

TOWER HAMLETS

MARK YOUR MIND CAMPAIGN PACK

Let's talk about youth mental
health in Tower Hamlets

YOUNGMINDS
The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing



NHS
Tower Hamlets
Clinical Commissioning Group



WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

Mark Your Mind is a campaign to help young people and families across Tower Hamlets get better informed about mental health. This campaign pack will give you info about:

- What mental health is
- Looking after your mental health
- When and where to get help with mental health
- Looking after your mates

It also has info for parents and carers, info about faith and mental health and links to other helpful resources.

It has been co-created with young people from Tower Hamlets. Thanks to workshop participants from Spotlight Centre, Docklands Outreach and Osmani Centre for ideas and contributions.

These activities are being supported by NHS Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group as part of the Tower Hamlets children and young people's mental health Transformation Plan.

This campaign has been set up as young people in Tower Hamlets said that mental health was important to them and they wanted to be better informed about it.



get INVOLVED!

There will be Mark Your Mind campaign activities happening across Tower Hamlets to promote awareness of youth mental health.

If you are a young person aged up to 18 and want to find out more about getting involved visit:

www.themix.org.uk/local/tower-hamlets

We also want parents and carers in Tower Hamlets and organisations working with young people and families in Tower Hamlets to get involved – you can do this by emailing:

matt.may@youngminds.org.uk

what is MENTAL HEALTH?

Everyone has mental health. Our mental health is about how our minds grow and learn and about how we overcome the struggles we face, so that we can make the most of our strengths and succeed in life.

Good mental health helps us with things like:

- Having good friendships
- How positively we see ourselves and the world around us
- Our ability to learn
- Being able to do the things we enjoy
- Setting goals for ourselves and reaching them

Just like we can all look after our bodies, we can also all look after our minds.

When we talk about looking after our 'mental health'– what we really mean is, keeping our minds healthy so we can get the most from life. The healthier our minds are, the more likely we are to be able to live the life we want, so taking care of our minds makes sense right?





dealing WITH LIFE

Photo credit: Joe

We all have ups and downs in life and as things change, it's normal that how we feel about ourselves and life changes. Our minds aren't black and white.

Most people don't always feel great (although if you do – good!) and we don't always feel bad, usually we are somewhere between the two, depending on what's happening to us and around us.

Some of the things that could affect how we feel and where we sit on that line could be...

- Pressure at school
- Fights with our friends
- Family problems
- Pressure about our bodies and how we look
- Issues with sex and relationships
- Feeling unsafe in our neighbourhood
- Worrying about money
- Worrying about the future

Feeling stressed when life is tough is normal and there are things you can do to help you cope and get through it.

MENTAL HEALTH

problems

Right, we need to clear up a myth here. Mental health is not the same as mental illness. We know a lot of people hear the words 'mental health' and think it means having a problem with our mental health, but it doesn't. Mental health is what we all have, and it can be good or bad.

Having a mental health problem (also called a 'mental illness') is when the struggles we have with our minds really affect our day to day to life.

One in four people will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime. It's more common than you might think.

A mental health problem is like a physical health problem. We don't choose to have them (just like we don't choose to get a cold) and there is help available for us if we struggle with our mental health.

There are different types of mental health problems. We can recover from some more quickly with a little time and care, a bit like when we get a cold. Sometimes though, a mental health problem can be more serious and stop us from doing day to day things.





common MENTAL HEALTH problems

Common mental health problems in young people are:

- **Depression:** some young people feel sad, lonely, down, worried or stressed for longer periods of time to the point where it can affect everyday life and can stop them doing things they would normally do.
- **Anxiety:** the feeling of fear or panic. Most people feel anxious, panicky or fearful at some time in their life – when facing difficult situations like exam stress, and then feel better and calmer when that situation ends. If the feelings of fear or anxiety continue after the difficult situation or are very strong, this is when anxiety becomes a problem and can affect doing everyday things.
- **Eating Disorders:** a range of conditions that can dominate lives through fear of food. Although serious, eating disorders are treatable and full recovery is possible.
- **Bipolar Disorder:** a less common illness that means people swing between feeling very manic or high and very depressed, which seem like extreme mood swings.
- **Psychosis:** a person experiencing psychosis loses touch with what is usually accepted as reality. They may feel paranoid, see things that aren't there, hear voices or have delusions, or have confused thoughts.



SELF-HARM

Self-harm can be really hard to understand but it is a lot more common than some people think.

What is self-harm?

Self-harming is when a young person chooses to inflict pain on themselves such as causing damage to their body, often as a result of distressing or difficult feelings.

Why do people self-harm?

Self-harm can be really hard to understand but it is a lot more common than some people think.

Between 1 in 12 and 1 in 15 people self-harm.

Young people may self-harm to relieve tension, to try and gain control of the issues that may be concerning them or to punish themselves.

Some young people report self-harming as a result of feeling overwhelmed, stressed, numb or disconnected. Others say something in their environment makes them feel vulnerable. Everybody's experience is different.

It is important to get help for self-harming behaviour as it can be dangerous. There is help available to support young people who self-harm.






more about MENTAL HEALTH

Why do we get mental health problems?

- Remember that a mental health problem is when the struggles we have with our minds really affect our day to day to life.
- Anyone can struggle with their mental health – people don't choose to have a mental health problem.
- Someone in our family might have a mental health problem, but that doesn't mean we definitely will have one too.
- Sometimes life can be too much, more than we can cope with, and that can make us feel unwell.
- There are lots of reasons we might get a mental health problem but whatever the reason, it's important we get support with it.

Can we feel better if we have a mental health problem?

- Yes, there are things we can all do to help us feel the best we can each day whether we have a mental health problem or not.
 - It can be helpful to think about how we can look after our minds and feel as good as possible today, even with the problem, rather than thinking we will only feel good again once we have completely recovered.
- 



LOOKING after OUR MINDS

We all know the simple things that are good for our bodies – like eating the right foods and exercising, even if we might not always be great at doing them.


Having a mental health problem (also called a ‘mental illness’) is when the struggles we have with our minds really affect our day to day to life.

There are also simple things we can do that are proven to look after our minds and help us feel as good possible:

- Connecting with others
- Getting active
- Learning
- Taking notice
- Helping others

These are based on the ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ and you can find out more about the facts behind why these things are good for your mind on the [new economics foundation](https://www.neweconomicsfoundation.org/) website:

www.fivewaystowellbeing.org



Being able to bounce back or bounce forward when times are tough and being able to be the best we can be is having Resilience. You might have heard this word used a lot. It can help with coping when facing difficult situations, so you can come out stronger the other side.

There are lots of things you can do that are proven to help us be more resilient that will give us a mental boost, so we can face the challenges in life and they include the actions in the next sections.

BOUNCING BACK

CONNECT

Knowing we matter to others, whether they are friends or people we just met, and showing others they matter to us is really great at helping all of us feel good.

You could...

- Message someone a link to a song you think they'll like or a video that will make them laugh
- Chat to someone different at your youth centre or school
- Message a friend you haven't seen for a while to check-in and say 'hi!'



Any physical activity from a boxing session or dance class to walking or cycling to the shops or a mate's house is good for our minds as well as our bodies, so get yourself active doing something you enjoy.

You could...

- Start with a walk maybe that walk will get longer, maybe it will turn into a jog, or maybe it will become something you want to do often
- Join a youth centre and try a new sport or dance class
- Use the outdoor gyms in Mile End and other parks
- Go down to the Olympic Village for their holiday activities

BE ACTIVE





mark YOUR MIND

Paying attention to what's happening around us right now and doing things that that make us look at the world and our lives in new ways is great for our minds and helps us stop thinking about our worries.

You could...

- Look around you when you wait for the bus and see what you notice – use all your senses what do you see, hear, smell?
- Leave a stressful situation you are in and meet with a mate to chat it over or take your mind off things
- Try a meditation or relaxation app – there are loads of free mobile apps available

A photograph of two young women standing in front of a grey, textured wall. The woman on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a light green hoodie. The woman on the right has long blonde hair and is wearing a dark grey hoodie with her arms crossed. Both are smiling and looking towards the right. The word 'LEARN' is overlaid in large green letters. There are decorative white and green diagonal line patterns at the top and bottom of the image.

LEARN

Learning happens all the time, not just in lessons. Taking time to find out about stuff that interests us keeps our mind growing and helps us discover ourselves.

You could...

- Look up new music and put together a playlist
- Follow blogs, social media and websites about things that interest you
- Share ideas and things you know about by chatting with others
- Set up a group to create something you enjoy with others like music or dance
- Help others



HELP OTHERS

It's official: doing good feels good. Getting involved across the area and helping make Tower Hamlets the best place possible for everyone can really help you feel good.

You could...

- Chat to someone quieter at your youth group or school and help them get involved
- Volunteer about something you care about or enjoy (like this campaign!)
- Share something you have created like music or poetry to inspire others to do the same



when to get HELP

We wouldn't try and fix our own broken leg, we'd get help! So, if we struggle with our feelings and thoughts, we don't have to cope alone then either. Help is out there, in lots of different types and places, once we realise we need it.

Thinking, feeling, doing

What we are thinking, feeling and doing is the best way to notice when we might need help.

When our feelings are much worse than usual or we are stuck in bad thought patterns or find ourselves doing things we know aren't making us feel good, these are all signs we could do with some extra help.

There are different ways people think, feel and act when they are having a tough time and here are some of the common ones:

- Eating more or less than usual
- Not getting a good night's sleep
- Feeling angry all the time
- Crying a lot
- Not looking forward to anything
- Feeling bored and tired every day
- Drinking a lot of alcohol
- Getting into trouble
- Wanting to hurt yourself



let's TALK ABOUT IT...

If you are struggling with how you are feeling then it is important you talk to someone. There are lots of people who can help you or help you access support.

You could...

- Talk to someone you trust: e.g. a family member, at school, youth group, arts centre, sports club, your social worker, a friend
- Talk to someone who doesn't already know you or the people in your life – such as a confidential helpline or online service – a useful list of numbers is [here](#)
- Talk to your GP – if your difficult feelings have lasted several weeks and are affecting your life, you could speak to your GP. Your GP is a confidential health service open to everyone of all ages, and they may be able to help you themselves or refer you to a service for youth mental health
- Find local support in Tower Hamlets – there are places that can give you support when you are struggling, find details at www.themix.org.uk/local/tower-hamlets

You can also do little things to make yourself feel as okay as possible whilst you are trying to find some help, like listening to music you love, playing sport or going for a run, or doing something creative.



starting the CONVERSATION

If you have decided to talk to someone about how you are feeling, here are some tips for the first conversation:

You could...

- Think about who is the best person to talk to, only you know who you feel most comfortable with
- Choose a good time and place for this discussion to take place so that you are not interrupted and don't feel uncomfortable in the surroundings
- Think about the outcome you want from the discussion – whether it is just to share your feelings or to find further help.
- Make notes or write things down before the conversation in case you forget exactly what you want to say so it can act as pointers during the chat

These are only ideas, if it all blurts out when you didn't plan it; the most important thing is that you have said something and you will probably feel better just for starting to talk about your problems.



what HAPPENS next...



Once you have started to talk to someone you might find that you feel better and all you needed was some space to share your thoughts and feelings. But it might be that you need more help as well.

Carry on the conversation...

- People who care about us will usually want to be there for us and help us. Our friends, or even our parents or teachers may not know exactly what to do to help us feel better but they can listen and help us find the right support
- Our friends might suggest that we tell an adult or they might even tell someone for us if they are really worried
- Adults we tell will probably want to help us find somewhere to go to get mental health support. Sometimes they might not explain it as we wish they would. This might be because they are afraid about us being unwell or because they don't understand what we are experiencing
- If someone isn't able to help, don't give up, speak to someone else.



mates MATTER

Our friends are the people that just get us, help us have a laugh, and share experiences with us. They often know us really well. They look out for us - and we can do the same for them.

Looking out for our friends...

Just like how we think, feel and act can tell us that we might need help, it's the same for our friends. One of the biggest signs we can look out for is if they change how they normally act.

Things like:

- Suddenly seeming tired all the time
- Not wanting to see any of their friends
- Letting their school work slip when they used to really care about it
- Not bothering to come to football practice
- Doing things that make you worry about their health like drinking too much alcohol, taking drugs and behaving sexually in ways they don't usually.

These could all be signs they could do with some extra help

What can we do if we are worried about our friends?

If you think you have noticed changes in how your friend is acting or feeling, you can be a good friend to them and find ways to help.

- Remind your friend you are there for them. They might not have spoken to you as they don't want to burden you, so simply saying that they don't seem themselves and reminding them you are there if they ever want to talk is a great help
- You don't need to have all the answers: Just listening to them is massively helpful
- If they want help, we can offer to help them find it for example by looking with them for somewhere they can get support.

If they tell us they are struggling, we don't have to have a perfect answer.





Should we ever speak to an adult about a friend we are worried about?

Part of friendship is sharing thoughts and feelings in confidence with each other. But, there are times when getting help is more important than keeping secrets.

- It is okay to speak to an adult to get support for ourselves or to help get support for your friend if we are worried and especially if we think they might **hurt themselves or they have said they are thinking about hurting themselves**
- Your friend may ask you not to tell anyone else, but if they are not well, they may not themselves be able to ask for help
- It can be stressful and worrying if our friend seems very unwell and talking to someone else to get help for them can help us stay strong so we can continue supporting them.

If we are really worried about a friend, asking someone like a parent, youth worker or teacher for help for them is important.

BEING THERE for your FRIENDS

It's really likely that at some point one of your friends will experience a mental health problem because as many as 1 in 4 people are affected over their lifetime. This might seem scary to think about, but here are a few things to remember:

You could...

- Ask them if they want to talk or not about how they are feeling
- Stay in touch and keep them updated with your news – even if they are feeling depressed or anxious it doesn't mean they don't want to hear about positive things from someone else
- Invite them to do things but don't take it personally if they say no
- Be understanding if they change plans
- Offer different things to do that might be more where they are at

For more ideas about supporting friends with mental health problems visit Epic Friends:

www.epicfriends.co.uk

What is CAMHS?

CAMHS stands for the 'Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services'; this means all of the services that are available to help children and young people when they are having problems to do with their mental health.

These services may be part of the NHS but could also be lots of other organisations.

What can CAMHS help with?

CAMHS is there to help you when you are experiencing a mental health problem that needs more support than family, friends, school or a GP can offer. Lots of the problems described in this pack might be included.

For more info about CAMHS take a look at:

what are CAMHS?

www.youngminds.org.uk/for_parents/services_children_young_people/camhs/what_are_cahms

HeadMeds

www.headmeds.org.uk

my CAMHS choices

mycamhschoices.org

CAMHS glossary

www.youngminds.org.uk/for_children_young_people/a_guide_to_mental_health_services/glossary



FAITH and MENTAL HEALTH

Whilst it is important to get help from qualified medical practitioners with mental health problems, you can also find support from a faith or organised religious group that you are a member of. It is important to remember that mental health problems are an illness and are not usually cured by prayer alone.

Faith groups can be a great benefit if you feel more comfortable talking to people who share similar beliefs and they can help you through a number of ways such as...

- Providing a safe space to talk through your fears or apprehensions
- Prayer or group prayer
- Offering a sense of community
- Helping you explore your religious awareness
- Building and maintaining personal relationships



LGBT youth MENTAL HEALTH

Research suggests that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (commonly known as LGBT) people may be more likely to have mental health problems than members of the straight community.

Young people in particular may also have an increased risk of experiencing mental health problems. This is often linked to being bullied at school or home – or other places – about being LGBT (known as homophobic bullying).

Being LGBT is not a mental illness and not everyone who is LGBT has a mental health problem.

Dedicated local LGBT youth services offer friendly support such as...

ELOP <http://elop.org>

Step Forward – Step Out group

www.step-forward.org.uk

Gendered Intelligence

www.genderedintelligence.co.uk

Mermaids UK www.mermaidsuk.org.uk



PARENTS and CARERS

The information in this pack could give you some ideas of things you might want to talk to your child about, or raise issues you would like more information on. These are some resources that could help:

- The YoungMinds Parents Helpline offers free, confidential online and telephone support, including information and advice, to any adult worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25. Call free on **0808 802 5544** (free for mobiles and landlines).
- Online information if you are Worried about a child
The YoungMinds self-harm #NoHarmDone parents pack
http://www.youngminds.org.uk/assets/0002/6728/No_Harm_Done_Young_Peoples_Pack.pdf
- How to improve and influence services with
YoungMinds Parents Say
www.youngminds.org.uk/for_parents/parents_improving_services
- Clear simple online information about how to help your child and how to find help via **MindEd for Families**
www.minded.org.uk/families

Local support in Tower Hamlets

- **CHAMPS** www.ideastoreonlinedirectory.org/kb5/towerhamlets/cd/service.page?id=S2Dvz0S-ssU
- **Mindbuilders** www.mindbuilders-consulting.org/index.html
A family centred approach to autism that offers parent groups and individual support work



working with YOUNG PEOPLE?

This info pack can be used with young people in your organisation. Each page (or as groups of pages) is an individual conversation starter for one to one or group sessions. There are also many links throughout to access more resources to support mentally healthy young people.

There are lots of other resources available too that might be useful in your work with young people:

- **HeadMeds** gives **young people in the United Kingdom** general information about medication.
www.headmeds.org.uk
www.headmeds.org.uk/about-this-site/creating-headmeds
- Mental Health Awareness **session plans** from Time to Change
www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources-youth-professionals/session-plans
- Resilience building **activities and session plans** from YoungMinds
www.youngminds.org.uk/assets/0001/1548/The_resilient_classroom.pdf

working with YOUNG PEOPLE?

This session plan has been designed to introduce and begin a conversation around mental health. The content of this campaign pack support the activities within the session plan and it has been successfully delivered to both young people and parent groups in Tower Hamlets.

The one hour session plan has been written so that the only resources needed are pens and paper, however if you have other resources at your disposal, play dough for example, we encourage you to adapt these activities as you see fit.



THE MARK YOUR MIND SESSION PLAN: LET'S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN TOWER HAMLETS

Overall Purpose	To begin a conversation about mental health with CYP in Tower Hamlets To challenge stigma around mental health problems To make sure CYP are aware of the 'Mark Your Mind' campaign
Aims	To begin an open dialogue between staff and CYP in Tower Hamlets about mental
Outcomes	By the end of the session 1) CYP will have a better understanding of mental health 2) CYP will be more aware and able to talk about mental health with adults and peers 3) CYP will have access to relevant resources to support their well-being
Resources	Flipchart paper; marker pens, felt tip pens, Mark your Mind campaign pack (one for each participant)

Time	Activity	Learning Outcome	Resources and Notes
5 mins	Welcome and Intro Overview of the session ‘We are going to do some activities that will get us all thinking about mental health and make sure we know how we can look after ourselves and know where to get help.’	To give an introduction to the session	N/A
5 mins	Group Agreement (No.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to the group that ‘this may be a topic that some of us are not used to speaking about. It’s important that everyone feels comfortable in our environment • To make sure this happens we are going to create a group agreement that everyone signs • Ask the group to make suggestions of what needs to be on here. Key things to include are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to other people’s suggestions • Sharing ideas and participating in the session • Respecting other people’s’ opinions and their right to have them • Not laughing laugh at other people’s ideas or questions • Keeping confidentiality 	To create a safe space where participants feel comfortable discussing the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart paper / board to make a note of suggestions • Marker pens • We understand that you may already have an existing group agreement with the CYP. If so you may wish to remind them of this instead of creating a new one.
15 mins	Mental health – what comes to mind? (No.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask CYP to think about the term ‘mental health’ • Ask participants to each share a word or short sentence that comes to mind when they think of ‘mental health’ • Remind participants that there ‘are no wrong or right answers, we just want to get an understanding of what people think at the moment’ • Once everyone has answered ask the group ‘Who has mental health?’ • Give them a minute to think about this and then raise your hand. This will be explained in the next step when you share the definition. 	Develop a shared understanding of the concept ‘mental health’	N/A

Photo credit: Ariana

5 mins	‘Our’ definition (No.3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that ‘mental health can some times have negative connotations which means that people can feel uncomfortable talking about it • Explain that YoungMinds has spoken to young people aged 11 – 18 across Tower Hamlets to come up with a definition of mental health.’ It is: • ‘Everyone has mental health. Our mental health is about how our minds grow and learn and about how we overcome struggles we face, so that we can make the most of our strengths and succeed in life.’ 	To give a clear and agreed definition so that the whole group has the same understanding of what mental health is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tower Hamlets’ definition prewritten on flipchart paper that can be display
15 mins	What makes us who we are? (No.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to the group that ‘now that we have a definition of mental health, we want to think about what can affect our mental health’ • Ask the group to get into pairs and draw an outline of a ‘made-up’ character / person • Imagine that this is a young person who lives in Tower Hamlets • Encourage them to think about the different aspects of a young person’s life: • What do they enjoy doing? • Where do they go? • Who is in their family? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of what CYP think affects their mental health • Develop an understanding that all aspects of our lives can feed into our mental health • Consider the different complexities of their worlds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Felt tips
5 mins	What might make them (your character) unhappy? (No.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get each pair to feed back some ideas for their character • Key points to think about are: • Home life • School achievements • Social circle • Hobbies and interests 	To give a clear and agreed definition so that the whole group has the same understanding of what mental health is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
10 mins	How can we improve things?/Resilience (No.6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a group discussion ask the group to think about the young person they have just created • ‘Let’s think about what they can do to look after themselves and feel good’ • Encourage the group to think about the things that make them feel better. Try to draw out: • Being active (A sport or hobby they enjoy) • Socialising (face to face rather than online) • Eating well • Helping others • Asking for help and support when we need it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To begin thinking about how we can take care of our own wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Photo credit: Ariana

5 mins

Mark Your Mind (No.7)

- Hand out the 'Mark Your Mind' campaign pack
- Explain that in the campaign pack they can find further information related to mental health, as well as where to seek advice if they are worried about themselves or a friend
- Remind them that 'it is ok not to always feel ok and that mental health is no different from physical health'

To encourage young people to continue to develop understanding of mental health by engaging with the campaign

- Copies of the 'Mark Your Mind' campaign pack

5 mins

Closing Go-round (No.8)

- In a go-round participants are invited to share one thing they've learnt from today's session

To bring the session to a close and reflect on what has been learnt

- N/A

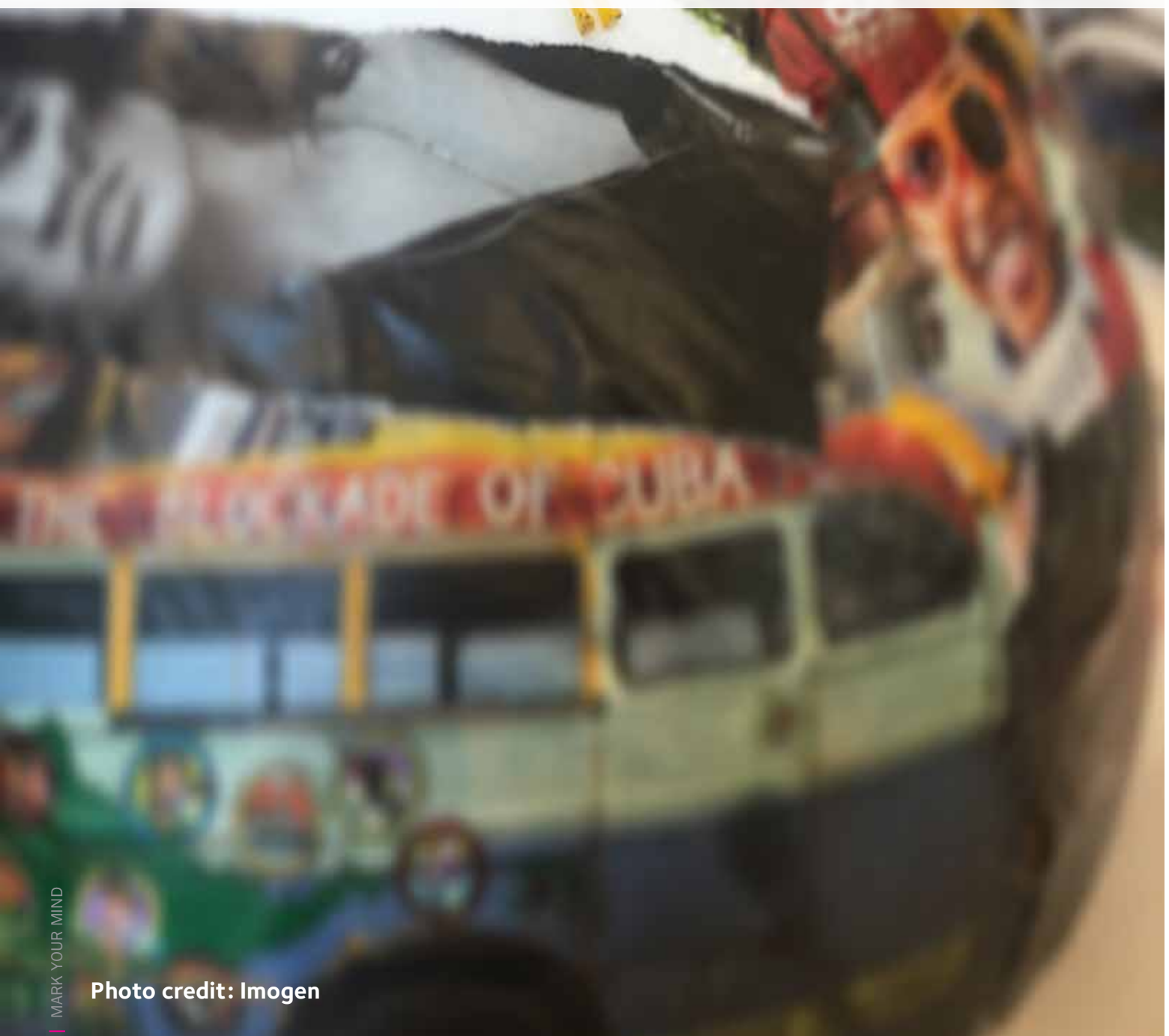


Photo credit: Imogen



Where to get support in Tower Hamlets

CAMHS in Tower Hamlets offers assessment and help to children, young people and their families.

All CAMHS clinicians have a relevant professional qualification and experience in working with children, young people and their families.



If you would like this document in another language...

If you would like help understanding this document, or
require it in another format or language, please contact
Tower Hamlets CCG by

Telephone: 020 3688 2500

Email: info@towerhamletsccg.nhs.uk



thank YOU

Thank you to all the young people and organisations that so generously gave their time and shared their experiences to create this pack.

This pack was co-created with young people and produced by:



YOUNG MINDS

The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing