



# Mental Health Support in Leicestershire

## GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Making sense of coronavirus and facing the uncertainty of when life will return to normal can be difficult to think about and deal with. If you're struggling to cope, feeling down or more worried than usual, help is at hand.

In this guide you will find information, advice and support on your feelings and mental health, from these Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland services:

**Health for Teens** – [www.healthforteens.co.uk](http://www.healthforteens.co.uk)

**ChatHealth** – [www.healthforteens.co.uk/health/about-chathealth](http://www.healthforteens.co.uk/health/about-chathealth)

**Kooth** – [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

**Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service**

[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/education-and-childcare/educational-psychology-service](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/education-and-childcare/educational-psychology-service)

**ALWAYS REMEMBER:**

**IT'S OKAY NOT TO BE OKAY, AND YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**



# HEALTH FOR TEENS

The Health for Teens website is packed with tips, articles and other helpful information on lots of areas that you may be worried or just intrigued about, including:

**Feelings**

**Relationships**

**Growing up**

**Sexual health**

**Health**

**Coronavirus**

**Lifestyle**

There's also a focus on the support that's available for you in Leicestershire.

Check it out: [www.healthforteens.co.uk](http://www.healthforteens.co.uk)





Did you know that if you're aged 11 to 19 and live in Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland, there's a confidential, secure text messaging service where you can get advice and support from a health professional about things like:

**Sleeping**

**Exam stress**

**Self-harm**

**Mental health**

**Sexual health**

**Anxiety**



Just send a text to **07520 615386** (if you live in Leicester City) or **07520 615387** (if you're in Leicestershire or Rutland) and a member of your local public health nursing (school nursing) team will get back to you within 24 hours. The service is **open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.**

To find out more, go to

[www.healthforteens.co.uk/health/about-chathealth](http://www.healthforteens.co.uk/health/about-chathealth)



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- Free counselling and live chat with a member of the team about whatever's on your mind
- Discussion boards where you can start or join a conversation with the Kooth community
- Kooth Magazine, featuring articles, tips and personal experiences from young people and the team
- A daily journal and other self-help tools that you can use to track your mood

SELF-HELP TOOL

Find out more at [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)



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**The coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis has caused major disruptions to family life, through the introduction of social distancing, school closures and lockdown.**

In difficult times like these, looking after our mental health is just as important as taking care of our physical health. It's normal for everyone to feel anxious at the moment, and children and young people of all ages are just as affected as adults by the worry and stress coronavirus can cause.

This may be even more pertinent if you or those around you are directly affected by Covid-19. All those involved

will have been affected in some way, though each person's experiences of the event will be personal and therefore different. You may have thoughts and feelings which you have not experienced before. This is a normal reaction to a very abnormal experience and these emotions may last for some time.



## HOW YOU MIGHT BE FEELING

There is no right way to feel or respond in stressful situations. But below are some common reactions:

- In the early stages you may have been in shock and felt confused, helpless or anxious. You may also have felt scared and sad.
- As time went on you may have felt angry with yourself, with school or with others. You may have even felt guilt or shame.
- You may have been visualising or dreaming about your experience.
- You could find yourself avoiding anything to do with the event, including talking to other people involved, being in places related to the

event or blocking out thoughts.

- You might be distancing yourself from other people.

People react differently and take different amounts of time to come to terms with what has happened. Even so, you may be surprised by the strength of your feelings. It normal to experience a mixture of feelings:

- You may be alarmed or confused by your reaction to the event
- You may have some negative and positive feelings and thoughts – for example, feeling grateful for your personal circumstances, as well as guilt or anger.

## Other feelings you might experience include:

**Frightened** that the same experience will happen again, or that you might lose control of your feelings and break down.

**Helpless** that something really bad happened and you could do nothing about it. You feel vulnerable and overwhelmed.

**Angry** about what has happened and with whoever was responsible.

**Guilty** that you have survived when others have suffered or died. You may feel that you could have done something to prevent it.

**Sad** particularly if people were very poorly or died, especially someone you knew.

**Embarrassed** that you have these strong feelings you can't control, especially if you need others to support you.

**Relieved** that the immediate danger is over.

**Hopeful** that your life will return to normal. People can start to feel more positive about things quite soon after.

## WHAT ELSE MIGHT YOU NOTICE?

**Strong feelings affect your physical health. In the weeks after a trauma you may find that you:**

- Cannot sleep, or when asleep you dream a lot and have nightmares.
- Feel very tired and have poor concentration
- Have memory problems or difficulty thinking clearly
- Suffer from headaches
- Experience changes in appetite
- Have aches and pains, and feel your heart beating faster



## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- Give yourself time. It takes weeks or months to accept what has happened and to learn to live with it. You may need to grieve for what (or who) you have lost
- Find out what happened. It is better to face the reality of what happened rather than wondering about what might have happened.
- Your support network. If you go to funerals or memorial services, it can help to spend time with others who have been through the same experience as you for support
- Ask for support. It can be a relief to talk about what happened. You may need to ask your friends and family for the time to do this – at first they will probably not know what to say or do.
- Take time for yourself. At times you may want to be alone, or just with those close to you.
- Talk it over. Bit by bit, let yourself think about the trauma and talk about it with others. Don't worry if you cry when you talk, it's natural and usually helpful. Take things at a pace that you feel comfortable with.
- Get into a routine. Even if you don't feel much like eating, try to have regular meals and to eat a balanced diet. Doing some exercise can help – but start gently.
- Physical exercise. Some young people find moving about and staying active can provide some temporary relief and occupy your mind with other thoughts.
- Relaxing activities, such as hobbies, writing, or listening to music.

Your feelings and thoughts may be very intense, and should gradually reduce over time (although they may not totally disappear). If your feelings or thoughts continue to cause you difficulties after approximately one month after the event, you may want to consider further support. You could talk to friends or family, or a teacher in school.

If you are a parent/carer, a professional or an education provider in Leicestershire, you can speak to an Educational Psychologist via the Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service Helpline:  
(Monday - Friday 9am to 11.30am, inc. school holidays)

**0116 305 5100**