

# 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**

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### 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](http://www.inhand.org.uk/#testimonials).

#### Getting started:

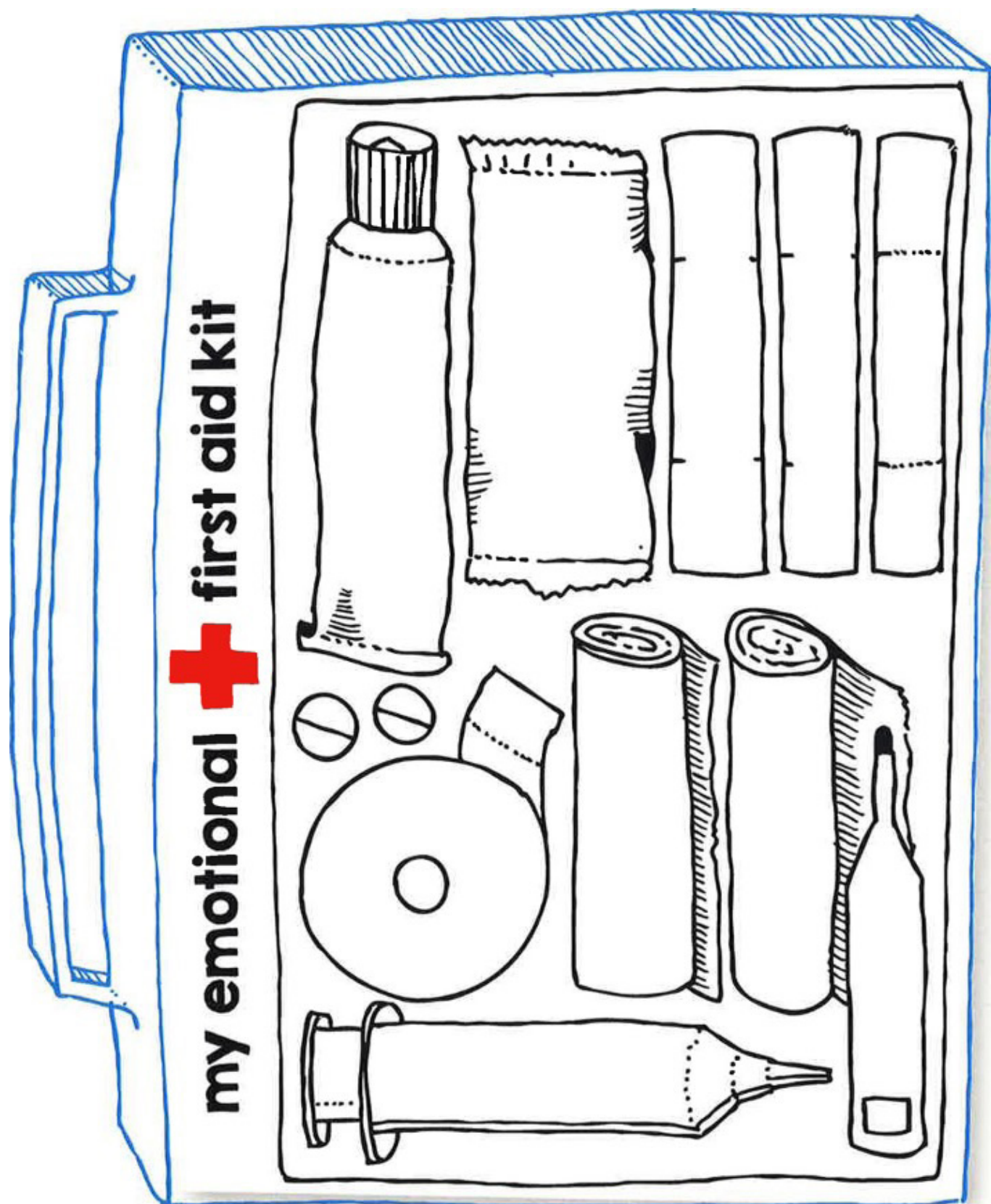
Ask the group what they do that helps their physical health and put ideas up on a flip chart. Make to include 'ordinary' things like walking and sitting down to eat a meal, as well as more obvious ones like going to the gym and not eating too much fast food. Now open up the idea that we need to look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





**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

**Mental Health First Aid  
Top Tips by the British  
Red Cross**



**TIP 1**  
Get plenty  
of rest



**TIP 2**  
Eat well



**TIP 3**  
Exercise



**TIP 4**  
Socialise  
with friends



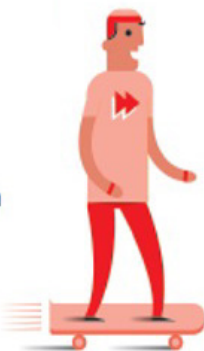
**TIP 5**  
Participate  
in a group  
or club  
you enjoy



**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