



Peer  
Education  
Project



Mental Health  
Foundation



A guide for caregivers

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# Connecting with nature is not just about the amount of time we spend outdoors; it is also about building a relationship with nature by noticing and becoming sensitive to what is around us.

Research tells us that there are many mental health benefits to connecting with nature, such as:

- Feeling happier.
- Feeling less stressed or angry.
- Having more and better-quality sleep.
- Feeling less worried.
- Being more environmentally aware and engaged.
- Increasing self-esteem.
- Increasing self-confidence.
- Improving attention and concentration.
- Encouraging participation in physical activities.
- Increasing social contact with other people and animals.



Nature is all around us. Building our connections with nature is finding what works for you, in the environment you are in.

**This guide provides tips and resources on how to support yourself as a caregiver, as well as your child or young person, to show kindness to yourselves and others.**



# Supporting yourself to connect with nature



## Resources to support yourself

### Mental Health Foundation resources

Our vision at the [Mental Health Foundation](#) is for a world with good mental health for all. With prevention at the heart of what we do, we aim to find and address the sources of mental health problems so that people and communities can thrive.

#### [Tips on looking after your mental health](#)

Read these tips on how to look after your mental health.

#### [Tips on how to look after your mental health using mindfulness](#)

Read these tips on how to look after your mental health using mindfulness.

#### [Thriving with nature guide](#)

Read this guide, developed by WWF and the Mental Health Foundation, exploring the link between nature and mental health, and activities that you can use to engage with nature.

#### [Tips on connecting with nature to improve your mental health](#)

Read these tips on connecting with nature to improve your mental health.

#### [How sleep and green space can help your mental health podcast](#)

Listen to this podcast exploring the benefits of sleep and green space to mental health.

#### [A personal story on connecting with nature](#)

Read this blog by television presenter and passionate outdoor campaigner Julia Bradbury, on how nature can lift her spirit and improve her wellbeing.

### Other resources

#### [A meditation to appreciate nature](#)

Listen to this mini-meditation by Headspace exploring the world around you and showing appreciation of nature.

#### [The mental health benefits of nature video](#)

Watch this video summarising five ways to connect with nature for your mental health.

#### [Call of the wild podcasts](#)

Listen to these podcasts explaining how we all have a role to play in protecting the natural environment.



# Support services for adults

## Samaritans

Samaritans are open 24/7 for anyone who needs to talk.

Call: **116 123** (free)

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Post: Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS

The Samaritans Self-Help app is a tool to track how you're feeling and receive tips on things you can do to look after yourself.

Samaritans also have a Welsh Language Line on **0808 164 0123** (7pm–11pm every day).

## Hub of Hope

Hub of Hope is a UK-wide mental health service database, allowing you to search for local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support. You can filter results to find specific kinds of support.

## Mind

Mind offers advice, support and information to people experiencing mental health difficulties, and their family and friends.

InfoLine: **0300 123 3393**

Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm (except bank holidays).

Email [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

## Side by Side

Side by Side, hosted by Mind, is an online community where you can listen, share and be heard. The online community is moderated to keep the community safe and supportive.

## Young Minds

Young Minds provides a parent helpline for parents and caregivers seeking detailed advice, emotional support and signposting about a child or young person up to the age of 25.

Call: **0808 802 5544** (free), available Monday – Friday, 9:30am - 4pm.

Webchat: available Monday – Friday, 9:30am - 4pm.



# Supporting your child or young person to connect with nature

## MHF Tips for Young People on Connecting with Nature

Share these top tip postcards, written by the Mental Health Foundation, to support your child or young person to connect with nature for their mental health.

## Here are tips on how you can support your child or young person to connect with nature:

### Inspire curiosity.

Being curious yourself can inspire your child or young person to question and take notice of their surroundings.

If you go out for a walk together or even if you are just looking out your window, comment on the nature you see. Ask your child or young person questions and encourage them to ask you questions too!

### Create your own nature safari

Organise a safari to explore your garden or other outdoor spaces, learning all about the nature around you.

### Turn to books and other resources.

There are plenty of books and online resources available to inspire you and your child or young person to connect with nature.

### Fascinating facts

Learn facts together about different species from across the world, and our planet.

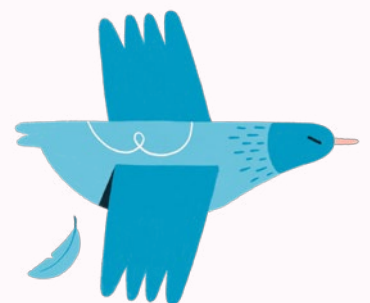
### Put technology on hold and get outside.

It can be difficult to switch off from our phones and other technology, but it's important for us all to have time away from our screens.

Try to disconnect from your own devices at points during the day, especially when you are exploring your local area or nature spots and encourage your child or young person to do the same.

### Get out with the kids

Use this database to find your next family-friendly outdoor adventure.



## Empower their ideas.

Give your child or young person the space and encouragement to explore their ideas and interests. It's important for them to find out what they enjoy and how they like to connect with nature.

## Get creative.

Nature inspires many people to be creative, be it through painting, drawing, photography or writing. Why not encourage your child or young person to explore their creative side?

### Nature-based crafts

Try these fun 'make-it' activities, encouraging your child or young person to explore their connection with nature.

## Connect with others.

Nature can be enjoyed with others. Encourage your child or young person to think about activities they could plan with others like going for a walk with a friend, playing football, having a picnic outside or joining a community gardening group.

## Nurture nature.

Teach your child or young person to look after the nature around them, and think about ways they can protect it, both closer to home and on a wider scale.

Even something as simple as growing herbs at home, will help your child or young person to connect their actions to positive effects, such as watering plants helps them grow.

Activities focused on looking after the natural environment can help your child or young person build a connection with nature and give them a sense of purpose and responsibility.

## Slow down and be mindful.

Sometimes we forget to slow down and appreciate the nature around us. We can miss the wonders that nature offers by simply not paying attention or giving ourselves the time to look.

Mindfulness is the skill of paying attention to what's happening in your mind and body right now, without judgement. It can help focus our attention on the nature around us, and enjoy being in that moment. Mindfulness is a skill that needs to be practised.

Try and encourage your child or young person to practise being in the moment and use all of their senses to engage with the natural world around them.

### A to Z of mindfulness in nature

Use this A to Z of mindfulness nature activities to support your child or young person to practise being in the moment and engage with the nature around them.



# Support services for young people

## The Mix

The Mix offers online information as well as helpline support to under-25s about anything that's troubling them.

Email: via their [online contact form](#)

Call: **0808 808 4994** (free)

Telephone services available 4pm – 11pm everyday.

Text: **THEMIX to 85258**

The text service is free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK.

One-to-one chat: Free [1-2-1 webchat service](#)

The webchat is available 4pm – 11pm, Monday to Saturday.

## Childline

A support service for anyone under 19 in need of support.

Call: **08001111** (free)

Telephone services available 24-hours a day, every day.

Young people can [sign up](#) for a free Childline locker (real name or email address not needed) to use Childline's free [1-2-1 counsellor chat](#) and email support service.

## Shout

A support text service, available 24-hours a day, every day.

Text: **SHOUT to 85258**



# GO RUN







[mentalhealth.org.uk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

 [Mental Health Foundation](https://www.facebook.com/MentalHealthFoundation)

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