

Things to do over the Christmas Holidays



Contents

Let's Get Baking Chocolate Brownies	3
Let's Get Baking Cookies	4
Student Assistance Programme	5
Folded Book Christmas Tree	6
DIY paper tree ornament	8
Christmas Quiz!	10
How to Survive Christmas!	11
Stay Connected and Set Goals	12
Create Mindmaps	13
Get Physical and Read a book	14
Recovery Letters*	15
Christmas Quiz answers	19
Feel Good Songs	20
Design your own activity book	21
Wordsearches	22
Colouring In Sheets	24
Contacts	26

***Trigger Warning**

Pages 15 to 17 contain references to themes of loneliness, depression, and suicidal feelings.



Lets Get Baking!

Chocolate Brownie Recipe

Ingredients

110 grams	Butter
200 grams	Caster Sugar
2	Eggs
60 grams	Self-Raising Flour
30 grams	Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
1/4 teaspoon	Salt
1 teaspoon	Vanilla Extract
60 grams	Chopped Walnuts (Optional)

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180 C / Gas 4. Grease and flour a 20cm square tin.
2. In a medium bowl, beat together the butter and sugar. Add eggs and mix well. Combine the flour, cocoa and salt; stir into the sugar mixture. Mix in the vanilla and stir in walnuts, if using. Spread evenly into the prepared tin.
3. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes in the preheated oven or until edges are firm. Cool before cutting into squares.



Lets Get Baking!

Cookies Recipe

Ingredients

470 grams	Plain Flour
1 teaspoon	Baking Powder
1/2 teaspoon	Salt
225 grams	Margarine (butter or cooking)
300 grams	Caster Sugar
2	Eggs
2 teaspoons	Vanilla Extract


Method

1. Preheat oven to 200 C / Gas 6 and lightly grease two baking trays or line with parchment.
2. Sift flour, baking powder and salt together; set aside.
3. In a large bowl, cream together the butter or margarine and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then stir in the vanilla. Gradually blend in the sifted flour until evenly mixed. Cover dough, and refrigerate for 2 hours.
4. On a floured surface, roll out portions of dough to 5mm thickness. Cut out a tree shape using a knife or use a variety of Christmas cookie cutters.
5. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes in the preheated oven, or until edges are barely brown. Transfer from baking tray to wire cooling racks. Decorate with icing when completely cool.

Student Assistance Programme (SAP)

provided by
Health Assured

You will have access to a 24/7 helpline staffed by BACP accredited counsellors to help you with any concerns and this does include linking you up to local safeguarding and emergency services where immediate action is needed to keep yourself or a friend safe.



All you need to do is call
0800 028 3766
to access this service.

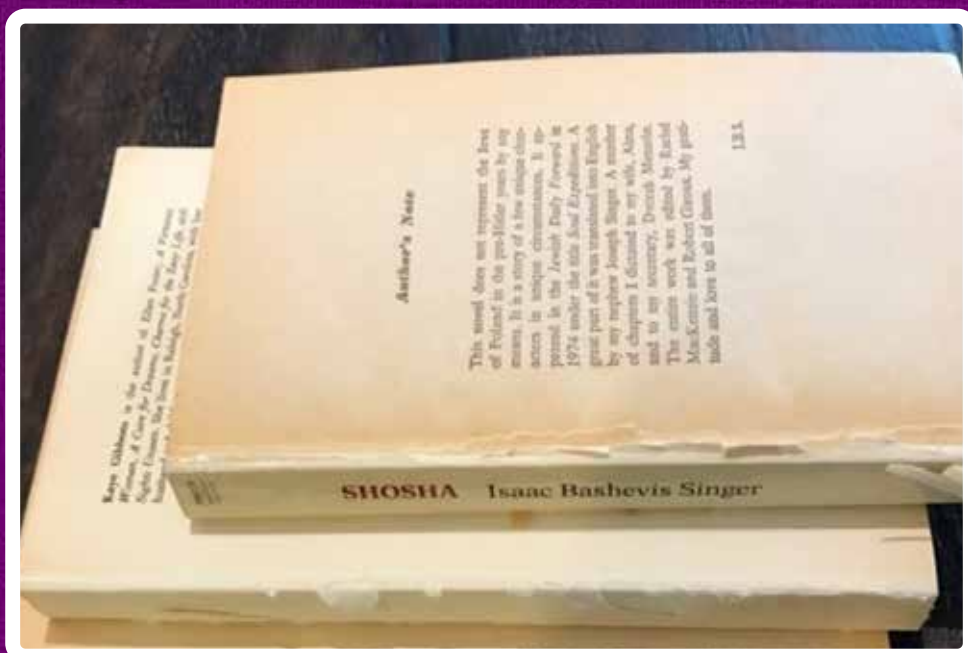
Folded Book Christmas Tree

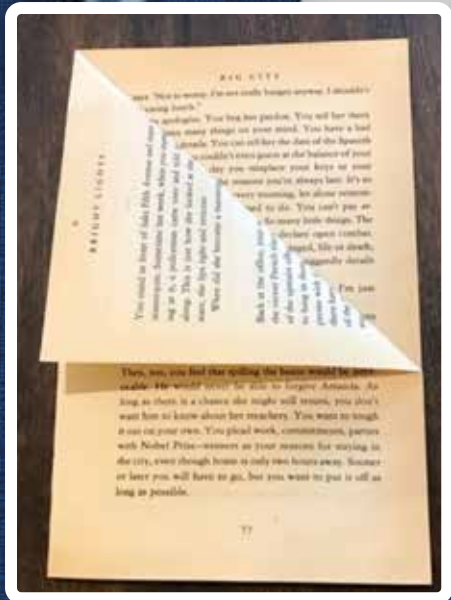
For all book loving, craft loving students... You must try making this Christmas Tree from an old unwanted book!



Step 1

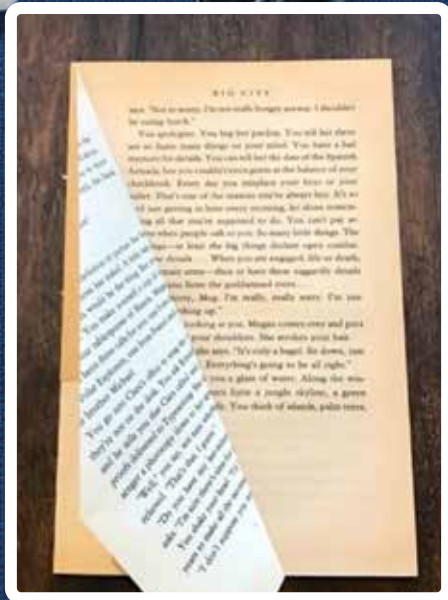
Tear the front and back covers off your book. There's no need to use an entire book - usually 60-100 pages is enough to make the tree look nice and full.





Step 2

Fold down the top right corner at a 90 degree angle so that it lines up with the spine.



Step 3

Fold the same page a second time so that the fold lines up with the spine. The corner will hand over the bottom.



Step 4

Fold up the piece that hangs over the bottom of the book, making sure to line it up with the bottom of the other pages.



Step 5

Follow steps 2 - 4 on the rest of the pages. This is where Netflix comes in handy!



Step 6

Once you're done folding, glue the first and last pages together to prevent the tree from gaping open. You might need to push and pull the pages a bit to get the tree to look uniform.



Step 6 - You're done!

You could then cut a star out of scrapbook paper for the top of the tree. From here you could add glitter or paint! Whatever you feel like to make it your own!

Instructions and photos are by Paula Wilson, a writer who loves to craft. If you wish to find more ideas, you can check out her blog paulawilsonwrites.com

DIY paper tree ornament



Scan the QR to watch the video guide!

DIY ornaments are a fun holiday activity, but also a great way to use up simple supplies you probably already have around the house!

Materials

- **Colourful cardstock or patterned papers**, leftover gift wrapping paper works too.
- **Large needle** or something to poke through the centre of the trees
- **String**
- **Straw (optional)**
- **Glue**
- **Scissors**
- **Printable on page 17**

Step 1

Print out and cut out the free printable template. There are 3 sizes for the circle and a star for the top of the tree.



Step 2

Start folding the circle in half and then keep going in half over and over again. The lines are to show you there are 16 lines. If this is confusing, try scanning the QR from the last page.

Step 3

Once you have folded all 3 size circles, poke a hole on top with your needle and thread a string to make the ornament loop. Tie it off at the bottom.

Step 4

Glue your star on top and hang on the tree!

Optional

if you want your tree to stand up instead of making an ornament, you can cut a straw and make the center holes bigger and insert straw underneath the accordion circle!



Christmas Quiz!

Try answering these questions yourself or arranging a quiz night with family or friends! The answers are available on page 18.

1. At what time on Christmas Day does the monarch broadcast to the nation?
.....

2. Which two of Santa's reindeers share names with meteorological terms?
.....

3. What links excitable Edgar within Monty the Penguin?
.....

4. Name the fictional character created by Dr Seuss that stole Christmas?
.....

5. How many different flavours are there in a standard tub of Quality Street?
.....

6. In the poem 'The Night Before Christmas', visions of what danced in children's heads?
.....

7. The American states of Georgia, Arizona, and Indiana all have towns that share which same Christmassy name?
.....

8. Which country was the first to use the tradition of the Christmas tree?
.....

9. The 2013 film Frozen was inspired by which Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale?
.....

10. How many ghosts appear in A Christmas Carol?
.....

How to Survive Christmas!

What to do if Christmas isn't the 'most wonderful time of the year!'

If you don't feel full of Christmas cheer it can be a stressful time that can lead to you feeling more sad, anxious and isolated. If you are feeling like the only person in the world who is not filled with festive joy, how can you make it through Christmas?

Give something back

Christmas can be one of the most rewarding times to give back. Whether it's signing up to a local charity, volunteering at a care home or a befriending service, it can be a worthwhile way to help others who are also finding the festive season difficult.

Treat yourself

Try to indulge in some self-care at this time of year. If you don't want to celebrate Christmas, celebrate your own little wins! Do some self-reflection, what have you achieved this year? Maybe you've done something to be proud of. No matter how small, celebrate this instead! Find gifts for yourself, pamper yourself, go for a long walk or read a book.

Accept the feelings are yours and valid

If you decide to take part in the celebrations recognise that you may still feel sad, you might be missing someone who is no longer with us, missing your friends, support group or struggling with the changes the festive time brings. No matter what time brings up for you, it's important to accept the feelings as they arise and handle them in a way that works for you.

Watch a non-Christmas film

Have a look at what's on at the cinema or Netflix and distract yourself for a couple of hours. Arrange to meet with friends if you can and enjoy the time to talk about non-Christmassy things.

Make a non-Christmas play list

Walking around the shops listening to the jolly Christmas music can be exhausting when you're not in the mood. Make a playlist of your favourite songs and put your headphones in.

Practice Mindfulness

Even five minutes a day has benefits for you. If you can start off small and often it can start to become a part of your daily routine. The Fika app can be used to aid mindful practices as well as having other useful tools to help you cope with anxiety, low mood and lack of motivation, to name a few.



Tell people

If you're struggling, be honest, let people know that you're not feeling very merry. If people don't know they're going to continue to wish you Happy Christmas. If you don't want to send or receive cards, let people know.

This time of year, however difficult, will pass. You've got this!



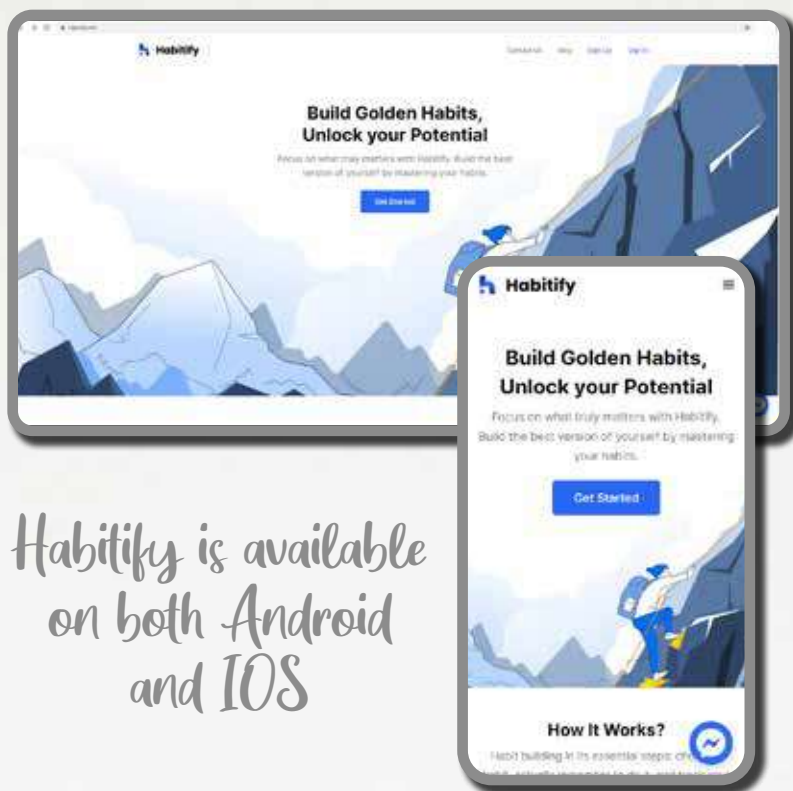
Stay Connected

Contact your friends or family and have conversations and do your best to talk about 3 different things such as hobbies, music and favourite things!

I spoke to	I spoke to	I spoke to
We talked about:	We talked about:	We talked about:
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Set Goals

To help you keep active, productive or engaged try to set yourself goals to keep you motivated. You can do that by using apps like ‘Habitify’ or try out creating your own. Make them manageable and realistic to get the most of them.



Habitify is available on both Android and IOS

Create Mindmaps

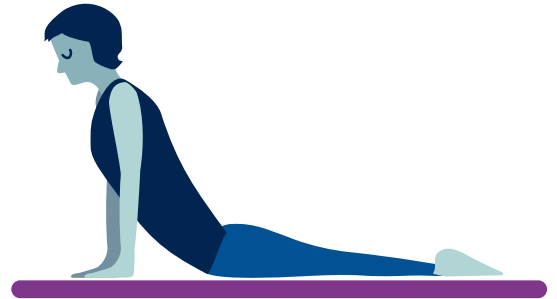
Mindmaps are useful in highlighting important facts , helpful in creative thinking and help with keeping your mind on important things.

Choose at theme and have a go. Here are some examples to help:



Get Physical

Something physical such as making a hot chocolate, going for a short walk, playing cards



Read a book

Pick a book and make a list of what you have read or want to read. It may be fun to visualise them like below.

You can write the book name
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Recovery Letters

The Recovery Letters are all written with the intention to try and alleviate some of the pain of depression, to make the loneliness slightly more bearable and above all to give hope that you can recover.

The idea for The Recovery Letters came about when I was in psychiatric hospital and wanted to hear about stories of recovery and management from depression but couldn't find any.

We see recovery as self-defined but can include living alongside symptoms or being symptom free, being stable on medication or medication free but most of all living a life with some meaning.

The letters are written from people recovering from depression, addressed to those currently suffering. At the moment the letter writers have experienced different types of depression including clinical/major depression, bi-polar and postpartum depression.

Of course, not all the letters will appeal to everyone and whereas we hope they will not act as a trigger for worsening symptoms we sadly can't guarantee that. Some of the content of the letters may be distressing for some and unfortunately that coincides with the reality of living with mental illness.

The Recovery Letters on the website are owned by the letter writers and can't be reproduced without their permission. If you want to re-produce them, please e-mail me at therecoveryletters@yahoo.co.uk and I will contact the writers.

The brand name The Recovery Letters belong to me, James Withey and can not be used without my permission. From time to time we may rotate the letters that are displayed.

What we hope is that the letters will give you a shot of hope, maybe question some of the dreadful thoughts that depression is making you think about yourself and get you through the next day, hour, minute or moment.

www.therecoveryletters.com

Recovery Letters

From Ben

Dear You,

When you're reading this you're probably in a dark place. I've been there too many times. Way too many times. As I couldn't stand being there anymore my wish only was to escape reality, feeling nothing anymore, don't exist anymore. That also included wanting to die.

I've been to this point a lot of times. Every time I was in such a dark place I felt hopeless. I thought I'd be stuck there for the rest of my life. That nothing and no one could get me out of there. I couldn't believe the people around me saying it would get better.

But it will. It won't happen overnight. It will take time and go slowly.

I have been fighting depression for the past four years and the last 2 1/2 years I've been in hospital for 50% of that time.

I learned a lot about myself and why I am who I am. I learnt a lot about what I need and also I tried a lot of different medications. It was about 20 different antidepressants, mood stabilisers, neuroleptics, etc. Most of them were pretty useless to me. Some helped me to calm down. Some made me dizzy. But only recently I got medication that really helps me. It pushes my mood. It gives me more energy and makes me feel more balanced.

I know how it feels when you think there is nothing that can help. But the probability is pretty high some medication will give you at least a bit of support. And if you only got to walk 90% of the way on your own that's fair enough!

I used to isolate myself from people around me. People that are mostly willing to help me. But to get help I had to grab their reaching hand. And stick to the helping people as close as possible. Or at least reply to text messages. Though it costs a lot of effort and felt so wrong because all you wanted to do is being alone.

Sometimes it is better to be alone but in most cases expressing yourself to someone else is valuable and divides the heaviness of the depression.

Also search for professional help! There are a lot of good therapists and doctors that can give you appropriate therapy and medication or other support. But again

it's up to yourself to accept the help that is there. Also don't expect any treatment or anything else to happen overnight as your mental illness grew over years. It won't tear down in just a week. It will last weeks probably till you feel way more stable. But that's okay. It's worth it. It's worth the fight every day when you kick yourself out of bed and have to force you to fight for yourself to care about you and your body. To dress up, to eat properly, to go out for a walk and breathe fresh air and make your appointments

Fighting depression is about letting go of negative relationships, letting go of your job that was stressing you out, letting go of anything that keeps drowning you. Letting go all the negative stress.

Try to see your depression as your opportunity to grow. Find out what kind of job you would like to do, which people you like to have around you, what you would like to do in your leisure time, what would you like to eat, where do you want to live or if you want to practice mindfulness. You'll face these questions in your treatment and you will find answers too. You won't find them in the beginning. That's not the right time. In the beginning you have to get more stable, relax from the stress this illness created. But on your way when you get better and better you will be able to express what you want and what you need. And that's exactly what will relieve you from your illness someday.

From three months I continuously feel better. It's not that every day is good. I still struggle. Some days I still have to fight with myself. That's okay! I am not in my full health! I am severely ill.

I started working out several times per week, including yoga lessons. I eat 3 times a day almost every day. I take care of myself (taking shower every day, getting dressed the way I like, etc.) I go to meetups to try new stuff and get to know new people. I started a new job.

I am not completely out of the tunnel yet. But the light isn't far away anymore. I'll be there. And it will feel great. And so will you.

Trust me, I escaped this horrible nightmare, though I had absolutely zero hope for such a long time.

You can do it and you WILL.

All the best

Ben

Recovery Letters

From Beatrice

Dear You,

Life began to unravel spectacularly for me 4 years ago, with a divorce and relocating. It was especially difficult at my age (62 now) not being able to find a job, and the Government postponing my retirement for several more years.

In the past two years it's been one setback after another. I used to love reading, but I just can't concentrate. But by far the worst thing has been the loneliness, isolation and being unable to find any purpose. It's not being alone that's difficult, it's knowing that no-one cares.

I can only say: if you don't know what to do, do nothing. Just be, until you feel calmer. Drugs and alcohol will NOT help and there's not a man or woman under the sun, or situation, worth topping yourself for.

Remember your depression will lift. You won't always feel like this. And in no way is that a platitude, it's a fact. It will happen even if you do nothing about it whatsoever. You just got to hang

on. And I know it's hard, unbelievably hard. But it will pass, it really will.

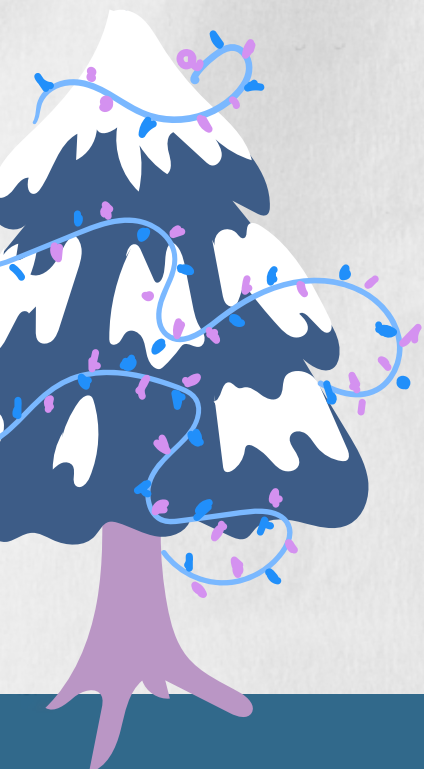
You are a worthwhile person. You're not stupid, useless, ugly, worthless. Dismiss that from your mind right now, it's simply not true. You're far stronger than you can ever imagine.

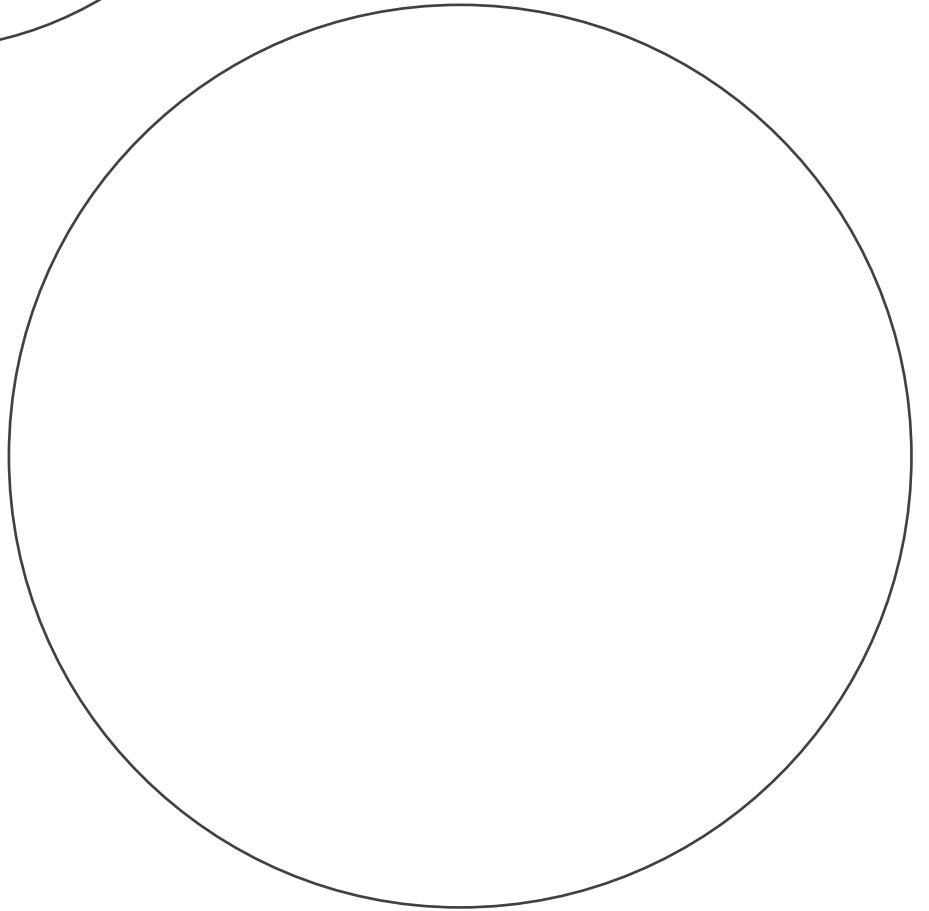
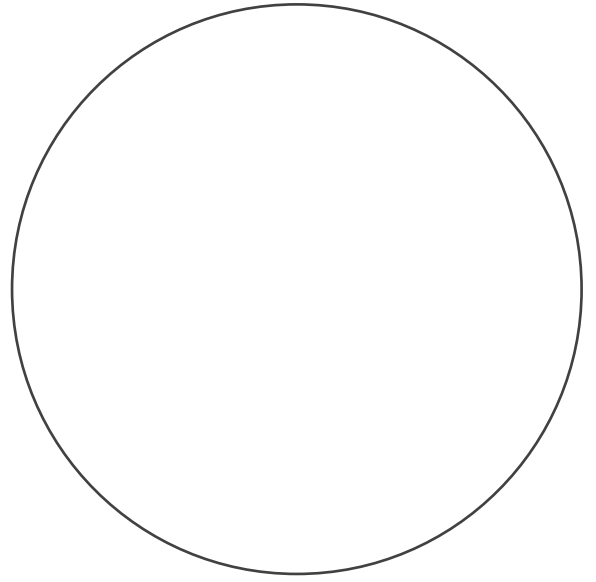
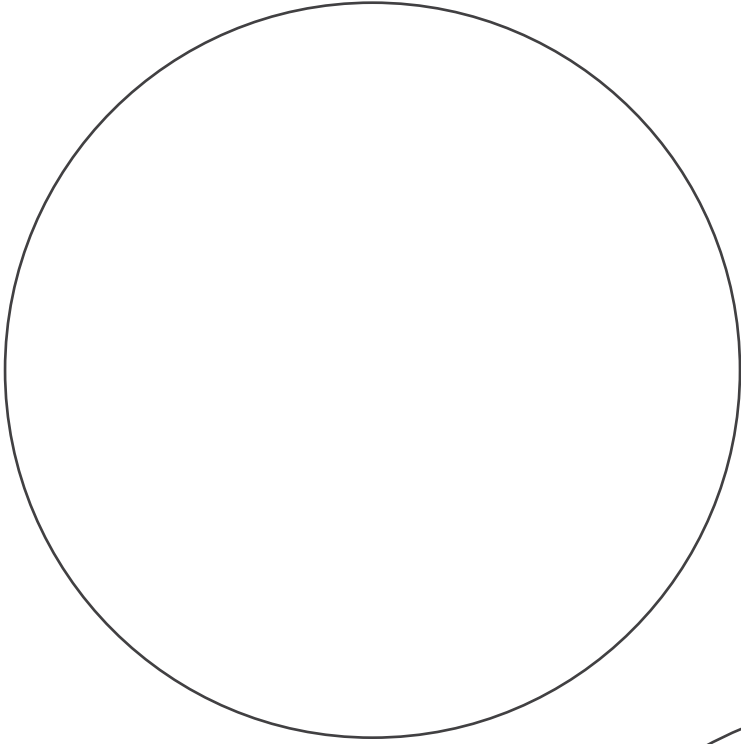
And it's perfectly OK if all you did today was survive.

Bear in mind that the black thoughts that assail you in the small hours aren't valid, in even the smallest degree.

Wishing you all the best.

Beatrice





Christmas quiz answers

1. 3pm
2. Donner and Blitzen (the names mean 'thunder' and 'lightning' in German)
3. John Lewis Christmas adverts
4. The Grinch (from *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* a children's book by Dr. Seuss)
5. 12 different flavours
6. Sugar plums
7. Santa Claus
8. Germany
9. The Snow Queen
10. Four

Feel Good Songs

List 5 'feel good' songs

Listen to them every day or share them with a friend or family member.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Try writing a song related to Christmas for example or a song about your feelings, or even your favorite food!

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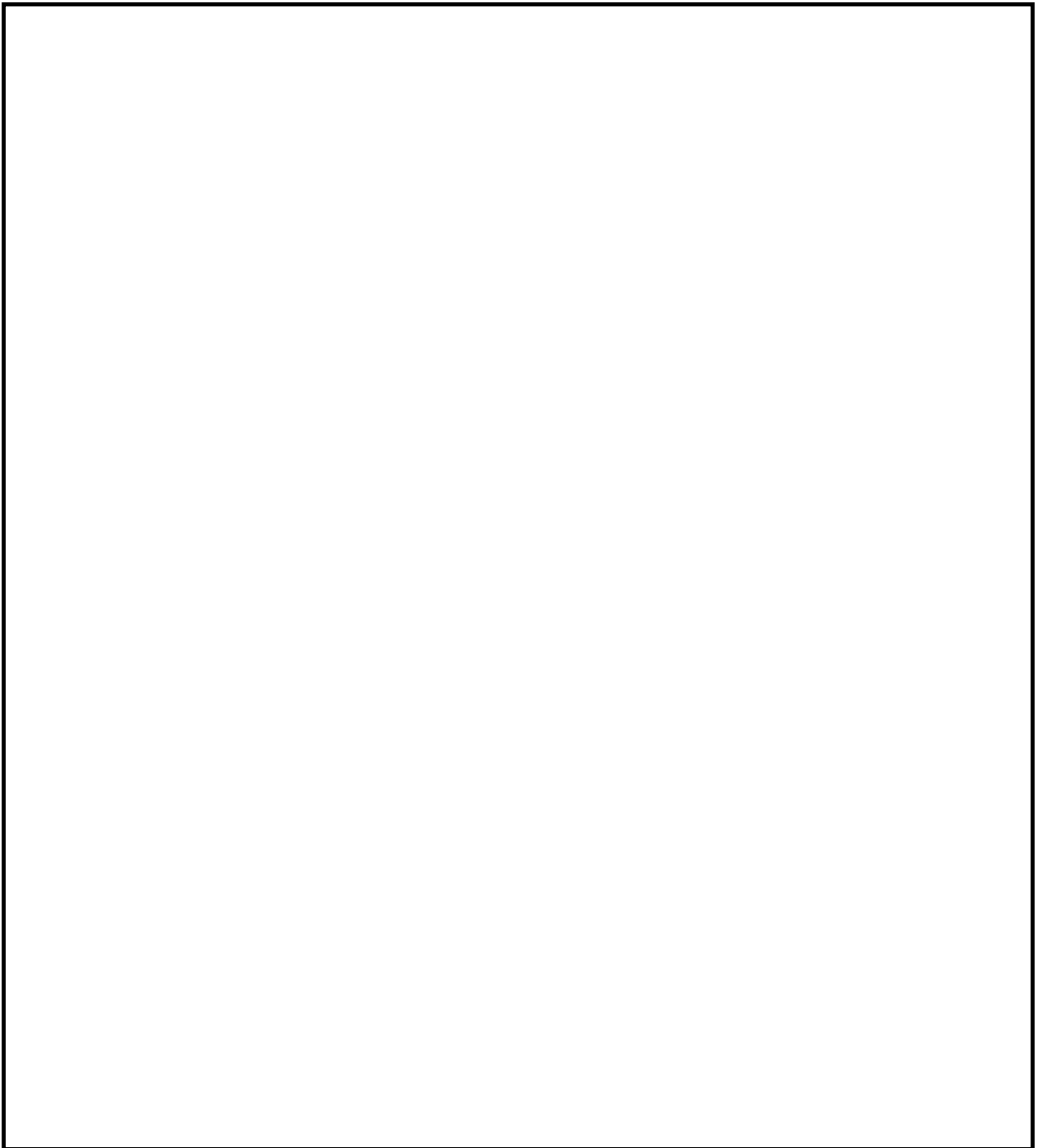
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Design your own activity book



Wordsearches

Self-Care Habits Wordsearch

N	V	I	N	S	I	V	R	H	T	L	A	E	H
I	A	N	G	M	G	S	P	M	I	E	L	V	T
T	A	L	K	I	N	G	O	E	M	G	I	O	G
Y	A	E	G	L	X	G	S	G	A	N	S	L	M
G	O	E	W	I	N	N	I	N	G	I	W	U	G
I	S	G	L	N	G	I	T	I	I	S	I	N	E
A	C	P	A	G	R	G	I	L	N	I	M	T	G
R	U	A	U	N	E	N	V	A	I	C	M	E	N
E	L	I	G	A	E	I	E	N	N	R	I	E	I
A	P	N	H	T	T	S	S	R	G	E	N	R	N
D	T	T	I	U	I	S	W	U	T	X	G	I	A
I	I	I	N	R	N	L	I	O	H	E	N	N	E
N	N	N	G	E	G	I	S	J	T	T	O	G	L
G	G	G	G	N	I	L	E	V	A	R	T	L	C

- JOURNALING
- SMILING
- TALKING
- POSITIVE
- TRAVELING
- SWIMMING
- PAINTING
- EXERCISING
- READING
- YOGA
- SINGING
- HEALTH
- CLEANING
- IMAGINING
- VOLUNTEERING
- GREETING
- SCULPTING
- LAUGHING
- NATURE



Christmas Wordsearch

E	N	R	D	W	R	E	A	T	H	N	I	S	B
M	E	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	Y	T	T	T
M	L	R	H	S	C	K	L	N	E	R	I	O	O
S	V	E	D	T	C	E	S	N	E	R	E	C	H
L	E	E	A	N	S	H	M	J	M	E	R	K	G
O	S	D	E	E	S	A	R	B	I	M	R	I	I
R	O	N	R	M	A	S	L	I	E	N	S	N	E
A	W	I	B	A	N	E	T	W	S	R	G	G	L
C	I	E	R	N	T	L	I	G	H	T	S	L	S
O	N	R	E	R	A	Y	N	R	A	C	M	I	E
C	T	I	G	O	E	L	R	E	T	R	E	A	A
R	E	C	N	T	I	L	R	H	R	E	N	E	S
R	R	O	I	N	R	O	N	S	E	S	D	S	L
I	Y	I	G	E	B	H	T	A	E	T	S	H	R

- WREATH
- JINGLE
- WINTER
- LIGHTS
- ORNAMENTS
- GINGERBREAD
- REINDEER
- DECEMBER
- TREE
- SANTA
- HOLLY
- ELVES
- MERRY
- SLEIGH
- CAROLS
- STOCKING
- CHRISTMAS
- PRESENTS



Wordsearches

Good Character Word Search

N	R	U	T	I	T	H	O	N	E	S	T	Y	R
O	E	I	I	E	C	A	R	I	N	G	N	R	A
T	P	E	R	S	E	V	E	R	A	N	C	E	S
I	E	N	T	C	E	P	S	E	R	H	I	U	S
E	A	S	C	I	R	D	P	E	E	S	I	O	I
R	E	S	P	O	N	S	I	B	I	L	I	T	Y
A	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	H	I	P	I	G	P
E	N	I	L	P	I	C	S	I	D	F	L	E	S
O	S	O	E	I	C	E	E	I	E	D	A	S	
E	E	R	P	N	C	S	S	E	N	R	I	A	F
P	E	S	E	R	E	D	R	P	E	F	E	P	C
P	I	H	S	N	E	Z	I	T	I	C	U	I	S
L	I	E	C	N	P	C	F	S	E	P	A	Y	H
A	S	I	O	E	G	A	R	U	O	C	P	P	E

- FAIRNESS
- RESPONSIBILITY
- CARING
- CITIZENSHIP
- SELF-DISCIPLINE
- RESPECT
- FRIENDSHIP
- HONESTY
- COURAGE
- PERSEVERANCE



Y Q S H G M C R E A T I V E N X E F E C V X E D
 E R U A X B M O H D A Y O Y E W N C X S F R N E
 E X O P J O C H E E R F U L P H E O Q U O G T L
 R T E P C L M Z N C P Q V L O N R N U O E L H I
 F E G Y M D Z N F A I T H F U L G F I L C O U G
 V I A O P A S S I O N A T E X O I I S E P W S H
 E U R U J E L B A T R O F M O C Z D I V G I I T
 C Q U D K U W E M P O W E R E D E E T R P N A F
 P A O E V I T P E C E R T S X L D N E A R G S U
 A R C P D N I K E L B A V O L U U T Q M O B T L
 S M E B N I M A G I C A L T Y E H F S R U O I Y
 H U A C R A E L C F O C U S E D Y O E L D K C R
 O M O Z I O P T I M I S T I C P I Q U C Q J I A
 P M M I I O D E T I C X E J O N N F D R A M Z N
 E T A K C N U Y I C V Q Q S S B Y E E X S E I I
 F E C G Z A G S L A K K I P Y A N S Z J U Y P D
 U V P K N L R U R L Y T I S L E I G S C O K M R
 L I Z O S I F G O M I R A P T L N F M R L S F O
 C S W W W Y F W Q V E E I H I I E A A D U I G A
 E I T K O E N I E D D L G E V Y H D N A B R L R
 O C B J S G R U C L O I N O V P I M O X A F L T
 S E T V N B A F F E L T L T W A R Y B Y F L A X
 H D Y N A M I C U N N K I T N A I L L I R B U E
 E M O S E W A R E L B T O T A P P R E C I A T E

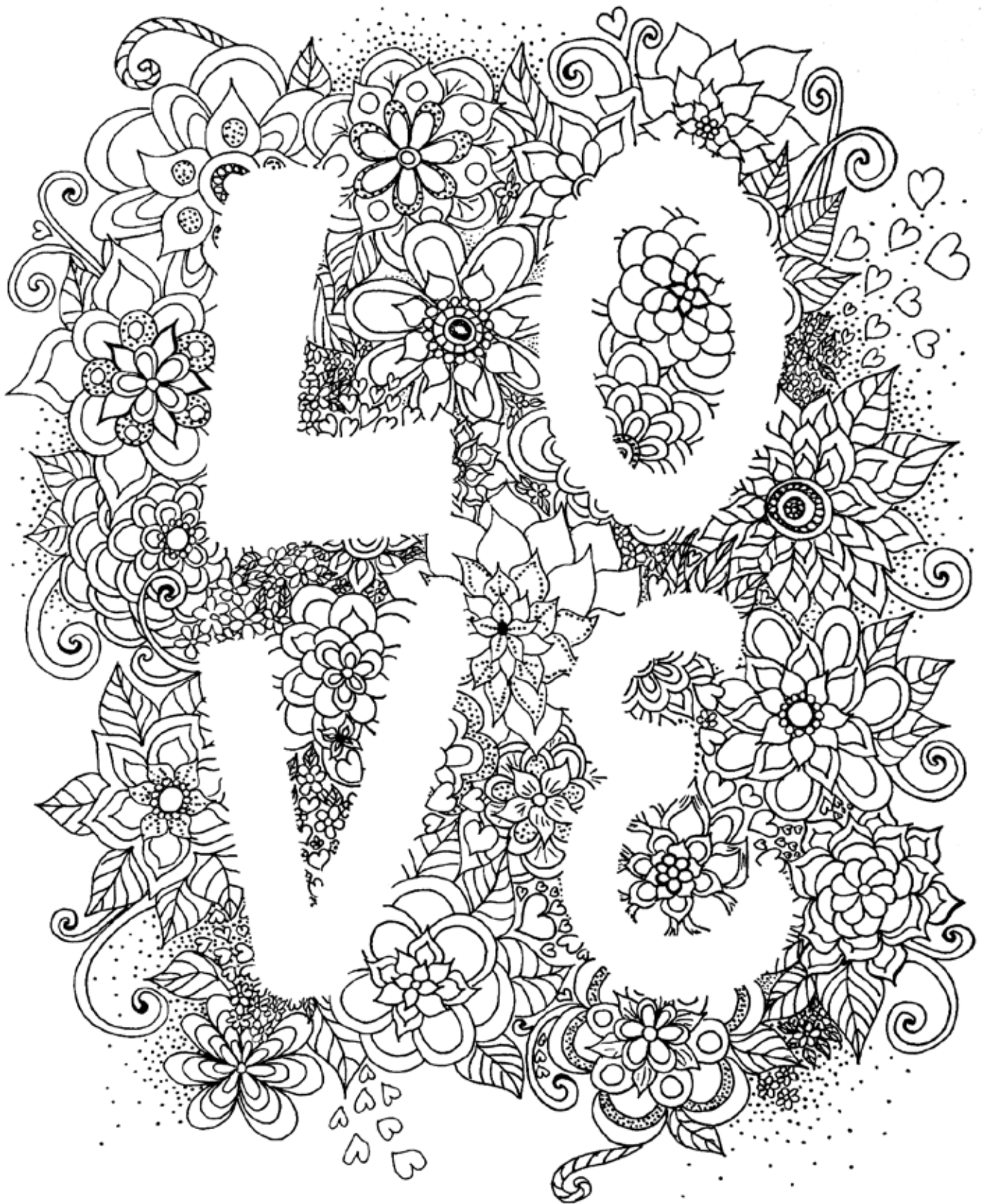
- RESILIENT
- RECEPTIVE
- RADIANT
- QUIET
- PROUD
- PRECIOUS
- POWERFUL
- POSITIVE
- PLAYFUL
- PEACEFUL
- PASSIONATE
- OPTIMISTIC
- OPEN
- NOBLE
- MARVELOUS
- MAGNIFICENT
- MAGICAL
- LOVABLE
- LOVING
- KIND
- JOYFUL
- JAZZED
- INSPIRED
- FAITHFUL
- HOPEFUL
- HAPPY
- GRACIOUS
- GLOWING
- FUN
- FRISKY
- FREE
- FOCUSED
- FABULOUS
- EXTRAORDINARY
- EXQUISITE
- EXCITED
- ENTHUSIASTIC
- ENLIGHTENED
- ENERGIZED
- EMPOWERED
- EASY
- DYNAMIC
- DELIGHTFUL
- DECISIVE
- CREATIVE
- COURAGEOUS
- CONFIDENT
- COMFORTABLE
- CLEAR
- CHEERFUL
- CALM
- BRILLIANT
- BOLD
- AWESOME
- APPRECIATE
- AMAZING

Colouring-in sheet



KS 2015

Colouring-in sheet



Contacts

Kooth

Visit <https://www.kooth.com/>

Beam

Visit <https://shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/mental-and-emotional-health-and-wellbeing-service/beam/>

Healios

Visit <https://www.healios.org.uk/>

Samaritans

Visit <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Young Minds

Visit <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Papyrus

www.papyrus-uk.org/papyrus-hopelineuk/
A helpline for people who are feeling suicidal.
Open 9am – 12am every day inc Christmas day.

