

# OUR LIFE

AUTUMN 2021

## Hello from Michelle

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Surrey Young Carers newsletter. We have had such a busy summer, seeing many of you at our events and the family fun days. We hope you had wonderful experiences with us and enjoyed spending time with your families and meeting new people along the way.

As you venture back to education and starting the new academic year, you might have feelings of nervousness or worry. You might be concerned about friendships, getting to school on time or being able to complete homework. This is normal for most children but especially those children with a caring role.

In this edition of the newsletter we will give you some 'top tips' on how to cope with things that make you worry. Don't forget to get in touch, we have a fabulous team here to listen and support you along the way, should you need a bit more help.

Best wishes,



**Michelle Harper, Manager  
Surrey Young Carers**



**Wow! Did you make it to one of our SIX Family Fun Days this summer?** Taking place all over Surrey, over 600 young people and their families enjoyed crafts, activities, entertainment – and LOADS of fun.

Don't forget, all our young carers are asked to these Family Days plus get: a welcome event • the SYC newsletter • can attend our 'Drop-In' youth clubs at venues across Surrey • can attend transition events • can join our Young Carers Forum • and of course get support from our friendly, caring and helpful staff!

# Feeling a bit stressed? Try these simple coping strategies

## Active coping strategies:

- Go for a walk, run or bike ride.
- Do some yoga or stretching.
- Do jumping jacks.
- Put on some music and dance.
- Bounce or kick a ball.
- Jump rope or hula hoop.
- Squeeze a stress ball.

## Relaxing coping strategies:

- Listen to calming music.
- Take some deep breaths
- Think of a calm, happy place
- Tense and relax your muscles
- Take a quiet break or rest.
- Have a drink of cold water.
- Close your eyes, and count to 10 or backward from 100.
- Read a book or magazine.
- Take a bath or shower.
- Blow bubbles.
- Hug a cuddly toy.
- Spend time outside. Sit and look at the clouds, or close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you.

## Creative coping strategies:

- Colour, draw or paint.
- Write a poem.
- Make up a song.
- Play an instrument.



- Write about your thoughts or feelings
- Play with Play-Doh or build with Lego or blocks.

## Social coping strategies:

- Play a game with the family.
- Call a friend.
- Cuddle or play with your pet.
- Read a book together.
- Facetime with relatives.
- Share your feelings with someone you trust.

## Coping strategies that shift your mindset:

- Think of something positive and focus on one thing you are grateful for.
- Close your eyes, and think about something you are looking forward to.

- Look at pictures, or think about a happy memory.
- Focus your energy on the present moment.
- Think about something that makes you laugh.
- Create a time capsule with your favourite artwork, homework, report cards and pictures from the past year.
- Focus on what you can control. Create a list of ways to stay healthy. Sometimes just having a plan can help us feel calmer and more in control.

Thanks to Strong4Life for this article [www.strong4life.com/en/emotional-wellness/coping/healthy-coping-strategies-for-kids](http://www.strong4life.com/en/emotional-wellness/coping/healthy-coping-strategies-for-kids)



## TAKE A BREATH:

### Try this breathing exercise to help you relax

**STEP 1** Make sure you are sitting comfortably in a quiet and safe place. Notice your breathing. Think about how it feels breathing in and breathing out. Try to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

**STEP 2** Place your hand on your tummy and focus on the feeling of your stomach rising and falling with each breath.

When you breathe in, quietly say 'in' to yourself, and when you breathe out, quietly say 'and out' to yourself.

**STEP 3** Concentrate on nothing but your breathing and try to let go of any other thoughts you may have. When you've had lots of practice at the breathing exercise, see if you can think about a happy memory at the same time. This way, your happy memory will take up all the space in your brain, and there won't be any room for worries.



# TOP TIPS...

## for dealing with boredom and low motivation from BBC Bitesize

### 1. Be kind to yourself

Remember, lots of people have been bored, flat and unmotivated during the pandemic. You're not alone. Be kind to yourself and notice what you're feeling without judging yourself. It's been a tough year and it's understandable to feel this way.

### 2. Notice and record time spent on daily activities to see what helps

Noticing your feelings when you're doing different activities is so important. You can make a record of the things that you find rewarding or fun and try to schedule more time into your day to do those things.

### 3. Work out what matters to YOU

Spend some time thinking about what really matters to you – what your values are – and which activities are in line with that. If you can find the **intrinsic** value in activities, you are more likely to do them. This video <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdc3trd> might help you find your driving force!

### 4. Do more of what matters

Plan activities that are in line with your values, like doing something nice for someone else or something that helps you move in the direction of your goals. Quite simply: work out what is important to you and then try to do more of it!

### 5. When you're feeling unmotivated, start doing something anyway

Start with a small step, even if you don't feel like it. Feelings of motivation usually appear **after** you've started to do something. Although there are limits and restrictions at the moment, think of what you **can** do, however small. And be sure to take note of your progress and what you've achieved, rather than the end goal. Getting started with a small step is a big achievement when you feel unmotivated.

### 6. Notice and pay attention to how it feels to do what you are doing

It is important to try and 'get out of your own head' when doing an activity: instead pay attention to everything that is going on around you (e.g. sounds, smells, tastes). Reflect on how it felt: did it feel good? Do you want to do it again?

### 7. Imagine positive future images in detail and imagine the steps needed to get there

Mental images can have a really powerful effect on your mood. What do you look forward to doing?



Imagine it with as much detail as possible, work out the steps you need to take to get there and if there are any obstacles, think of how you can remove them.

### 8. Try to notice and address any negative 'self-talk' that's getting in the way of enjoyment or motivation

Negative thoughts like 'I'm no good at this,' or 'What's the point?' can get in the way of your enjoyment. Notice these thoughts and gently challenge them. Think again about your values and why you want to do this activity. Try to replace thoughts like 'I should', 'I have to...' with 'I want to...' and focus on the **why**.

### 9. Make a commitment to others

If you plan to do something, it can be helpful to tell others about your plan as a way of committing to it. You can also plan to do things **with** others, where possible and doing things **for** others can have a positive impact on your wellbeing.

### 10. Seek help when it's needed

If feelings of boredom and low motivation are causing distress or interfering with daily life, it's important to speak to someone about them. There are some links to support below.

*Thanks to [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/) for this article.*

## If you need support

You should always tell someone about the things you're worried about. You can tell a friend, parent, guardian, teacher, SYC staff or another trusted adult.

If you're struggling with your mental health, going to your GP can be a good place to start to find help. Your GP can let you know what support is available to you, suggest different types of treatment and offer regular check-ups to see how you're doing.

If you're really struggling you can call Surrey's 24/7 mental health line, for all young people (up to 18) on 0800 915 4644. (You can also text 'SHOUT' to 85258, a national text-based service.)

# Fighting for young carers' rights



## Young Carers' Rights

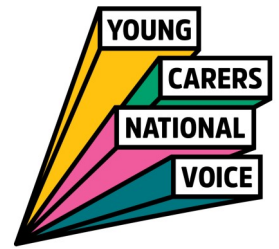
Making them real



This September, we joined with young carers' organisations from across England in asking MPs and other decision-makers to better consider young carers, especially in light of the new Health and Social Care Bill.

Working with the Young Carers National Voice, we produced a new report, *Young Carers Rights – Making them real* and shared it with all Surrey's MPs and key government officials. We all demanded action, including (at the same time) 'shouting' loudly across all our individual social media channels. We've had some positive reactions from MPs already, and our Chief Exec, Jamie is meeting with key Surrey MP Jeremy Hunt next month to discuss young carers and their rights.

You can read more about the report on our website: <https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/news/young-carers-rights-making-them-real/>



## Survey for YOU enclosed!

We are always wanting to make sure that as many young carers can attend our drop-ins as possible. **Enclosed is a survey** to ask what times etc would be best for you. Lisa was at the Hampton Court Family Fun Days and spoke to many of you – so don't worry about completing this again, unless there is anything that you might like to add. If so, please let us know!

And on the reverse you'll find a few questions asking about your hopes and plans for your future. We want to understand how we can best support you to achieve your aims.

Please then put the survey in the FREEPOST envelope provided (by 8<sup>th</sup> November), and pop it in your nearest post box!



**THANK YOU!!**



## Transition Events

Every summer we hold 'transition events' for young carers moving on to secondary school (or college). Here's some photos from this year. Keep an eye out for similar events next year!



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**CONTACT US** Call 01483 568269 or email [SYC@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:SYC@actionforcarers.org.uk)

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