RESILIENCE & COPING

This section aims to equip participants with the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary to enhance their resilience and coping abilities in various aspects of life. The sessions focus on personal growth, emotional regulation, and practical strategies to navigate challenges effectively.

Learning outcomes:

Young people will...

1. Understanding Resilience
2. Identifying Coping Strategies
3. Building Self-Awareness
4. Developing Problem-Solving Skills
5. Enhancing Emotional Regulation
6. Building Social Support Networks
7. Fostering Adaptability
8. Promoting Positive Thinking
9. Setting Realistic Goals
10. Improving Decision-Makin

Activity 1

‘Coping Strategies’ Take 5

5

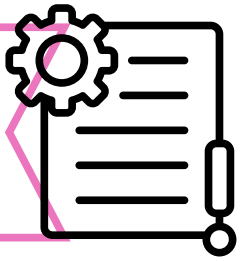
Purpose: To enable young people to learn practical coping stradegies

Objective: Young people will be aware of the take five method & be able to reflect on the differences of reacting in the moment and after implementing the take five method.



Resources Required: Comfortable and quiet space

Notes:
You can play soothing background music or nature sounds to enhance the relaxation experience.



Steps

1. Begin by finding a comfortable and quiet place to sit or stand.
2. Set a Timer: This exercise takes about 5 minutes, but you can adjust the time based on your preferences.
- Closing your eyes can help you focus on your breath and block out distractions, but it's not necessary if you're uncomfortable doing so.
3. Breathe In (2 Counts):
    - Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, counting to 2 in your head. Focus on your breath as it enters your body.
4. Hold (1 Count):
    - Hold your breath for a count of 1. This is a brief pause at the top of your inhale.
5. Exhale (4 Counts):
    - Exhale slowly and completely through your mouth, counting to 4 in your head. As you exhale, release any tension or stress.
6. Pause (1 Count):
    - Pause at the bottom of your exhale for a count of 1. This is a moment of stillness.
7. Repeat: Continue the cycle of breathing in (2 counts), holding (1 count), exhaling (4 counts), and pausing (1 count) for the specified duration.
8. Focus on Your Breath: Pay close attention to your breath as it moves in and out of your body. Let go of any distracting thoughts and focus on the sensation of breathing.
9. Complete the Cycle:
    - Continue the breathing cycle until you've completed the desired 5 minutes or the set time.

‘Coping Strategies’ Take 5

5

Alternative Option:

Steps:

1. This does not require any preparation and can be done anywhere.
2. Breathing exercises can help calm emotions, relax your mind, and allow you to be better able to identify what you are feeling and manage that emotion during a difficult time.
3. Explain to the group you are going to play an audio clip to assist with the activity.

-Mindfulness of the breath - YouTube

-Crab Breaths | Mindful Breathing Exercises for Kids | Calm Summer Meditation Music - YouTube

-Notice 5 Things - YouTube

Processing questions:

- How did you find this activity?
- How did your body feel after the breathing exercise?
- Do you think this is helpful?
- If you were experiencing strong emotions, do you think this would help return you to baseline?
- Can you think of any other “take 5” exercises that could help in calming emotions?



Activity 2



'Resilience Bracelets'

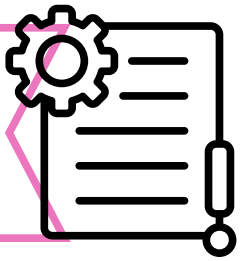
Purpose: To promote resilience by creating bracelets that symbolise and celebrate the qualities and strategies that help young people overcome challenges.

Objective: Young people will create their own bracelets with the idea of resilience



Resources Required: Assorted beads (various colours, shapes, and sizes), string/cord or elastic thread, Scissors, Small containers or trays to hold beads

Notes:
Having conversations about resilience throughout this activity is a great holistic way to develop understanding of resilience



Steps:

1. Gather the young people in a comfortable and quiet setting.
2. Start by explaining the concept of resilience, describing it as the ability to bounce back from tough times and challenges.
3. Provide each participant with a length of string/cord or elastic thread (approximately 8-10 inches long).
4. Set out containers or trays of assorted beads and let the young people choose the beads they like.
5. Instruct them to select beads that represent the resilience traits and strategies they feel have helped them or would like to develop.
6. For example, they can choose a yellow bead for optimism, a blue bead for problem-solving, a green bead for perseverance, and so on.
7. Let them string the beads onto their cord in any order they prefer.

Processing Questions

- What beads did you choose for your resilience bracelet, and why did you select those specific ones?
- Did creating the resilience bracelet make you think differently about the challenges you've faced or may face in the future? If so, how?
- In what ways can your resilience bracelet serve as a reminder of your inner strengths and ability to overcome difficulties?
- How might wearing the resilience bracelet influence your mindset and actions during tough times?
- What did you find most enjoyable or meaningful about the resilience bracelet activity?
- If someone were to ask you about your bracelet and its significance, what would you tell them?

Activity 3

'If You Don't Ask, You Don't Get'

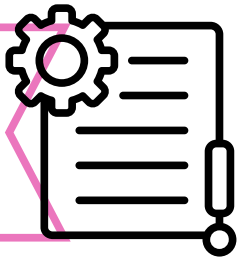
Purpose: To empower young people to identify barriers to access help and identify specific support services

Objective: Young people will discuss and reflect on the barriers for accessing help and research available support locally, regionally and online



Resources Required: Flip-chart paper, markers, sticky notes, tape/glue

Note:
This is great for display boards around the youth centre



Steps:

1. Ask the young people to brainstorm and write down different categories of support networks they have, such as family, friends, teachers, local supports (like community centres), regional supports (like regional youth organisations), and online supports (like social media groups/forums or websites).
2. Encourage them to think about specific individuals or resources within these categories.
3. Provide each participant with a large sheet of paper or a poster board.
4. Instruct them to create a visual map of their support network by dividing the paper into sections or categories for each type of support.
5. Using markers, coloured pencils, or other art supplies, encourage them to draw or write the names of people or organisations that belong to each category.
6. Have the young people add short descriptions or reasons why each person or resource is a part of their support network.
7. They can use sticky notes or adhesive labels for this purpose.
8. Invite participants to decorate their support network maps with images or drawings that represent their interests, hobbies, or the activities they enjoy with their support networks.

Processing questions:

- How did creating the support network map make you feel about the people and resources you havre in your life?
- Which category of support networks do you feel most connected to? Why?
- In what ways can your support network map serve as a helpful reference for you in the future, especially during times of need or decision-making?
- How can you use your support network to give back and support others, just as they have supported you?

‘If You Don’t Ask, You Don’t Get’





‘If You Don’t Ask, You Don’t Get’

Regional Support Services

Online Supports

Activity 4

'Top 10 Tips for Resilience'

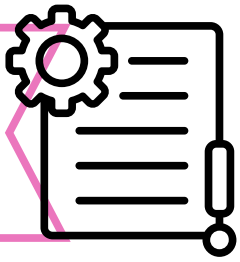
Purpose: To discover what is meant by resilience and explore different ways to be more resillient.

Objective: Young people will brainstorm what is meant by reliance and identify ways in which to be more resilient using the top 10 tips of resilience



Resources Required: 'Top 10 tips for resilience' handout

Ground Rules
'Top 10 tips for resilience' handout



Steps:

1. Brainstorm' as a group what we mean by resilience. Some people may say things like bouncing back, adapting to a situation well, coping under pressure etc.
2. Take note of the brainstorms up on. a flip-chart

- The Oxford Dictionary definition of resilience is '**the ability to recover from difficult situations'**. It is about being flexible and open to change, being creative with how we deal with it, and maximising all our resources to help us through that change or event.

3. Share with participants the 'top tips for resilience' worksheet.
4. Go through each one and ask participants to provide some examples of each strategy e.g., start a journal, join a gym, write down your goals.

Processing questions:

- Out of the top 10 resilience tips, which one do you think you can start using right now, and why?
- Imagine you're sharing these tips with a friend who's feeling overwhelmed. Which tip would you suggest they try first?
- If you were to create your own tip for building resilience, what would it be? Share it with the group.
- Think of a time when you faced a tough situation. How could one of these tips have helped you handle it better?
- Which tip surprised you the most, and why?

‘Top 10 Tips for Resilience’

R	Remain Positive	Look towards the future, think of what you want from life
E	Establish	Establish realistic and achievable goals. This helps give you focus
S	Strategies	Plan your coping strategies. Don’t be afraid to ask for help
I	Identify	Identify your strengths and be confident in yourself
L	Learn	Learn from experiances and move on
I	Introduce	Introduce. a positive way of thinking. Focus on the good things in life
E	Enjoy	Make time to do things you enjoy
N	Needs	Take care of yourself. Keep healthy and fit
C	Connect	Build healthy relationships with the people in your life
E	Embrace Change	Don’t dwell on the past. Put your energy into the present to shape your future

Activity 5

'Mistakes Happen'



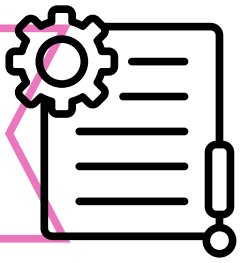
Purpose: To create a safe and supportive environment where participants can embrace the concept that making mistakes is a natural part of learning and growth

Objective: Young people will foster a mindset shift towards viewing mistakes as opportunities for learning and improvement rather than as failures



Resources Required: Pens/Markers, blank pages

Note
You can also do this activity with a shredder



Steps:

1. Give each young person a blank page
2. Ask young people to write about a mistake they made recently and how it made them feel
3. Ask them to crumple the page, and throw it at the wall with the feelings they have when they make a mistake.
4. Ask them to retrieve the paper, un-crumple it, and colour each line with different colours
5. Ask what they think those lines represent. Explain that the lines represent the impact of mistakes have on your brain to enable you to learn and remember not to make the same mistake again
6. Suggest young people keep the paper to look at when they make a mistake. This physical reminder prompts them to use mistakes to strengthen their brains every time they make a mistake

Processing questions:

1. How do you feel when you make a mistake? Why?
2. How do you think other people see you when you make a mistake?
3. Have you ever discovered something new from making a mistake?
4. Have you ever felt proud of making a mistake?
5. Has a mistake ever made you think more deeply about a problem?

Activity 6

‘Progression Vs Perfection’



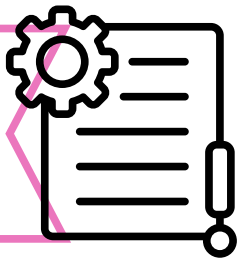
Purpose: to encourage participants to shift their focus from achieving perfection to embracing the process of growth and improvement.

Objective: Young people will understand that it's okay to make mistakes, learn from them, and appreciate the journey of progress rather than being overly fixated on flawless outcomes.



Resources Required: Magazines or printed images, scissors, glue or tape, large sheets of paper, markers/pencils, sticky notes

Note:
This can be done with drawings if there is no access to printable images

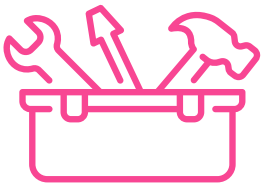


Steps:

1. Begin by discussing the concept of perfection with the young people. Explain that society often places a lot of pressure on individuals to be perfect in various aspects of life, such as appearance, academics, or sports. Emphasise that perfection is an unrealistic and unattainable standard and that striving for progress and personal growth is a more attainable and healthier goal.
2. Provide the materials and encourage the young people to create a collage or vision board with the following themes:
3. Perfection Side: On one half of the board, have them find and cut out images or words that represent society's unrealistic standards of perfection. These could include photos of models, perfect test scores, or unrealistic body images.
4. Progress Side: On the other half, have them find and cut out images or words that represent personal growth, self-acceptance, and resilience. These could include images of people overcoming challenges, celebrating small achievements, or quotes about self-improvement.
5. After completing their collages, gather the young people together for a discussion. Ask them to share what they included on each side of their boards and why those images or words represent perfection or progress to them.
6. Give each participant a few sticky notes and ask them to write down one thing they can do to focus more on progress and personal growth rather than perfection in their own lives. Encourage them to place these sticky notes on their collages.
7. Invite participants to share their reflections and the actions they plan to take to prioritise progress over perfection.

Activity 7

‘My Coping Toolbox’



Purpose: To empower young people with a personalised set of coping strategies and techniques that they can use to manage stress, anxiety, and difficult emotions effectively.

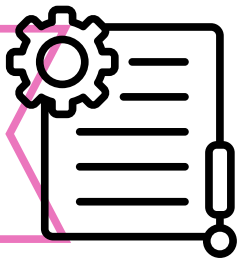
Objective: Young people will identify, create, and compile a range of coping tools and resources that they can turn to when facing challenging situations.



Resources Required: toolbox container, coping strategy cards, art supplies, blank note cards, and access to digital resources

Note

This can be made for all young people within the youth centre in mind not just the ones participating in the activity



Steps:

1. Start by discussing the concept of coping strategies with the young people. Explain that coping strategies are like tools they can use to manage stress, deal with difficult emotions, and navigate challenges in their lives.
2. Have a brainstorming session with the participants to generate a list of coping strategies. Encourage them to think of various strategies, such as talking to a friend, drawing, deep breathing, or going for a walk. Write down their ideas on a whiteboard or large piece of paper for reference.
3. Provide the participants with index cards or small pieces of paper. Instruct them to choose a coping strategy from the list generated earlier or come up with their own. They should write the coping strategy on one side of the card and decorate the other side with art supplies to make it visually appealing and memorable. Encourage creativity in designing the cards.
4. Give each participant a larger sheet of paper or poster board to create their "Coping Strategy Toolbox." They should decorate the toolbox, using markers, stickers, or magazine cutouts to make it visually appealing.
5. Have the young people glue or tape their coping strategy cards inside their toolbox. They can arrange them in a way that feels organised and accessible.
6. Ask each participant to share one or more coping strategies from their toolbox with the group. Encourage them to explain why they chose those particular strategies and how they plan to use them when needed

Activity 8

‘Ball of Stress’



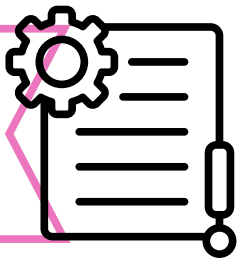
Purpose: To provide participants with a hands-on and creative activity to make their own stress-relief tools, fostering relaxation and stress management

Objective: Young people will be aware of the benefits of stress balls and offer a practical, engaging way to create their stress-relief tools.



Resources Required: Balloons, Flour/rice or play-dough, permanent markers, art supplies (optional) small containers/cups

Note:
Different kinds of stress balls made can be made into a sensory box for the group when they are feeling overwhelmed



Steps:

1. Start by discussing stress with the young people. Ask them to share their experiences with stress and how it makes them feel. Emphasise that stress is a normal part of life but can be managed with the right techniques.
2. Lead a discussion about various stress management techniques. Include strategies like deep breathing, mindfulness, exercise, talking to friends or family, and squeezing stress balls. Explain that stress balls are a physical tool that can help reduce tension.
3. Show the participants a completed stress ball or a commercial stress ball to demonstrate how it works.
4. Provide each participant with a balloon and a small container or funnel (if using).
5. Instruct them to stretch the balloon by gently pulling on it to make it more flexible.
6. If using a funnel, place it inside the balloon's opening. If not, carefully spoon flour, rice, or play-dough into the balloon.
7. Fill the balloon to their preferred size (smaller for firmer stress balls, larger for softer ones). Leave some space at the top to allow for tying.
8. Remove the funnel (if used) and tie the balloon securely, making sure it's airtight.
9. Provide permanent markers and art supplies for participants to decorate their stress balls. They can draw faces, patterns, or write affirmations on them.

Activity 9

'Taking Control'

Purpose: To engage participants in a fun and challenging activity that enhances their problem-solving skills and teamwork

Objective: Young people will work together to solve a series of riddles and puzzles while honing their critical thinking and collaboration abilities

Resources Required: List of problems, timer, paper and pens

Note:
Scenarios can be adapted to suit current needs/situations within the group

Steps:

1. Begin by discussing the concept of taking control of a situation. Explain that it involves identifying challenges, making decisions, and taking action to find solutions. Emphasise that it's a valuable life skill.
2. Divide the participants into small groups of 3-5 people. Make sure each group has paper and pens.
3. Provide each group with a list of scenarios or problems. These can be real-life situations or hypothetical challenges relevant to their age group. Examples include planning a surprise party, organising a charity event, or solving a hypothetical crisis.
4. Let the participants know they have a set amount of time (e.g., 30 minutes) to choose one scenario, brainstorm solutions, create a plan of action, and present it to the group. Emphasise that they should aim to take control of the situation and demonstrate their problem-solving skills.
5. Allow the groups to work independently to brainstorm solutions and create a plan of action. Encourage them to delegate tasks, assign roles, and use their creativity to come up with effective solutions.
6. After the allotted time, have each group present their chosen scenario, the problem they faced, their solution, and the steps they would take to address it. Encourage them to explain how they took control of the situation.
7. Facilitate a discussion after each presentation. Ask the other groups to provide constructive feedback on the presented solutions. Encourage questions and suggestions to help each group refine their plans.



Organising a School Dance:

Challenge: You and your team are in charge of organising the coolest school dance ever. Plan the theme, decorations, music playlist, and ticket pricing.

Resolving a Friendship Drama:

Challenge: Help two friends who are not getting along anymore. Come up with a solution to mend their friendship and make sure everyone is happy.

Creating a Green School Project:

Challenge: Develop a project that makes your school more eco-friendly. It could be starting a recycling program, organising a green fair, or planting a school garden.

Throwing a Surprise Birthday Bash:

Challenge: Your friend's birthday is coming up, and you want to throw them the best surprise party ever. Plan it all, from the guest list to the cake and decorations.

Mastering Time Management:

Challenge: Imagine you have a busy day with school, sports practice, homework, and other activities. Create a schedule that helps you manage your time wisely and get everything done.

Responding to a Superhero Emergency:

Challenge: Pretend you're a team of superheroes facing a crisis in your city. Develop a plan to handle the situation, including rescue strategies and communication methods

Activity 10

‘One Step Back, Two Steps Forward’

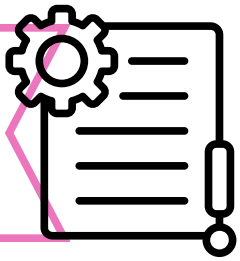
Purpose: To help individuals reflect on their past goals, evaluate their progress and outcomes, and create a structured plan for future growth and development

Objective: Young people will assess the effectiveness of their previous goals, identify areas for improvement, and design a well-defined plan with specific actions to move forward and achieve their personal or professional aspirations



Resources Required: List of problems, timer, paper and pens

Note:
If young people are struggling to come up with ideas, you can provide guidance.

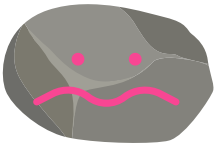


Steps:

1. Start by discussing the importance of setting goals and how sometimes we don't achieve them. Explain that it's okay to face setbacks and that not reaching a goal doesn't mean failure. It can be an opportunity for growth and learning.
2. Ask each participant to share a goal they had in the past but didn't achieve. It could be a personal, academic, or extracurricular goal. Encourage them to describe the goal and why they wanted to achieve it.
3. After sharing their goals, have participants reflect on how they felt when they didn't achieve them. Did they feel disappointed, frustrated, or discouraged? Discuss these emotions openly.
4. In small groups or pairs, ask participants to identify the obstacles or challenges that prevented them from reaching their goals. Encourage them to be honest and specific about what got in the way.
5. Reconvene as a group and discuss what they've learned from not reaching their goals. Explore the idea that setbacks can provide valuable lessons and insights.
6. Have each participant write down or draw (using markers or coloured pencils) a growth plan for how they can work towards their goal in the future. This plan should include:

- Specific steps they can take.
- Strategies to overcome obstacles.
- A timeline for achieving the goal.

Activity 11



'Worry Stones'

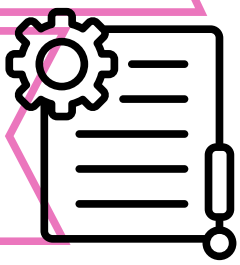
Purpose: To provide participants with a tangible and calming tool to manage stress and anxiety effectively.

Objective: Young people will learn how to use worry stones for relaxation and stress relief



Resources Required: Smooth small stones, Paint, markers or coloured pencils, paint brushes and water, protection for work surfaces, clear nail polish (optional)

Note:
Other small objects of the groups choosing can be substituted for the stones



Steps:

1. Provide a variety of smooth, small stones or pebbles. Encourage participants to choose a stone that feels comfortable to hold and fits in their pocket.
2. Distribute paints, markers, or coloured pencils, and explain that participants will be decorating their stones.
3. Encourage them to think of calming or comforting designs. They can draw patterns, symbols, inspirational words, or anything that helps them feel relaxed.
4. If using paint, allow the stones to dry completely. This can be a good opportunity to engage in a brief discussion about patience and waiting, which are part of managing anxiety.
5. Gather participants in a circle and ask them to share why they chose their specific designs and what the stones represent to them.
6. Discuss the idea that holding the stone and focusing on the design can be a grounding and soothing practice during moments of anxiety or stress.
7. Lead participants in a brief mindfulness exercise using their worry stones. Guide them to hold the stones, feel their texture, and take slow, deep breaths while focusing on the sensations.
8. Encourage them to carry the stones with them in their pockets or bags for whenever they need a moment of calm.
9. Conclude by reinforcing the idea that the worry stones are a tool they can use to manage anxiety and stress. Remind them that it's okay to seek support from trusted adults if their anxiety becomes overwhelming.
10. Provide clear nail polish or a sealant to participants who want to protect their designs. Allow the stones to dry before participants take them home.

It is critically important for youth workers to take care of their own emotional health and well-being for several reasons:

1. Role Modelling: Youth workers serve as role models for the young people they work with. By demonstrating good emotional health practices, they can inspire and teach young people how to prioritise and manage their own emotional well-being effectively.
2. Effective Support: When youth workers are emotionally healthy, they are better equipped to provide effective support and guidance to the young people they work with. They can offer empathetic and non-judgmental assistance, which is vital for building trust and rapport.
3. Burnout Prevention: The nature of youth work can be emotionally demanding. Without proper self-care, youth workers are at risk of burnout, which can lead to exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased effectiveness in their roles.
4. Resilience: Taking care of one's emotional health helps youth workers build emotional resilience. They become better equipped to handle the challenges and stressors that often come with working with young people, making them more adaptable and less susceptible to emotional fatigue.
5. Healthy Boundaries: Maintaining emotional well-being enables youth workers to establish and maintain healthy boundaries with the young people they work with. This is essential for their own well-being and for creating safe and appropriate relationships.
6. Enhanced Communication: Emotional health is closely tied to effective communication. Youth workers with good emotional well-being can communicate more clearly and empathetically, facilitating better understanding and cooperation with young people.
7. Conflict Resolution: Youth workers often encounter conflicts and challenging situations. When emotionally healthy, they can approach these conflicts calmly and constructively, helping to find resolutions that benefit all parties involved.
8. Personal Growth: Prioritising their own emotional well-being allows youth workers to continue their personal growth and development. This growth can translate into improved skills and knowledge that benefit the young people they work with.
9. Longevity in the Field: Youth work can be a rewarding but demanding career. Emotionally healthy youth workers are more likely to stay in the field for the long term, ensuring continuity and stability for the young people they serve.
10. Overall Well-being: Just as emotional health is important for the young people they support, it is crucial for the well-being of youth workers themselves. Taking care of their own emotional health enables them to lead fulfilling and balanced lives outside of work.

In summary, youth workers play a pivotal role in the lives of young people, and their own emotional health is foundational to their effectiveness and overall well-being. By prioritising self-care and emotional health, youth workers can provide better support, avoid burnout, and lead by example, ultimately benefiting both themselves and the young people they serve.

here are some mental health organisations and resources in Northern Ireland that you can reach out to for support or information. Please note that it's a good idea to verify the current status and contact information of these organisations:

MindWise: MindWise is a mental health charity in Northern Ireland that provides a wide range of services and support for individuals living with mental health conditions.
Website: MindWise

Aware NI: Aware NI is an organisation that offers support and resources for individuals affected by depression and bipolar disorder. They provide support groups and mental health education.
Website: Aware NI

Action Mental Health: Action Mental Health is a Northern Ireland-based organisation that promotes mental well-being through various programs and initiatives. They offer services for individuals of all ages.
Website: Action Mental Health

Lifeline: Lifeline is a crisis helpline in Northern Ireland offering support to individuals in emotional distress or experiencing a mental health crisis. It's available 24/7.
Helpline: 0808 808 8000

Mind Your Mate: This initiative provides resources and information to help individuals support their friends and peers who may be experiencing mental health challenges.
Website: Mind Your Mate

Minding Your Head: This is a resource provided by the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland, offering information and tips for maintaining good mental health.
Website: Minding Your Head

The Rainbow Project: This organisation specifically focuses on supporting the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals in Northern Ireland.
Website: The Rainbow Project

Samaritans Belfast: The Samaritans provide a helpline for individuals in distress or experiencing emotional difficulties. They offer a listening ear and emotional support.
Helpline: 116 123

I**nspire Wellbeing:** Inspire Wellbeing offers a range of mental health and well-being services, including counselling and support for individuals and communities.
Website: Inspire Wellbeing

Please remember that the availability of services and contact information may change over time, so it's a good idea to visit the respective websites or contact these organisations directly for the most up-to-date information on their services and resources. If you or someone you know is in crisis or experiencing a mental health emergency, please seek immediate help from a healthcare professional or emergency services.



An Emotional Health & Wellbeing Framework for Youth Workers

Wellbeing For All

boys & girls clubs
reach : involve : enjoy : achieve

ea Education Authority