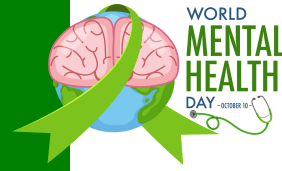


# The Three Pillars of Crisis Response: Supporting Student Mental Health



*Staying Calm & Connected When Things Go Wrong*

## Recognise the Signs (Observe & Listen)

### Changes in Behaviour:

- Withdrawal (less engaged, quieter)
- Increased irritability or anger
- Restlessness, fidgeting
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sudden drop in schoolwork
- Regression (e.g., clinginess, bedwetting in younger children)
- Changes in eating/sleeping patterns (reported by parents)
- Increased physical complaints (headaches, stomach aches)

### Emotional Clues:

- Persistent sadness or tearfulness
- Excessive worry or fear
- Loss of interest in activities
- Expressions of hopelessness
- Difficulty regulating emotions (e.g., sudden outbursts)
- Anxiety about returning to school or specific situations



**Remember: Look for significant changes from their usual self. Everyone reacts differently; there's no "right" way to feel.**

## Respond with Calm & Care (Connect & Reassure)

### Your Presence is Powerful:

- Listen Actively: Give them your full attention. Let them talk, don't interrupt.
- Validate Feelings: "It sounds like you're feeling really worried right now, and that's okay."
- Offer Reassurance: "We are here for you. You are safe." (Focus on what you can control).
- Maintain Routine: Where possible, consistent routines provide comfort and predictability.
- Be Patient: Healing takes time. Avoid pressuring them to "get over it."
- Encourage Expression: Gentle prompts like "How are you feeling today?" or "Tell me more about what's on your mind."

### Practical Support:

- Offer quiet spaces or a brief break if overwhelmed.
- Encourage grounding techniques (e.g., deep breaths, naming 5 things they can see).
- Connect with parents/guardians for a holistic picture.

## Refer & Review (Escalate & Follow Up)

### When to Act Further:

- If distress is severe or prolonged.
- If symptoms significantly impact daily functioning (learning, friendships).
- If you hear concerning statements about self-harm or harming others.
- If a student is withdrawn and unresponsive to initial support.

### Your School's Pathways:

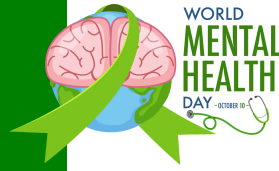
**Consult:** Speak with your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) immediately.

**Refer:** Follow your school's established protocol for internal counselling, Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs), or CAMHS.

**Document:** Keep clear, factual records of observations and actions.

**Team Approach:** Remember, you're not alone. Utilise your school's support network.

# Staying Calm When Things Go Wrong: Your Mental Health in a Crisis



*It's OK Not To Be OK. We're Here To Help.*

## What You Might Notice in Yourself or Friends

### Body & Feelings:

- Feeling extra worried or scared
- Feeling sad or tearful often
- Getting easily annoyed or angry
- Tummy aches or headaches (when you're not sick)
- Trouble sleeping or eating
- Not wanting to do fun things anymore
- Feeling confused or finding it hard to focus

### How You Act:

- Being much quieter than usual
- Not wanting to play or hang out
- Shouting more
- Finding schoolwork harder
- Feeling jumpy or restless



**Remember:** Everyone reacts differently to tough times. These feelings are normal, but if they last a long time or feel too big to handle, it's good to talk.

## Simple Ways to Feel Better

### Talk About It:

- Share your feelings with a trusted adult: a teacher, a grown-up at home, your Head of Year.
- Listen to a friend who is struggling, just by being there.

### Look After Yourself:

- Try to stick to your usual routines (school, mealtimes).
- Get enough sleep.
- Eat healthy snacks.
- Do something you enjoy – draw, play, listen to music.
- Spend time outdoors.



### Calm Your Body:

**Deep Breaths:** Breathe in slowly through your nose, hold for a count of 3, breathe out slowly through your mouth. Repeat a few times.

**5-4-3-2-1:** Name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste.

**You're Not Alone:** Everyone needs help sometimes.

## Who Can Help You Here (In School)

### Talk to:

- Your Teacher
- Your Head of Year
- A Teaching Assistant
- The School Counsellor

**Remember:** Asking for help is a sign of strength!



### You can also find support online:

- **Childline:** Call 0800 1111 or visit [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)
- **YoungMinds:** [youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk) (for young people and parents)
- **Shout 85258:** Text SHOUT to 85258 for free, confidential mental health support, 24/7.