



Peer
Education
Project



Mental Health
Foundation



A guide for staff
supporting young people

Contents



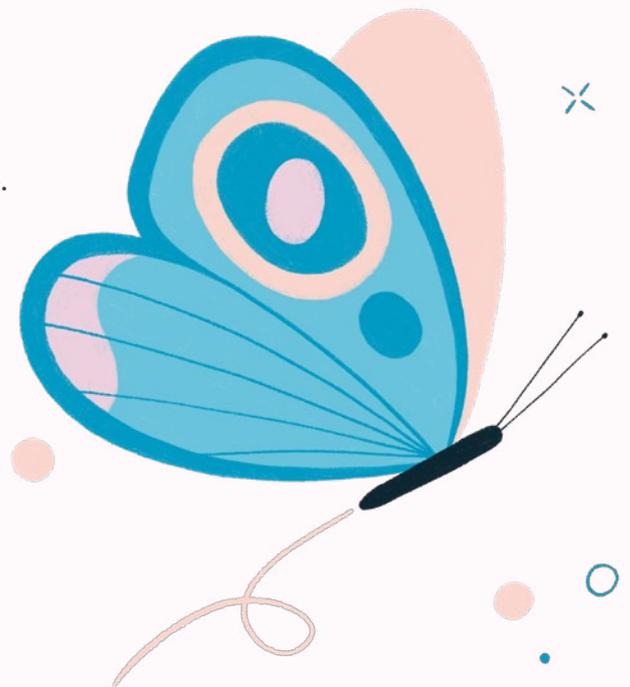
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Connecting with nature is not just about the amount of time we spend outdoors; it is also about building a relationship with nature by noticing and becoming sensitive to what is around us.

Research tells us that there are many mental health benefits to connecting with nature, such as:

- Feeling happier.
- Feeling less stressed or angry.
- Having more and better-quality sleep.
- Feeling less worried.
- Being more environmentally aware and engaged.
- Increasing self-esteem.
- Increasing self-confidence.
- Improving attention and concentration.
- Encouraging participation in physical activities.
- Increasing social contact with other people and animals.



Nature is all around us. Building our connections with nature is finding what works for you, in the environment you are in.

This guide provides tips and resources on how to support yourself, your colleagues, and your pupils to connect with nature.



Supporting yourself and your colleagues to connect with nature

Resources to support yourself and colleagues

Mental Health Foundation resources

Our vision at the [Mental Health Foundation](#) is for a world with good mental health for all. With prevention at the heart of what we do, we aim to find and address the sources of mental health problems so that people and communities can thrive.

[Tips on looking after your mental health](#)

Read these tips on how to look after your mental health.

[Tips on how to look after your mental health using mindfulness](#)

Read these tips on how to look after your mental health using mindfulness.

[Thriving with nature guide](#)

Read this guide, developed by WWF and the Mental Health Foundation, exploring the link between nature and mental health, and activities that you can use to engage with nature.

[Tips on connecting with nature to improve your mental health](#)

Read these tips on connecting with nature to improve your mental health.

[How sleep and green space can help your mental health podcast](#)

Listen to this podcast exploring the benefits of sleep and green space to mental health.

[A personal story on connecting with nature](#)

Read this blog by television presenter and passionate outdoor campaigner Julia Bradbury, on how nature can lift her spirit and improve her wellbeing.

Education Support resources

[Education Support](#) is the only UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff in schools, colleges, and universities.

If you need support, speak to a qualified counsellor using Education Support's 24-hour helpline.

Call: **08000 562 561** (free)

[An article on how small connections can boost our mental health](#)

Read this article exploring how teachers and education staff can connect to nature to positively benefit their mental health and wellbeing.



Other resources

[A meditation to appreciate nature](#)

Listen to this mini-meditation by Headspace exploring the world around you and showing appreciation of nature.

[The mental health benefits of nature video](#)

Watch this video summarising five ways to connect with nature for your mental health.

[Call of the wild podcasts](#)

Listen to these podcasts explaining how we all have a role to play in protecting the natural environment.



Support services for adults

Samaritans

Samaritans are open 24/7 for anyone who needs to talk.

Call: **116 123** (free)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Post: Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS

The Samaritans Self-Help app is a tool to track how you're feeling and receive tips on things you can do to look after yourself.

Samaritans also have a Welsh Language Line on **0808 164 0123** (7pm–11pm every day).

Hub of Hope

Hub of Hope is a UK-wide mental health service database, allowing you to search for local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support. You can filter results to find specific kinds of support.

Mind

Mind offers advice, support and information to people experiencing mental health difficulties, and their family and friends.

InfoLine: **0300 123 3393**

Lines are open Monday to Friday
9am to 6pm (except bank holidays).

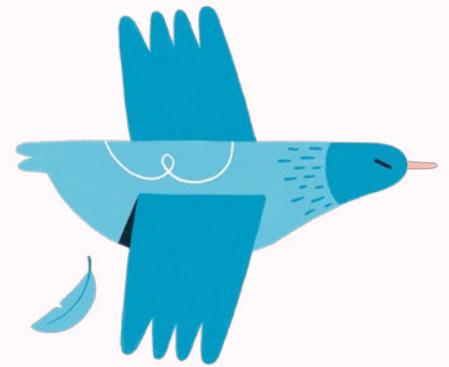
Email info@mind.org.uk

Side by Side

Side by Side, hosted by Mind, is an online community where you can listen, share and be heard. The online community is moderated to keep the community safe and supportive.



Supporting your pupils to connect with nature



Classroom-based activities

Connecting with nature by taking individual action

Provide opportunities and resources for pupils to connect with nature in their own ways.

[Learn to love nature craft activities](#)

Provide space and resources for pupils to create fun 'make-it' activities, encouraging them to explore their connection with nature.

Connecting with nature in the classroom

Provide opportunities and resources for pupils to connect with nature together.

Take lessons outside!

Where possible, leave the classroom behind and get outdoors. Use your playground either as a space for learning or as a source of learning itself. This can deepen pupils' understanding of relevant topics and provide a change of pace and place for staff and pupils. You could organise a bug hunt, outdoor chalk art or even den building!

[Outdoor learning resource pack](#)

Take inspiration from this outdoor learning pack by the Woodland Trust.

[The WildED Programme](#)

Register for the WildED Programme, which consists of a series of tailored workshops and student-led activities for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. It focuses on deepening young people's connection and understanding of the natural world, gaining practical skills, knowledge and confidence, and emerging as young leaders motivated to drive further change in their communities.

[Live lessons and events by WWF](#)

Register your class for free live learning opportunities, whether it is to learn more about how penguins and polar bears are adapted to their polar environments or to explore the themes within the David Attenborough's A Life on Our Planet film.

Connecting with nature as a community

Provide opportunities and resources for pupils to connect with nature as a wider school and local community.

[Become an Eco-School](#)

Follow these 7 simple steps to become an Eco-School and apply for the Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation.



Resources for young people

[MHF Tips for Young People on Connecting with Nature](#)

Share these top tip postcards, written by the Mental Health Foundation, to support young people to connect with nature for their mental health.

[Nature journal](#)

Encourage pupils to use this downloadable journal to document how they feel before and after connecting with nature, and jot down anything interesting they notice!

[A guide on exploring worries about our planet](#)

Share this guide to help young people explore some ways to feel more hopeful and optimistic about the environmental challenges our planet faces.



Support services for young people

The Mix

The Mix offers online information as well as helpline support to under-25s about anything that's troubling them.

Email: via their [online contact form](#)

Call: **0808 808 4994** (free)

Telephone services available 4pm – 11pm everyday.

Text: **THEMIX to 85258**

The text service is free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK.

One-to-one chat: Free [1-2-1 webchat service](#)

The webchat is available 4pm – 11pm, Monday to Saturday.

Childline

A support service for anyone under 19 in need of support.

Call: **08001111** (free)

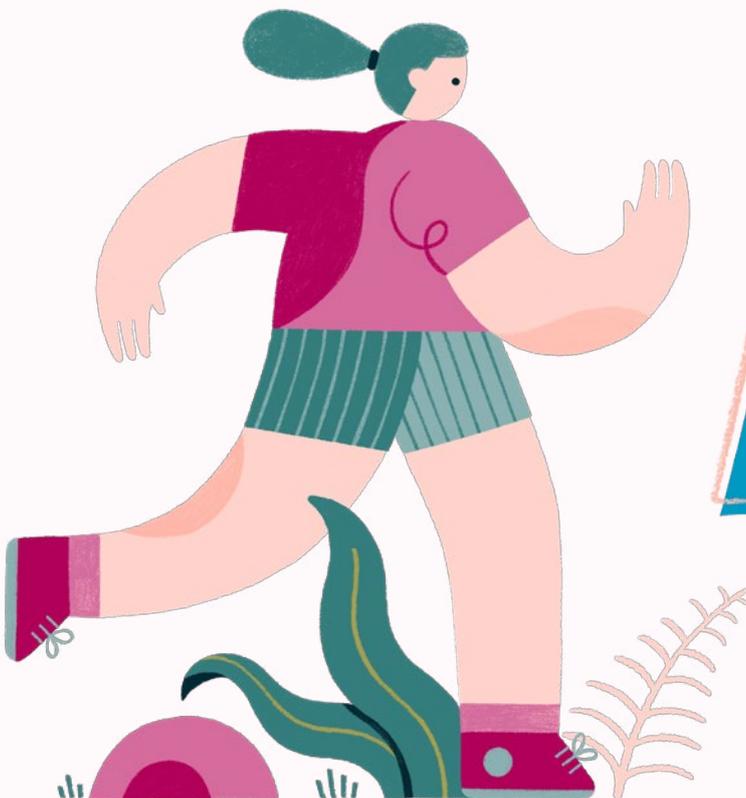
Telephone services available 24-hours a day, every day.

Young people can [sign up](#) for a free Childline locker (real name or email address not needed) to use Childline's free [1-2-1 counsellor chat](#) and email support service.

Shout

A support text service, available 24-hours a day, every day.

Text: **SHOUT to 85258**



GO RUN



Supporting staff and pupils within school



Resources

[Article on improving mental health awareness at school](#)

Read this article on why mental health awareness is important in your school and ways to build it in to school life.

[Advice on developing empathy-based classrooms](#)

Watch this short video describing how to have an empathy-based classroom.

[Training on mental and emotional health in schools](#)

Sign up to this free CPD certified online course helping school staff recognise and respond to signs of poor mental health and support their own and other's emotional health, increasing mental wellbeing in schools.

[The Green Tree Schools Award](#)

Get involved with the Green Tree Schools Award where your school can take part in fun, practical projects while helping the environment and improving your grounds. It's completely free and you will be provided with the resources and support to help you get the most out of it. Your pupils can also earn certificates in recognition of their achievements and a special plaque to display in your school.



Fundraising for mental health awareness

Hold a 'Wear it Green Day' for Mental Health Foundation

The green ribbon is the international symbol of mental health awareness.

Whether you go all out in head to toe green or show your solidarity with one of our [green ribbon pin badges](#).

Holding a 'Wear it Green' day is a great way to get the whole school involved and talking about mental health.

Download our [Wear it Green Day Fundraising Pack](#) and our [Wellbeing and Schools Fundraising Pack](#).

We'd love to hear about your Wear it Green Day!

Get in touch with the team to let us know your plans: events@mentalhealth.org.uk

We can also send collection tins and fundraising materials.

Wear It* Green Day



How to send the money to the Mental Health Foundation:

You can go to the Mental Health Foundation's [online donation page](#) or

Send a cheque payable to Mental Health Foundation to: **Mental Health Foundation, Studio 2, 197 Long Lane, London SE1 4PD**



If you'd like us to send you a paying in slip, please email events@mentalhealth.org.uk and this can be organised for you.

When sending us your donations, make sure you always bank the money yourself! Never send cash through the post, as it could get lost or stolen.

Thank you so much for your support!





[mentalhealth.org.uk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

 [Mental Health Foundation](https://www.facebook.com/MentalHealthFoundation)

 [mentalhealthfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/mentalhealthfoundation)

 [@MentalHealth](https://twitter.com/MentalHealth)



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