podcast**

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/leeds-mind>





**West Yorkshire  
Health and Care Partnership**



 **mind Leeds**

**Leeds Mind**

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11 Clarence Road  
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