



stem4
supporting teenage mental health

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH DAY

19th September

A GUIDE ON HOW TO **#ConnectMeaningfully** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



stem4

supporting teenage mental health
registered charity No. 1144506



Dear YMHD Participants,

stem4, the charity I founded ten years ago, is once again running Youth Mental Health Day (YMHD) in 2022. This year, stem4's YMHD has a new date of 19 September to accommodate more schools, colleges, and universities that have told us they would like to participate in the day. We are therefore delighted to invite you to get involved and participate in YMHD 2022, as well as the events leading up to it.

Most of you would probably agree that young people have missed out on developing important social connections over the past two years as a result of the pandemic. By focusing on ways to catch up on making meaningful connections and developing a solid support system, stem4's YMHD 2022 will invite young people across the country to reflect on how their relationships (with family, friends, teachers etc.) have changed over the last couple of years, and share how they can make an effort to #ConnectMeaningfully. Research, as well as the young people we work with, all agree that positive relationships are a foundation for good mental health.

stem4 has put together a brief guide to help you feel more confident and able to #ConnectMeaningfully. This guide is full of tips to help you make and strengthen relationships, as well as negotiating some tricky situations (such as distancing yourself from a friendship). Please join us by sharing your experiences, creative pieces, and even your own tips through celebrating the #ConnectMeaningfully message on social media on stem4's YMHD 2022, on 19 September. As a teenage charity supporting young people's mental health, I would like to thank you for your participation and look forward to your valued participation and to hearing all your views.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Nihara Krause
Founder and CEO, stem4

#YMHD **#ConnectMeaningfully**

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What differentiates a meaningful connection from a more superficial one?

Remember: quality over quantity. Even if you are surrounded by people, you can still feel lonely. That's why it's important to foster meaningful connections that can support you and your wellbeing.

- Each person gets something of value from a meaningful connection.
- You trust a person you have a meaningful connection with.
- You can turn to a person you have a meaningful connection with when you need comfort or understanding.
- A meaningful connection is someone you first turn to when you want to share both really good news and the more difficult news.
- You know a relationship is meaningful when they remember what's important to you and show you they care.

How can I introduce myself to someone new and start a friendship?

Sometimes the first step to making a new connection is just by starting a conversation. Here are some tips to help you connect with someone and find common ground.

- It's good to focus on topics that are shared interests when starting a conversation. For example, a movie, hobbies, something about school.
- It's best to avoid topics that might raise difficult emotions in new people, such as politics or religion.
- Avoid asking too many questions. Leave space for the other person to respond and also ask you some questions.
- Focus on listening to them rather than taking up most of the time talking about yourself.
- Introduce yourself at the beginning of a conversation and anyone else who might be with you.



How can I distance myself from a friendship?

As important as it is to foster meaningful connections, it's equally important to recognise when a connection is no longer serving you (or the other person) and know that sometimes it's best to part ways.

- Arrange to talk to them face to face rather than sending them a message.
- Be honest but kind. You could say 'I would like us to have some time apart for the next few weeks' or 'I need some space from this friendship for the moment, hope you understand' or 'I need to work out a fresh perspective on our friendship and would like to have a break'.
- Write down what you want to say and practice saying it out aloud before you do.
- Don't try to end the friendship by posting something horrible about them on social media.
- Don't spread rumours or gossip about someone and hope they find out through this that you no longer want to be their friend.

How can I reach out to someone I haven't spoken to in a while?

From the stresses of balancing schoolwork and home life, as well as just growing up, people often drift apart. It doesn't have to be anyone's fault, but if you're looking to reach back out to someone, then here are some tips to help you.

- Send a text rather than an email since it's more direct and less likely to get stuck in spam.
- You don't need long explanations or apologies, just say that you've been thinking about them and thought you would drop them a note.
- Be specific about what you want them to do. You could say, 'I look forward to hearing from you by the end of this week.'
- You could like something of theirs on social media and follow it up with a message.
- Be prepared for the friendship not to resume, sometimes it's hard to reconnect.

How can I reach out to someone I think is struggling?

If you think someone is struggling, it can be hard to know how to approach them in a sensitive way. Start by just letting them know that you're there for them and thinking of them. Here are some ways you can do that.

- Send a nice message to say that you are thinking of them.
- Keep reaching out in different ways if they don't respond. For example, you could send them a photo of a time you were together, or suggest you go for a walk or to the cinema.
- You could say 'I've noticed you've been a bit down recently.'
- Don't accept someone saying 'I'm ok' when you ask them if they are alright. Ask again 'Are you sure you're ok?'
- Ask them what they want rather than saying what you think.

How can I reach out to someone if I am struggling?

When you're struggling, you may find it hard to know how to reach out, or even know how to say that you need their help. Keep it simple and try one of these prompts to help you get the conversation started.

- 'I've been feeling out of sorts recently and I wondered if you might have some time for us to talk.'
- 'I'm struggling at the moment. It would help if you could come with me to talk to [an adult].'
- 'I'm not the best company right now but would really like you to come and have a coffee with me.'
- 'Could you help me come up with a plan on how I might feel better?'
- 'Would you mind just talking to me on the phone even if I don't say too much? It helps me to hear your voice.'

stem4's Free Mental Health Resource for Young People: **Head Ed Light**

Head Ed Light is an entirely free, online educational resource for young people to learn about mental health topics independently.

Head Ed Light contains 4 modules on **anxiety**, **depression**, **resilience** and **self-harm**.

Each module is an interactive fact file that teaches signs, symptoms, and management of each topic. Plus, the modules are all specifically designed to be self-guided and used independently by young people from home.

Young people have just as much right to access facts about good mental health as they do good physical health, and yet there is a lack of accurate information. Embarrassment or social stigma surrounding mental health issues can so easily lead to confusion with what may be normal development, as opposed to the early development of a mental health issue.

Head to education.stem4.org.uk to get started.

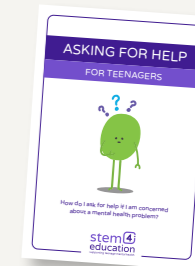


HEAD ED
Light

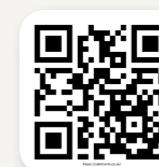
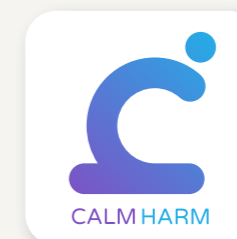
For young people:

'Asking for Help' Booklet: a handy guide for young people that provides tips on ways to develop positive mental health, and practical advice on how to reach out for help.

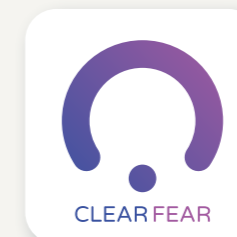
<https://stem4.org.uk/go/asking-for-help-leaflet/>



stem4's mental health apps



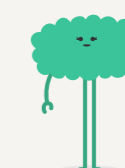
A free app to help teenagers resist or manage the urge to self-harm
www.calmharm.co.uk • @calmharmapp



A free app to help children and young people manage the symptoms of anxiety
www.clearfear.co.uk • @clearfearapp



A free app to help teenagers manage low mood and depression
www.movemood.co.uk • @appmovemood



A free app to help families and friends provide mental health support
www.combinedminds.co.uk • @combmindsapp

stem4's award-winning apps are available to download from the App Store and Google Play.



Please note that these apps are an aid in treatment but do not replace it.

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