

Wellbeing Activities for Young People

The EmpowHER programme was created to help address the worryingly low levels of wellbeing amongst young women and girls in the UK and as such, wellbeing is at the very heart of the programme. Here are a few examples of wellbeing activities that young people can do at the start, during or after every session.



EMPOWHER

Created by

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Blob Tree

The Blob Tree came out of the work by Pip Wilson, with young people, in the East End of London around 20 years ago. The blob illustrations initiate and promote discussion of feelings in a non-threatening way. This method is used all over the world and appeals to all ages. Questions are supplied for guidance and to help personal exploration.

You will need:

- Copies of the Blob Church illustration sheet below
- Questions

Method:

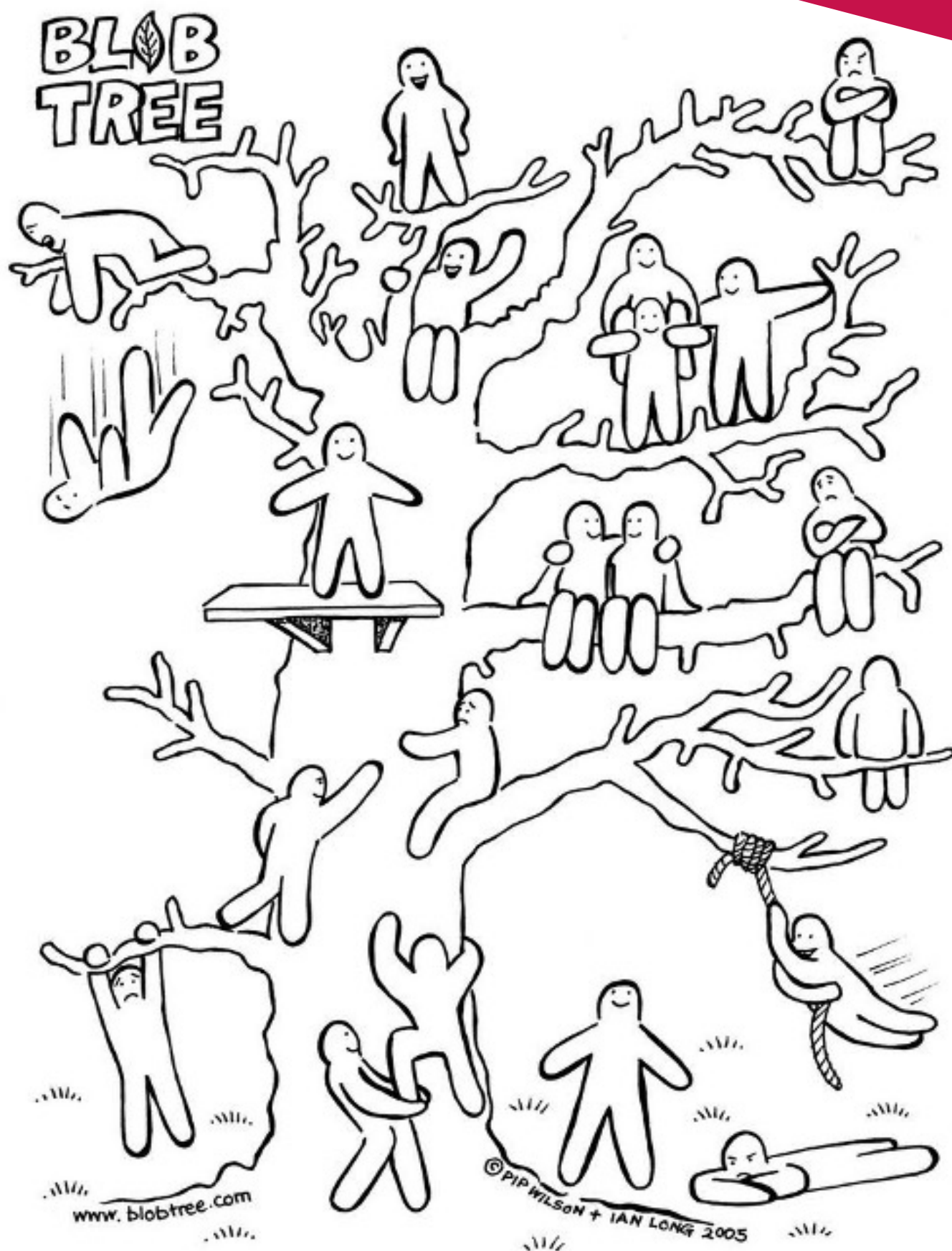
- ★ Enlarge the Blob Church illustration or give out an A4 copy to each child
- ★ Ask children & young people to look at the illustration
- ★ Leaders to ask the following:



**Please use your own suggestions for questions. This exercise is ideal for small group work. Invite a leader or young leader to be a scribe for the feedback.*

Make sure the team of staff or volunteers Suggested questions:

- ? Which Blob do you feel like today?
- ? Why do you feel like that?
- ? Which Blob would you like to feel like?
- ? Which Blob do you feel like when you come to church?
- ? Which Blob do you feel like when you are with your mum or dad in church?
- ? Which Blob do you feel like when you are with your friends?
- ? Which Blob do you feel like when you are with all ages in church?
- ? Which Blob do you feel like when you are in your Sunday school/youth group/Bible study?
- ? Which Blob do you feel like when someone talks about God?
- ? Which Blob does God feel like in church? participants if needed, and arrange any breakout rooms.



Wellbeing First-Aid Kit

Purpose of the activity:

The aim of this activity is to increase participants' awareness and understanding around mental and emotional wellbeing and equip them with the skills to look after these. To aid this activity, flip charts, pens and copies of the emotional first-aid kit worksheet should be provided. This activity is suitable for young people aged 10-18.

Your emotional first aid kit

- ☆ Hand out the emotional first aid kit worksheet. Ask them to write something in each box that they do to help themselves when they feel stressed, upset or angry. Allow 5-10 minutes for this.
- ☆ Note that some things they do for their physical health are also good for their mental health. Encourage them to include things they haven't done for a while or might like to start to do in the future as well as things they already do.
- ☆ Invite them to share these in pairs. You can mention that not everything that people will have in their first aid kit will be good for them.
- ☆ Optional–show the group the In hand app (a mental health app designed by young people for young people)–some of them might want to download it and have a go. If possible you could show the clips from www.inhand.org.uk/#testimonials.

Getting started:

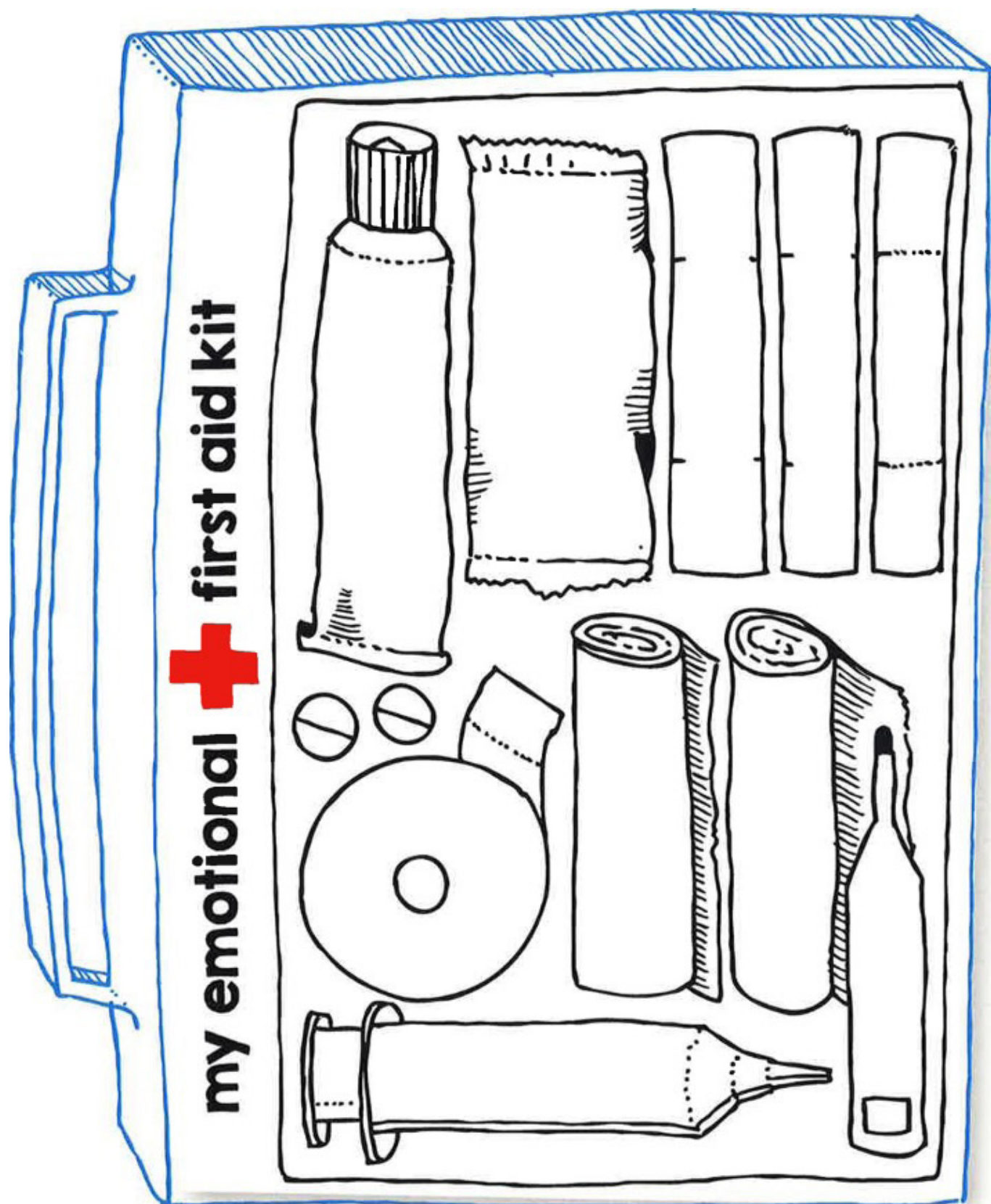
Ask the group what they do that helps their physical health and put ideas up on a flip chart. Make to include 'ordinary' things like walking and sitting down to eat a meal, as well as more obvious ones like going to the gym and not eating too much fast food. Now open up the idea that we need to look after our mental health just like our physical health.

Optional–Ask young people to name music that they find relaxing. This might be something they put in their first aid kit (below). Pick a name out of a hat and play the music whilst you do the following exercise.

Running the activity (20-25 minutes):

Throw the monkey:

- ☆ End by standing in a circle and throwing the monkey (or any other funny object). When you catch the monkey you have to say one thing that you have put in your emotional first aid kit.
- ☆ Ask everyone to write one new thing in their emotional first aid kit. This may be something that someone else has said and they would like to try out.
- ☆ End by encouraging the group to go away and do something from their first aid kit that they haven't done for a while or to try out something new.



Three Faces

Purpose of the Activity:

The 3 Faces poster is a way of understanding how we feel emotionally.

Everyone in the world experiences what the images relate to. The space below the line represents our emotions & how we are dealing with sensory issues such as noise or smell, whilst the space above the line represents our ability to process information.

Face number One:

This is when we are having a good day, and everything is ok. We describe this as feeling balanced. Our emotions are steady, and we are in an environment that isn't overwhelming us. We then have 'space' in our heads to listen to instructions and make sense of them, make better choices, absorb information and learn, sit still and manage any challenges more effectively.

Face number Two:

This is when we become overwhelmed with emotions such as being very frustrated, frightened or anxious or happy and excited. We maybe in environment that is really noisy or hot and claustrophobic. It can be something that happens really quickly, and we go from face number 1 to face number 2 suddenly or it could be something that gradually builds over a short period of time. When this happens, we then lose that 'space' in our heads to process what is going on around us. We shout, get angry, say things we later regret. We make mistakes, need to leave the room or behave aggressively. We may be over excited and laugh uncontrollably and jump up and down. We certainly cannot sit still, learn and make positive choices and we cannot respond to verbal instructions. No one ever calmed down from someone telling them to calm down!

Face number Three:

This is when we try and 'hold it together'. We bury or deny how we are feeling because we may be in an environment where we know if we express how we are really feeling there would be negative consequences, we may be a long term carer, who is trying to hold it together to carry out our role or it may be something we are going through that we aren't ready to share with anyone. Doing this over a long period of time can make us physically and mentally unwell and isn't a good way to live. Doing this for short periods, such as a school day, can mean that we let all that emotion out in a great big rush, like taking the lid off a shake- up bottle of fizzy drink.

Most of the population live fairly close to face number 1 for the majority of the time. They may have the occasional bad day or week, and go to face's 2 & 3, but have learnt skills in how to self-regulate and come back to a balanced state. For those living with social communication disorders or mental health conditions they spend a lot of time in face 2 and 3. Lots of people hold themselves together all day to explode at home, with many parents never feeling able to let that emotion come to the surface, fearing that if they started to cry or shout they would never stop.



Room for thinking



Room for emotions & senses

Calm – feeling emotionally safe

- ★ Emotions are under control.
- ★ Your senses aren't overloaded.
- ★ You have room to:
- ★ Think
- ★ Learn
- ★ Listen
- ★ Process information
- ★ Make Choices

Room for thinking



Room for emotions & senses

'Very' something

- ★ Emotions extreme.
- ★ Your senses are overloaded.
- ★ You have NO room to:
- ★ Think
- ★ Learn
- ★ Listen
- ★ Process information
- ★ Make Choices
- ★ Process verbal instructions

Room for thinking



Room for emotions & senses

Controlled

- ★ Emotions extreme. but you are holding them together
- ★ Its exhausting
- ★ it is like a shaken bottle of fizzy drink
- ★ one last shake and you will go to "very something"
- ★ it can make you unwell
- ★ you can start to self-medicate
- ★ you can sleep, eat, drink too much or not at all



Simple Ice Breaker Questions

Having a set of fun and interesting Ice breaker questions to ask young people or for them to ask each other can be a easy and effective way of breaking down initial barriers and creating a safe and welcoming safe for them. Here are a list of questions some young people asked themselves during different EmpowHER sessions:

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- ? What would the autobiography of your life be called?
 - ? What three words would you use to describe yourself?
 - ? If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
 - ? If you could be best friends with a cartoon character, who would it be?
 - ? If you could choose one superpower, what would it be and why?
 - ? If you were a breakfast cereal, which one would it be and why?
 - ? What was the last thing you read?
 - ? Would you say you're more of an extrovert or an introvert?
 - ? In the summer, would you rather go to the beach or go camping?
 - ? Tell us something interesting about your feet, shoes or socks?
 - ? Which actor would you like to play you in a movie about you?
 - ? What phone app do you use the most?
 - ? What's your favourite season and why?
 - ? What's your favourite board game?
 - ? What's your favourite type of exercise?
 - ? What one thing instantly makes your day better?



POW



**Other Fun
and exciting
activities
include:**



- ★ Room 101
- ★ Chatterbox
- ★ Simon Says
- ★ Themed scavenger hunts
- ★ Can I bring to the party (Riddle game)
- ★ Give it up/Let it go
- ★ Cameras on and off (Understanding group similarities and differences)
- ★ Word wall website
- ★ Two truths and a lie
- ★ 5 second rule
- ★ Kahoot quiz
- ★ Reach 20
- ★ Show and Tell
- ★ Pass the dance
- ★ Pictionary
- ★ 30 seconds (Pecha Kucha)
- ★ Bucket List
- ★ Charades or Articulate
- ★ Finish the Sentence
- ★ Leader of the Band
- ★ Memory Game
- ★ Not the same
- ★ Disappear

Wellbeing Activities for Young People

Mental Health First Aid Top Tips by the British Red Cross

TIP 2 Eat well



TIP 3 Exercise



TIP 1 Get plenty of rest



TIP 4 Socialise with friends



TIP 5 Participate in a group or club you enjoy



TIP 6 Be open about your feelings



TIP 7 Watch out for your health and your friends/ family



TIP 8 Have fun



TIP 9 Smile



TIP 10 Be Creative



TIP 11 Don't be afraid to talk when not feeling good



TIP 12 Know who to chat to for support when having bad day

