



York

Winter Wellbeing Toolkit



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We believe no-one should have to face a mental health problem alone.

If you live in York, we are here for you. We will help you get to where you want to be. We will listen, give support and advice, and fight your corner.

Connect with us

www.yorkmind.org.uk



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Loneliness



We all feel lonely from time to time, and although feeling lonely isn't in itself a mental health problem, the two are strongly linked. Having a mental health problem can increase your chances of feeling lonely—it is important to remember that **loneliness is not always the same as being alone.**

Feeling lonely can also have a negative impact on your mental health, especially if these feelings have lasted a long time. Some research suggests that loneliness is associated with an increased risk of certain mental health problems Inc. depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep problems and increased stress.

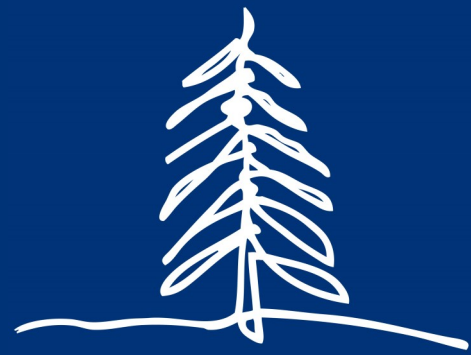
Although most people need some kind of social contact to maintain good mental health, **everyone has different social needs.** You may be someone who is content with a few close friends, or you may need a large group of varied acquaintances to feel comfortable.

People usually describe feeling lonely for one of two reasons:

- They simply don't see or talk to anyone very often.
- Even though they are surrounded by people they don't feel understood or cared for.

Deciding which reason you relate to the most may help you find a way of feeling better, check out the following pages to find out some top tips for managing loneliness.

Loneliness



Here are some of Mind's Top Tips for managing loneliness, especially during the winter months, for more information on managing loneliness visit the [**Mind website!**](#)

Take It Slow

If you've felt lonely for a long time, even if you already know lots of people it can be worrying to think about trying to meet new people or opening up to people for the first time. But it's important to remember you don't need to rush into anything!

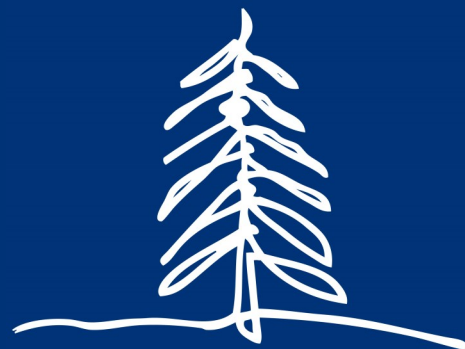
- **Start off by going somewhere like a café, the cinema, or a sports event where you can be around people, but not expected to talk to them—you may find that simply being around other people is enough to help with feelings of loneliness.**
- **If you're going to a group or class you could ask whoever runs the class or groups if you can just go along and watch at first.**
- **Go somewhere it's not expected that you'll interact straight away, like a class where everyone is focused on the activity.**

Make New Connections

If you are feeling lonely because of lack of satisfying social contact in your life, you could try to meet more or different people.

- **Try to join a class or group based on your hobbies or interests.**
- **If you are able to, volunteering is a good way of meeting people. Helping others can also really help improve your mental health. It is also a good idea to check that you will receive adequate support from the organisation you're volunteering at.**

Loneliness



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Don't Compare Yourself to Others

It is very hard to stop comparing ourselves to others, we all do it, but it can help to just be aware that things are not always how they seem or appear on the outside.

Social media, and the fact we often only see what people want to share about their lives, can really make us feel as though we are the only ones feeling lonely. Remember that everyone is only sharing the good bits, and we don't truly know what is going on behind the scenes.

If you're worried that social media may be affecting your mental health check out Mind's info on [**online mental health**](#).



Sunday Coffee Club

Looking for something to do at the weekend?
Fancy a hot drink and a chat with others?



Join us at 30 Clarence Street for our weekly Sunday Coffee Club!

Our Coffee Club offers a friendly and welcoming space, where you can drop in for refreshments, meet new people and have a chat. We will also be running a few fun-themed events too and a monthly quiz!

Socialising with other people can help reduce isolation and be beneficial for mental health and well-being.

No initial referral necessary. Just pop along and see us!

Date: Starting 14th July 2019

Day: Sundays

Time: 2-5pm

Venue: 30 Clarence Street, York YO31 7DE

Cost: Free to attend (charges are made for refreshments)



For further information please contact the Activities Team at York Mind by email: activities@yorkmind.org.uk, or telephone 01904 643364 option 5.

Creative Writing at York Mind

Do you have a story to tell?

Would you like to develop a new skill in a relaxed space?



Unleash your imagination; invent characters to light up your short stories, explore the poet within, or write about your life experiences.

All explored in a relaxed atmosphere, which is designed to share ideas and make writing fun. Creativity is clinically recognised as being beneficial for mental health, including recovering from depression and anxiety.

Why not give it a go? Set your inner storyteller free and sign up today.

Date: 17th January—6th March 2020

Day: Fridays

Time: 10.30am-12.30pm

Venue: York Mind, Highcliffe House, Highcliffe Court, York YO30 6BP

Cost: Free



For further information, or to discuss a referral, please contact the Activities Team at York Mind by email: activities@yorkmind.org.uk, or telephone 01904 643364 option 5.

Registered charity no. 1006759

www.yorkmind.org.uk



York

Managing

Anxiety



Living with anxiety can be very difficult, but there are a number of strategies and steps you can take to try and manage it.

Talk to Someone You Trust

Talking to someone you trust about what's making you anxious could be a relief. It may be that just having someone listen to you and show they care can help in itself.

If you aren't able to open up to someone close to you, **Samaritans** and **Anxiety UK** both run helplines that you can call to talk to someone.

Try to Manage Your Worries

It can be really hard to stop worrying when you have anxiety. You might have worries you can't control, or you might feel like you need to keep worrying because it feels useful—or that bad things might happen if you stop. It can be helpful to try different ways of addressing these worries.

For example you could:

- **Set aside a specific time to focus on your worries—so you can reassure yourself you haven't forgotten to think about them. Some people find it helpful to set a timer.**
- **Write down your worries and keep them in a particular place, e.g. you could write them in a notebook, or on pieces of paper in an envelope jar.**

Managing Anxiety



Find out more about **Anxiety and Panic Attacks** and check out some of Mind's Top Tips for managing anxiety.

Look After Your Physical Health

- Try to get enough sleep. Sleep can give you the energy to cope with difficult feelings and experiences.
- Think about your diet. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can make a difference to your mood and energy level.
- Try to do some physical activity. Exercise can be really helpful for your mental wellbeing.

Complementary and alternative therapies

Yoga, meditation, aromatherapy, massage, reflexology, herbal treatments, Bach flower remedies, and hypnotherapy are all types of complementary therapy that you could try, and see if they work for you. Some people find that one or more of these methods can help them to relax, or sleep better.

Confidence and Resilience

Would you like to feel more confident and in control of your life?
Do you feel that you are missing out and not able to move forward?



Our facilitated 5 week course will look at practical ways of managing emotions by exploring how we think and behave. In doing this we will be able to reflect on how we could change our thoughts in order to feel more confident, resilient and connected.

As a group, we will look at the barriers we face, and explore coping strategies to support positive well-being.

Come along and take a step on the path to a more confident life!

Date: 21st January—25th February 2020

Day: Tuesdays

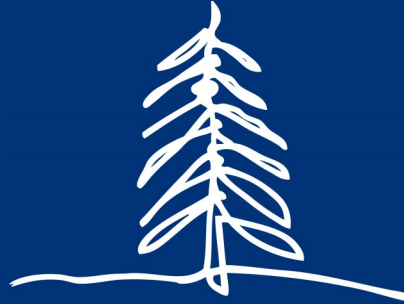
Time: 10am—12 noon

Venue: York Mind, Highcliffe House, Highcliffe Court, York YO30 6BP

Cost: Free

For further information, or to discuss a referral, please contact the Activities Team at York Mind by email: activities@yorkmind.org.uk, or telephone 01904 643364 option 5.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)



What is SAD?

SAD is a type of depression that you experience during particular seasons or times of the year. Depression is a low mood that lasts for a long time and affects your everyday life.

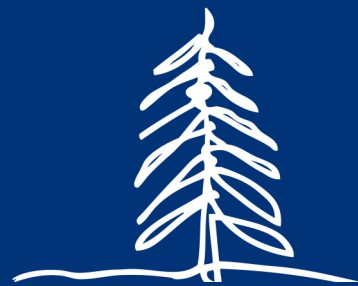
If you have SAD, you'll experience depression during some seasons in particular or because of certain types of weather.

Symptoms of SAD

If you have SAD, you might experience some of the signs and symptoms. But it's different for different people, and can vary season to season, so you might also have other kinds of feelings that aren't listed here:

- Lack of energy.
- Finding it hard to concentrate.
- Not wanting to see people.
- Sleep problems, such as sleeping more or less than usual, difficulty waking up or difficulty falling or staying asleep.
- Feeling sad, low, tearful, guilty or hopeless.
- Changes in your appetite, for example feeling more hungry.
- Being more prone to physical health problems, such as cold, infections or other illness.
- Losing interest in sex or physical contact.
- Suicidal feelings.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)



Living with SAD can be difficult, but there are lots of things you can do to help yourself cope.

Talk to someone

It can be hard to reach out when you're not feeling well, but it might help to share how you're feeling. If you don't feel you can talk to the people around you, or you need additional support you could contact helplines such as:

- **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)** - Support for anyone who identifies as male. You can call them on 0800 58 58 58 (5pm–midnight every day) or use their webchat service.
- **Samaritans**— Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to listen to anything that's upsetting you. You can call 116 123 (free from any phone), email jo@samaritans.org or visit some branches in person.
- **SANELine**—support for people experiencing a mental health problem or supporting someone else. You can call them on 0300 304 7000 .

Keep a Diary

You might find it helps to keep a note of your symptoms, including when they start and if particular things seem to trigger them, including changes in the weather. This can help you notice any patterns.

You could also make a note of things that you find helpful, or that seem to make things worse. This can be helpful because SAD affects you at sometimes and not others and might not remember the details.



Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)



Plan for More Difficult Times

If you've noticed your symptoms follow a pattern, you may be able to work out when they're most likely to start in the future. This may help you put things in place for those times.

For example you could:

- Try to re-arrange stressful activities or events for another time.
- Plan relaxing activities that might help improve your mood.
- Plan ahead, such as stocking up on things you need or preparing early for special occasions such as Christmas.
- Try to make more time to rest or do things that you enjoy.
- Create a self care box.

Creating a Self-Care Box

Some people find it helpful to fill a box with things that comfort them or help them to relax. You could try including a variety of different things, for example your favourite book or film, a notebook and pen to write down your thoughts or notes of encouragement to yourself.

This can be a useful tool as it can be very difficult to come up with ideas to help when you're feeling low. [Here](#) are some ideas of other things you could include!

For more information on SAD, check out [Mind's info page](#).

Well-being Peer Support Group

Are you looking for ways to improve your well-being?
Do you want to meet and share with people in a similar
situation to you?

Our Well-being Peer Support Group meets weekly and gives members
a chance to share their feelings and experiences with others.

Over the course of the 9 week group, members can explore ways of
improving self-esteem, managing emotions, techniques for relaxation
and mindfulness, alongside people you can relate to.

The group is facilitated.

Come and join us—meet people and share your story at your own
pace in a safe space.

Start Date: 20th January 2020

Day: Mondays

Time: 2pm-3.30pm

Venue: York Mind, Highcliffe House,
Highcliffe Court, York, YO30 6BP

Cost: Free



For further information, or to discuss a referral, please contact the
Activities Team at York Mind by email: activities@yorkmind.org.uk, or
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Winter Wellbeing Tips

We recognise that the festive season can be a difficult time for most, we're out of our normal routine and may feel a pressure to be enjoying every minute of the holidays. Here are some of our top tips to help you maintain good wellbeing during the winter months!

Food and Drink



A healthy diet helps you maintain a stable mood, think more clearly & gives you more energy. When our usual routine these healthy habits can lead to over-indulgence.

It's important to remember you are still entitled to treat yourself, but it's all about finding the right balance.

Make sure not to skip breakfast! Eating breakfast will get your day off to a good start and prevent you eating large portions that may make you drowsy and uncomfortable.

Drinking 6-8 glasses of water a day will help you concentrate and think clearly. Tea, coffee, juices and smoothies all count towards your intake, but be aware that these may also contain caffeine or sugar. Just like alcohol, there are now some great sugar and caffeine free versions of your favourite drinks.



Sleep

Over the festive period, lots of us find that our sleep patterns become disrupted, we're often staying up later and don't always catch up on the sleep that we've missed. If possible, **try to head to bed at your usual time** every night. If you're a light sleeper staying in a busy household, you can always try to get a head start by going to bed by going to bed first and popping ear plugs in!

It's important to remember that alcohol can also have an affect on the quality of your sleep.



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Exercise



During the winter months it can be really difficult to motivate yourself to exercise, but exercising can make a real difference to your mental health and wellbeing!

Wrap up warm and go for a winter walk: it will help you connect with nature, metabolise sugary treats and improve the quality of your sleep!

When it comes to exercise **what ultimately matters is whether it works for you!** If you feel like you aren't up to exercising right now, please don't feel guilty, it's important to remember you can only do what you can do!

Why don't you sign up to **RED January** - A community initiative that encourages you to support your mental health by doing something active every single day.



Alcohol

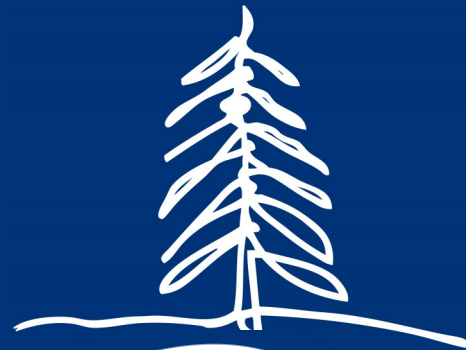
Although alcohol may initially make you feel more relaxed, it's important to remember it's a depressant, and drinking too much may make you feel anxious, aggressive or low. If you're already feeling low, alcohol may also enhance these feelings and make you feel even worse. It would be useful to think about other activities that you could channel your feelings into such as exercise, writing or drawing.

You should never feel pressured into drinking, it is perfectly fine to turn down a drink. If you still want to feel involved in the festive celebrations, check out the different alcohol free alternatives!



Coping with Grief

During the Holidays



The holiday season can be a painful time, whether it is your first year without someone, or if you were bereaved long ago. The emotions you feel after losing someone important can leave us with the same anxiety, loneliness, anger or depression associated with many mental health problems.

It may be helpful to spend some time deciding what kinds of arrangements will best suit your needs and the needs of others who share your loss.

Different Ways of Mourning

We know that people remember and mourn in different ways. Conflict within a family can sometimes occur when we have expectations as to how others should grieve, it is important to be sensitive to others needs—but also talk openly about what would be helpful for you too!

Whether to Celebrate

Some bereaved people find that they do not wish to celebrate Christmas at all, for some simply **maintaining their regular routine** and celebrating as normal is the best tribute they can pay for their loved one.

For some it **may feel important to make a special effort** to remember the person has died. This can be as simple as 'speaking' to the person, silently or out loud.

Also visiting the persons grave or somewhere that was special to them may be helpful. These can be things we do alone, or with friends and family. You may have photos or particular memories which you treasure; sharing these with others may be something that brings you together.



Contact us

Getting in touch

We'd love to hear from you.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch...

01904 643 364

www.yorkmind.org.uk

York Mind,
Highcliffe House,
Highcliffe Court, York,
YO30 6BP