



Resource
for
Professionals

Clacks Keys is a youth-led campaign empowering children and young people in Clackmannanshire to know how and where to get support with their mental health, and how to have conversations with their peers and adults in their lives.

The campaign also aims to increase the confidence and knowledge of adults in the community and professionals about how they can support children and young people to experience better mental health and wellbeing.

The campaign is a partnership between NSPCC Scotland and Clackmannanshire Planet Youth Coalition, created alongside young people. This campaign was developed using Planet Youth (2023/2024) and Plan International (2024) data highlighting the need for more support in this area.

This resource has been created by young people aged 12-15. It provides their first-hand tips, insights, and best practices for professionals working with children and young people, in a way that supports good mental health and wellbeing.

These back-to-basics strategies are crucial for effectively supporting children and young people and can be referred to whenever needed. While many of these strategies may already be part of your approach and are unlikely to be new to you, consider these prompts as a gentle reminder that you're on the right track.

The young people suggested that professionals could support better mental health and wellbeing for children and young people by...

Listening with Empathy

- **Take time to listen with empathy:** to understand properly what is going on, try not to be judgemental.



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- **Make us feel heard:** Repeating ourselves to multiple professionals and adults can be exhausting and make us think our feelings don't matter. Consider how you can make things easier, for instance when moving to a new provider, ask us what we would like shared with the new person beforehand, and what would make it easier for us.
- **Make space for us to talk, when we're ready to.** Creating a welcoming environment, leaving the door open or being available to have informal conversations regularly can help give us the confidence to talk to you and ask for support.

Communicating openly with us

- Make sure that we **know we can talk to you if we want to, when we're ready.**
- **Be open and honest.** Try not to jump to conclusions about what we know or what we would like or dislike.
- If you're unsure about something that impacts us, **just ask.**

Include us in Decision-Making

- **Support us to make informed decisions** that may impact our mental health and wellbeing.
- **Ask us how much, or how little, we would like to be involved** in decision making.
- Just because we said no once, doesn't mean this will always be the answer.
Check in regularly in case we have changed our mind.
- Share information with us and help us access further information on topics.
- Make sure we know that we can ask for **support and what services are available.**

Respect our Choices and Boundaries

- **Acknowledge growth:** Remember that learning and trying new things, as well as making mistakes, is a normal part of growing up.
- **Support despite disagreements.** Even if you don't agree with some of our choices, we still deserve support, respect and a non-judgmental space to feel heard and listened to.
- **Recognise individuality.** We are all individuals. What works for one young person may not work for another.

Support:

NSPCC Helpline – for advice and support with concerns about a child or young person.
Call **0808 800 5000** or email **help@nspcc.org.uk**.

Directory of Mental Health Supports – visit

<https://sites.google.com/view/directory-of-mental-health-sup/MHWBinClackmannanshire>.

Find us online!



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