



# MANAGING MELTDOWNS

## - For Parents

# MELTDOWNS

- What can these look like?
- What behaviours are exhibited?
- How can they be managed?
- What strategies are available?

# CAUSES OF MELTDOWNS

Sudden change or novel situations



Overwhelming stimulation

Transitions

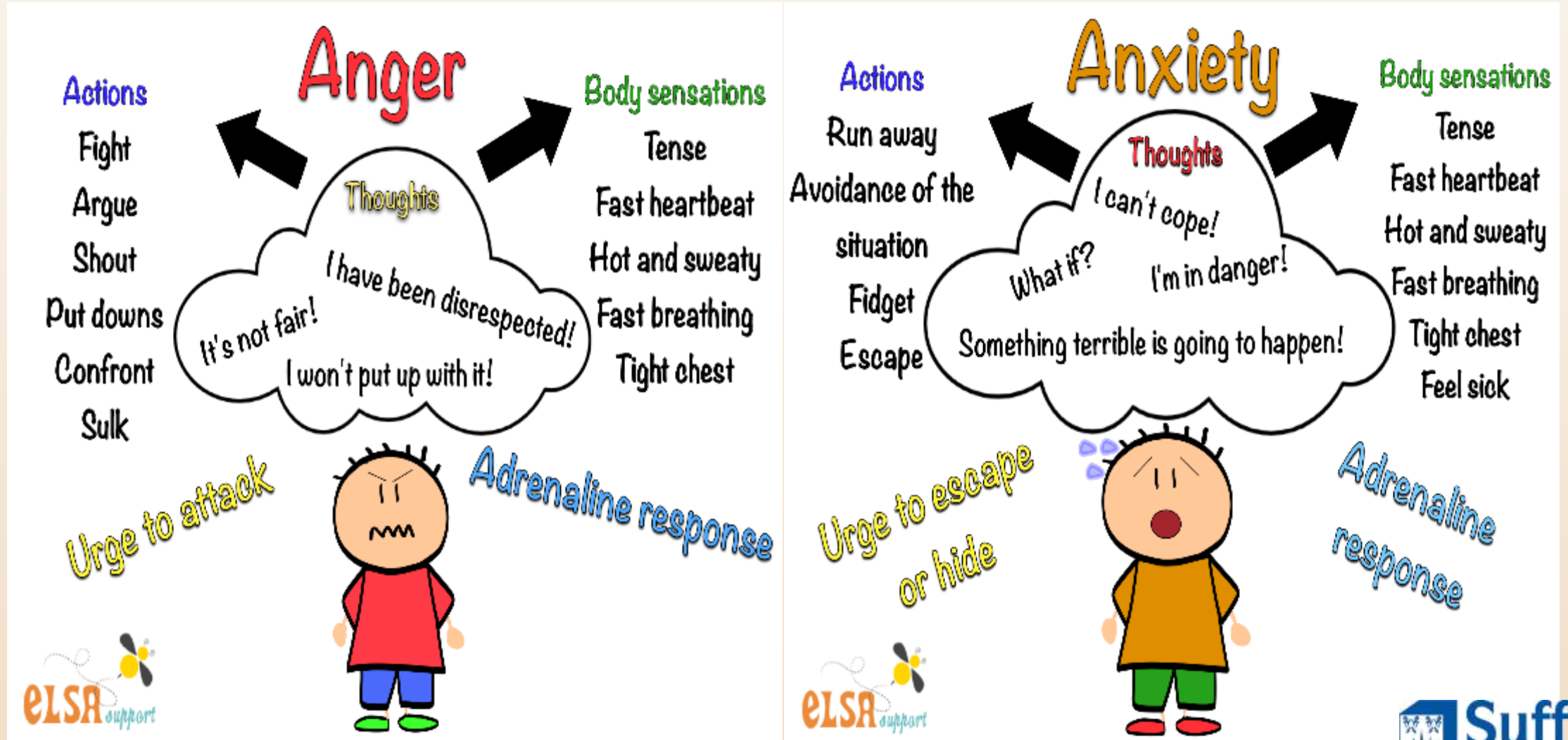
Confusion

Poor emotional management



Sensory overload

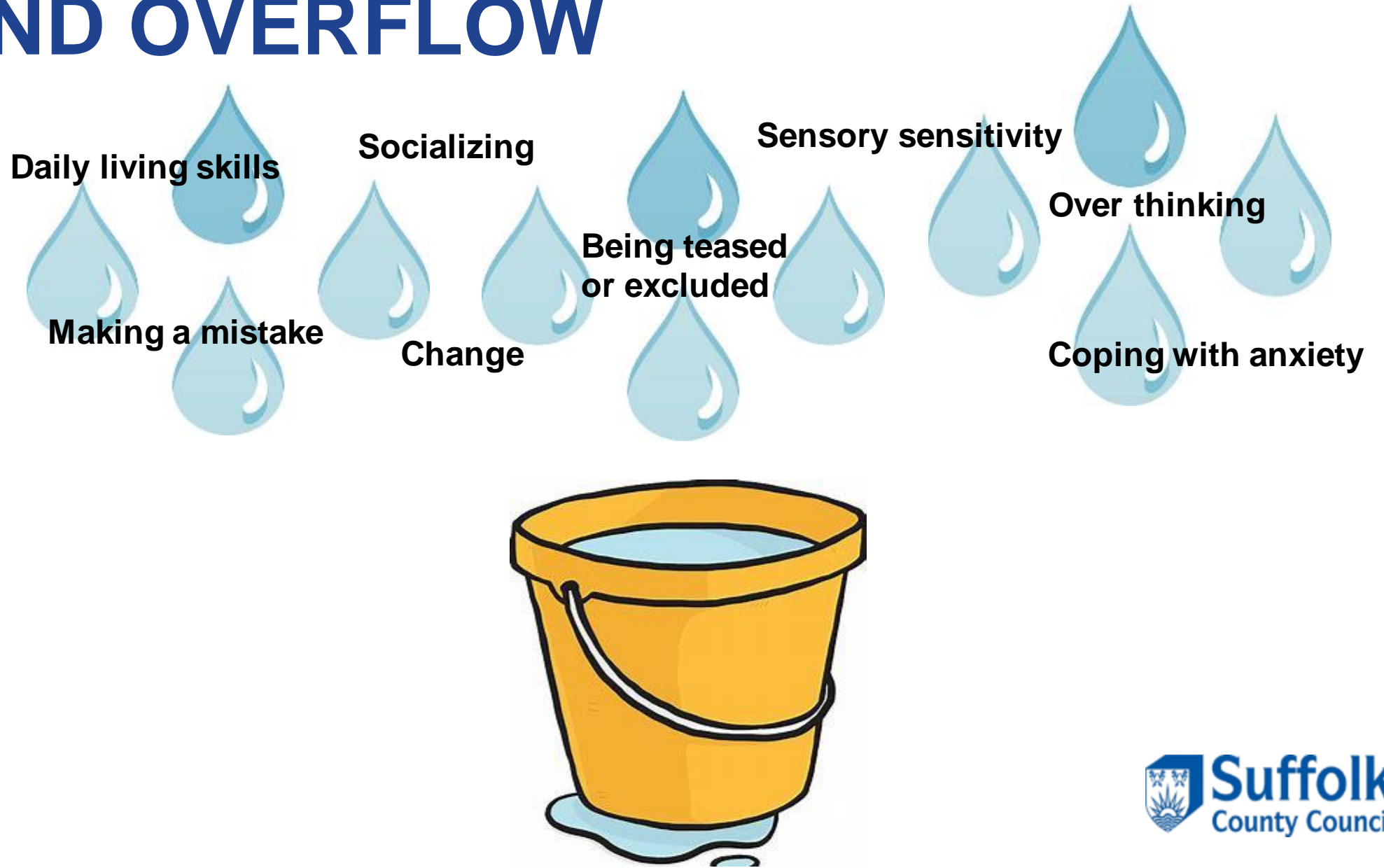
# BEHAVIOUR RESPONSES



# WHAT MAKES OUR STRESS BUCKET FILL AND OVERFLOW

The Stress Bucket is a helpful way to think about how we can try to control the build-up of stress and emotions in our lives.

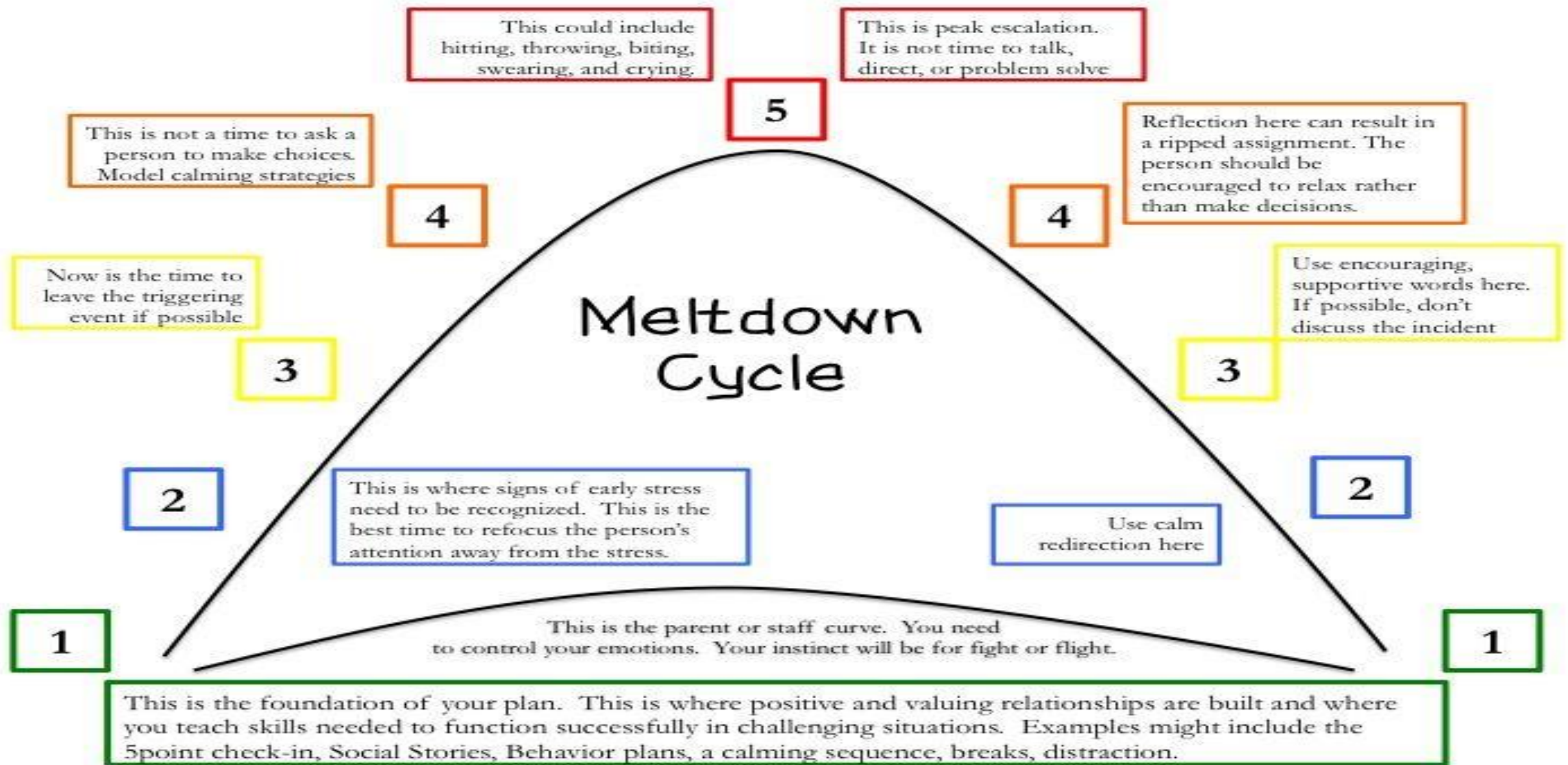
**What fills your bucket? Too much input and it will overflow**



# HOW TO EMPTY OUR STRESS BUCKET







Meltdowns can be a reaction to a build-up of stresses or severe stress.  
This stress may not be obvious to you as a parent.

## DURING A MELTDOWN

### BEFORE A MELTDOWN

- show you understand and recognise their feelings
  - Use distraction techniques
  - Remain calm
- Identify triggers - Take note of when meltdowns occur and look for patterns – activities, time, food/ drink intake

- Use minimal words
- Avoid physical contact
- Have a plan – calming strategies, who will support, who is on standby to assist
- Choice board – this or this
  - Keep safe – move people and objects which may cause harm to themselves or others

### AFTER A MELTDOWN

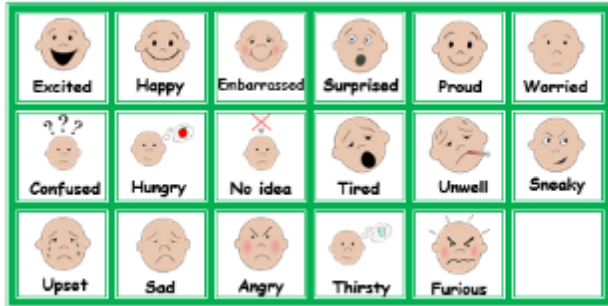
- Extended periods of time to calm are needed
- There may be intense feelings of shame, remorse and humiliation
- Continue to be safe, calm affirmative, and empathic
- Reflect – who, where, what, why?
- Plan future strategies



How do you feel today?

012345678910

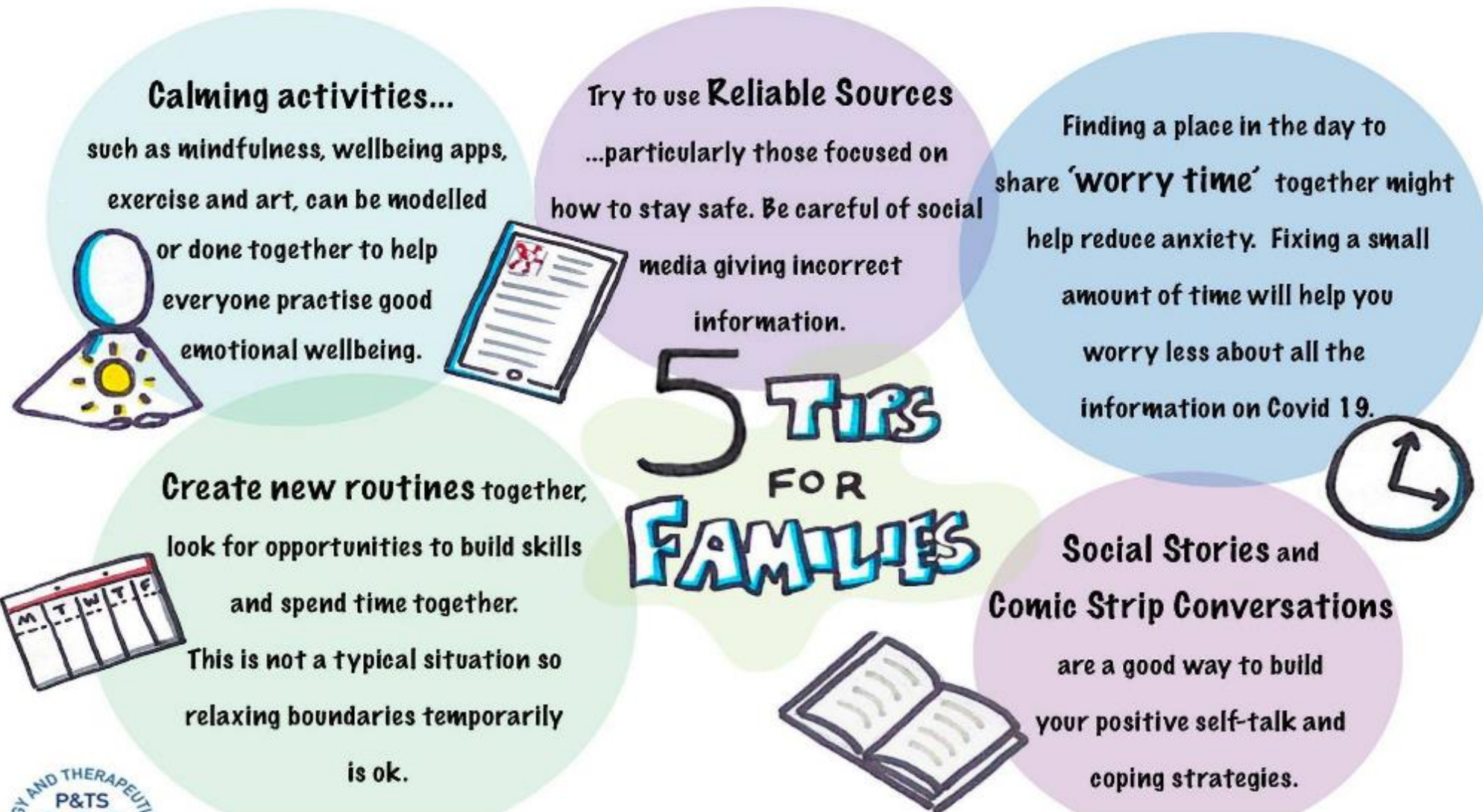
The higher the number the stronger the feeling



# STRATEGIES TO MANAGE BEHAVIOUR

- Feelings lines
- Using a place to calm
- Break system
- Time warnings
- First/Then Now/Next
- Reward positive behaviour
- Focus on what you want the child to do rather than what you want them to stop doing
- Remain calm

# IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES





## Exercise Regularly Together

This releases natural feel good chemicals that can:

- reduce stress and anxiety
- help you to sleep better
- improve self-image



## Listening to Music

Try playing slow-paced instrumental music in the home as it can:

- lower blood pressure and heart rate
- reduce stress hormones



## Deep Breathing

Sit comfortably, try to notice:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you can feel
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 deep breath



## Gratitude Journal

Try keeping a family gratitude journal.

Writing down something you are grateful for together each day can help to relieve stress by focusing on and sharing positives.

**5 TIPS FOR FAMILIES**



## Reduce Caffeine

High quantities of caffeine can increase stress. If you notice it is making you feel restless, cut back. Less caffeine may also help you to sleep better.



.... to help reduce stress and anxiety for young people....



## Clear Facts

Ask them what they are actually worried about, be honest but reassuring, give child friendly facts and answer their questions.

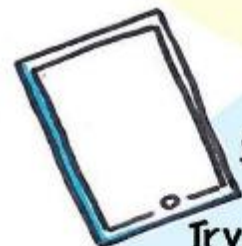
## Lots of Emotions

Listen to each other's feelings and explain that we are all experiencing lots of different emotions and that's ok.

**It's OK...**

## Social Story

Create social stories using your child's calming ideas to manage changes e.g. 'washing your hands', 'what to do if you feel scared', 'why we have to stay at home'.



## Screen Time Boundaries

Try to be flexible and clear about any changes to screen time. We use our screens to stay connected, but let your child know it is just for now, whilst we can't meet other people.

# 5 TIPS FOR FAMILIES



## Focus on the Positives

This is an opportunity to spend more time together, develop your special interests and channel your skills.



.... to help reduce stress and anxiety for children with autism....



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Devise an exercise routine using funky moves

Physical exercise supports good mental health, relieves stress and increases concentration.

Gardening  
Sow some seeds.  
Do some weeding  
or tidy your outdoor space.  
Look for bugs!  
Water your house plants



<https://www.goodtoknow.co.uk/family/things-to-do/gardening/gardening-ideas-activities-kids-539163>



<https://www.verywellfamily.com/brain-breaks-for-busy-kids-1257211>



<https://app.gonoodle.com/categories/stretch>

Bricks2learn have created daily You Tube videos on different themes to encourage building

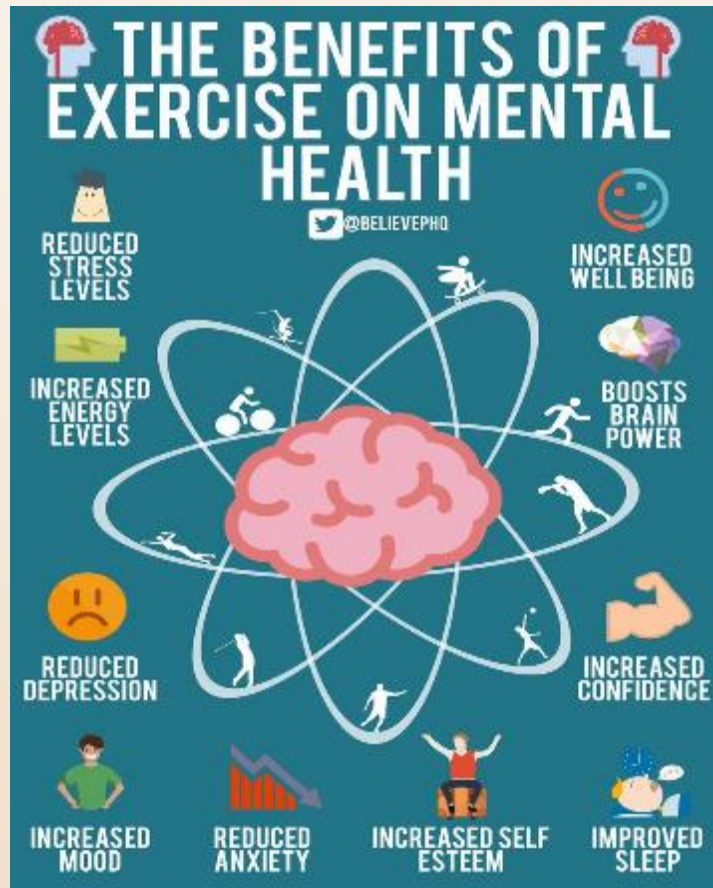


<https://www.bricks2learn.com/youtube>



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Keep Moving Suffolk is a local campaign to keep people active in and around their own homes



Get set for PE, has a number of indoor and outdoor activities to keep all ages busy

Resource Bank for Active Families



<https://www.getset4pe.co.uk/ResourceBank/ResourceCategory/1002>

STARJUMPS P.E WITH  
CHALLENGE JOE WICKS  
SKIPPING  
CYCLING GARDENING  
10 MINUTE  
CARDIO SQUATS  
DANCE GYM FREE  
WORKOUTS  
TENNIS BURPEES  
AT HOME YOGA

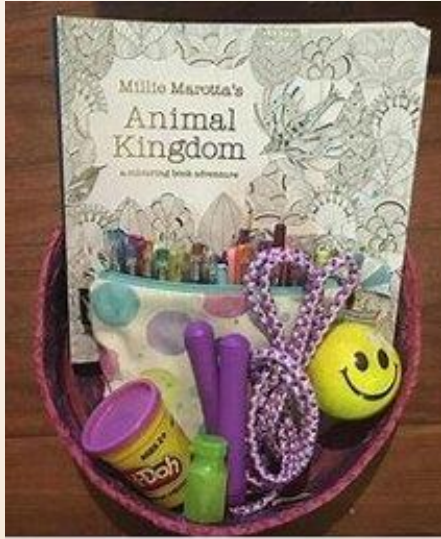
[www.keepmovingsuffolk.com](http://www.keepmovingsuffolk.com)

Go on a sensory walk around your house or garden. What can you see, hear, smell and feel? Printable resources available

## INDOOR SCAVENGER HUNT

- Find a Fork.
- Find something that is red.
- Find a tissue box.
- Find 3 things that have wheels.
- Find an orange crayon.
- Find something that is very soft.
- Find a band-aid.
- Find a key.
- Find 2 socks that match.
- Find something round.
- Find a sticker.
- Find a rubber band.
- Find a pair of glasses.
- Find an envelope.

# MINDFULNESS AND RELAXATION



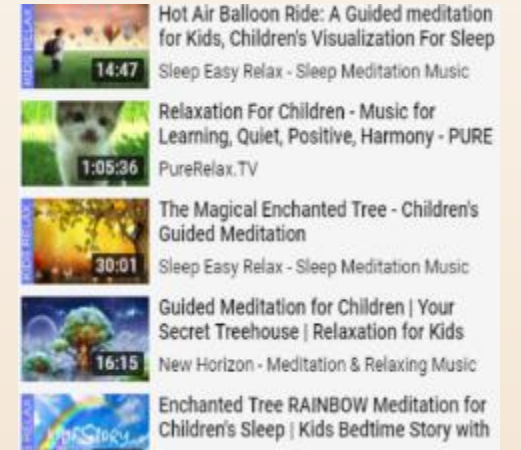
Create a calm box to support emotional regulation



<https://inclusiveteach.com/>



Relax with a story or music



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R05SOqmW5PI&list=RDQMfDA-7\\_xw5JE&index=13](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R05SOqmW5PI&list=RDQMfDA-7_xw5JE&index=13)



<https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga/playlists>

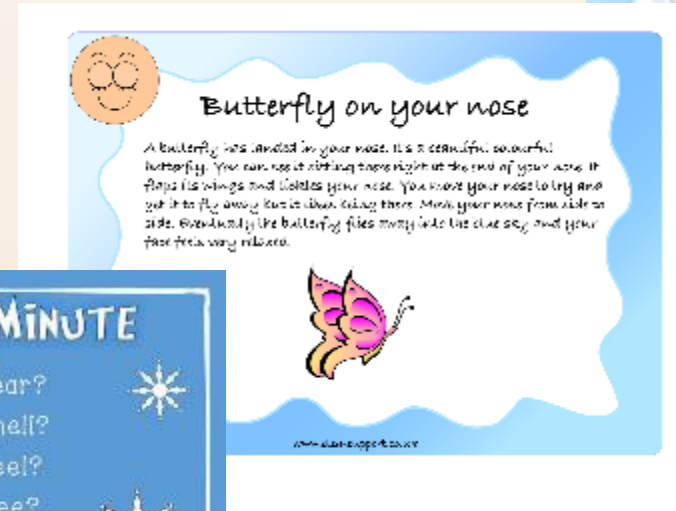


# MINDFULNESS AND RELAXATION

Taking some time off for **relaxation** is vital to help your **mind** and body switch off from pressures. (youndminds)



Try some meditation activities



<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/relaxationcalming-activities-children/>

<https://www.moodcafe.co.uk/media/8374/Relaxleaflet.pdf>



<https://biglifejournal.com>

# FEELINGS

There are many resources that can support the communication of feelings

Big feelings come and go, is a story about flight, fight, freeze responses. It supports self-regulation



[https://protectchildren.ca/pdfs/C3P\\_BigFeelingsComeAndGo\\_storybook\\_en.pdf](https://protectchildren.ca/pdfs/C3P_BigFeelingsComeAndGo_storybook_en.pdf)

Create opportunities to Communicate with each other



<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/>



# FEELINGS

## HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE SCALE

Resources to support recognising, expressing and reacting to different feelings and emotions



Use a visual reminder to understand emotions

My Control Scale			
Rating	Looks like	Feels like	I can try to
5	Hitting, kicking	My head will explode	Go to my room
4	Screaming and Swearing	Nervous	Go for a walk
3	Quiet, sometimes rude talk	Bad mood, grumpy	Take deep breaths
2	Regular kid!	Good	Stay that way!
1	Playing, having a great time	A million bucks!	Enjoy!

My Problem Scale		
Rating	Type of Problem	Possible Responses
5	Catastrophe <i>Brother gets hurt</i>	Might cry and yell, need immediate adult help
4	Big Problem <i>I have no where to sit at lunch</i>	Take a few deep breaths. Say "I can get help with this."
3	Medium Problem <i>Lost Homework</i>	Take a break Say "I can get through this."
2	Little Problem (Annoyance) <i>Missing Lego</i>	Take a few breaths Say "I can work it out"
1	Glitch <i>Friend is late coming over</i>	Say "Oh well", It's OK"



5 point scales are a simple and effective way to communicate. It supports the understanding of responses and feelings to particular behaviours in non-judgemental language.





CISS are supporting parents during these unprecedented times:  
Providing virtual advice and guidance for children with communication and/or social, emotional and mental health needs.  
Contact Tel: 01473 264717 or email: [cissparentsupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:cissparentsupport@suffolk.gov.uk)  
Please note that this telephone line will only be answered between the hours of 9am and 3pm and advice will not be given during the call, but questions passed on, which will then be answered by the most relevant CISS member of staff.

# USEFUL INFORMATION

**Suffolk info link** - an online directory of community information; local clubs, societies, community and voluntary organisations, childcare providers and services

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/home.page>

Helpline: 01473 265210

**Activities Unlimited** - provides short breaks and leisure activities to disabled children aged 0-25 in Suffolk

<https://www.access-unlimited.co.uk/activitiesunlimited>

Telephone number: 01473 260026

**National Autistic Society** - UK's leading charity for autistic people and their families

<https://www.autism.org.uk>

Helpline: 07795 238778

**Suffolk Parent Carer Network:** SPCN is a network of parents and carers of children with additional needs and/or disabilities. They are offering support to Suffolk parents online and over the phone, have a support page <<https://spcn.org.uk/parent-carer-support/>> and are sending out free Family Support boxes to families of children with additional needs up to the age of 25.

Call: 07341 126455

Visit: [www.spcn.org.uk](http://www.spcn.org.uk)

Email: [admin@spcn.org.uk](mailto:admin@spcn.org.uk)

**Anna Freud National centre** - for children and families - a child mental health and treatment centre

<https://www.annafreud.org>

Helpline: 0207 7942313

**Booklet of mental health resources for children, young people and families**

[https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/suffolk/enterprise/files/2020-04-09\\_mental\\_health\\_resources\\_v3.pdf](https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/suffolk/enterprise/files/2020-04-09_mental_health_resources_v3.pdf)

# USEFUL INFORMATION



Leading the fight for a future where all young minds are supported and empowered whatever the challenges. Working to improve the emotional health and well being of children and young people in the UK.

<https://youngminds.org.uk>

Parent helpline: 0808 8025544



Mind empowers people to understand their condition and the choices available to them, through an info line which offers callers confidential help.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Infoline: 0300 123 3393 Mon – Fri 9am 6pm Text: 86463

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



SENDIASS provide unbiased information and advice about the local authority's policies and procedures and about the policy and practice in local schools and other settings.

Helpline: 01473 265210

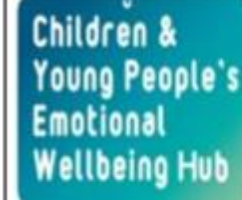
<https://www.suffolksendiass.co.uk>



Support for **parents/carers PACT** offer free, confidential support, including information and advice to any adult worried about the emotions, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person. We offer a safe environment to support with no judgement.

<https://www.parentsandcarerstgether.co.uk>

Contact Support line: (07856) 038799



A consultation helpline for emotional wellbeing and mental health issues relating to children and young people.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/suffolk-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-wellbeing-hub/> Call 0345 600 2090, available Monday to Friday, 8am to 7:30pm.



Offers help and support to improve wellbeing and manage stress, low mood and anxiety. They aim to reduce the onset of mental health problems, prevent deterioration and promote recovery by offering a range of flexible services.

<https://www.wellbeingnands.co.uk>

Non-emergency contact number 0300 123 1503 9am-5pm



Shout is a 24/7 UK crisis text service available for times when people feel they need immediate support.

[www.giveushout.org](http://www.giveushout.org)

Text: 85258

# USEFUL INFORMATION

## Useful Apps

Dragon in the Attic (8-12 years) - <http://dragon.me/play>

For me - <http://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/for-me/>

Headspace - [www.headspace.com](http://www.headspace.com)

Moodometer <http://myhealthapps.net/app/details/363/moodometer>

Moodpanda - [www.moodpanda.com](http://www.moodpanda.com)

Moodscope (14 years +) - [www.moodscope.com](http://www.moodscope.com)

Smiling Mind - <http://smilingmind.com.au/>

Get self-help - [www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)

Mindshift <https://www.anxietybc.com/resources/mindshift-app>

Positive penguins (8-12 years) - <http://positivepenguins.com/>

SAM - <http://sam-app.org.uk/>

Rise up recovery warriors - <https://www.recoverywarriors.com/app/>

Suffolk  
Family Carers  
Living Fuller Lives

## YOUNG CARERS INFORMATION & ADVICE

FUNDED BY SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

PHONE, EMAIL, ONLINE CHAT  
[WWW.SUFFOLKFAMILYCARERS.ORG](http://WWW.SUFFOLKFAMILYCARERS.ORG)

**01473 835477**

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, YOUNG CARER NEEDS  
ASSESSMENTS, ONLINE WORKSHOPS, SUPPORT AT  
SCHOOL, SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES AND MUCH MORE



# USEFUL INFORMATION

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE:

### Organisations offering activities and support

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/results.page?coronavirushelp=2>

### For local information go to Coronavirus Information

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advice.page?id=VbBYkG02Gz4>

Home But Not Alone phone line: 0800 876 6926,

or go to **Community Action Suffolk**

<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/> to see how local groups can help isolated people.



HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY?

However you are feeling, you are not alone and there is someone who will listen and help you.

**The Source**  
A website of information, advice and support for **young people in Suffolk**  
  
[www.thesource.me.uk/health](http://www.thesource.me.uk/health)

**ChatHealth**  
Text a school nurse for confidential help.  
 **07507 333356**  
Available Mon- Fri, 9am - 4:30pm, excluding bank holidays  


**Live 1-1 chat**  
Free, safe, anonymous chat when you need it  
 **kooth.com**  
Available Monday - Friday 12pm - 10pm  
Saturday - Sunday 6pm - 10pm  
  
#TOILETDOOR

**The Emotional Wellbeing Hub**  
Get support if you or your friends are worried about an emotional wellbeing issue online or by phone.  
 **0345 600 2090**  
Available Monday to Friday, 8am to 7:30pm  
[www.thesource.me.uk/hub](http://www.thesource.me.uk/hub)