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# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This is a guide for young people who have experienced sexual violence. Sexual violence can be physical or emotional, and can happen in person or online. Sexual violence includes things like:

- ✗ unwanted touching or kissing
- ✗ forcing someone to look at a sexual picture or film
- ✗ putting pressure on someone to send sexual pictures or do something sexual (whether online or in person)
- ✗ taunting and name-calling someone in a sexual way
- ✗ doing something sexual to someone who is drunk or high on drugs and therefore unable to **CONSENT**
- ✗ giving drugs or alcohol to someone in order to do something sexual to them (like 'spiking' someone's drink)
- ✗ **RAPE**

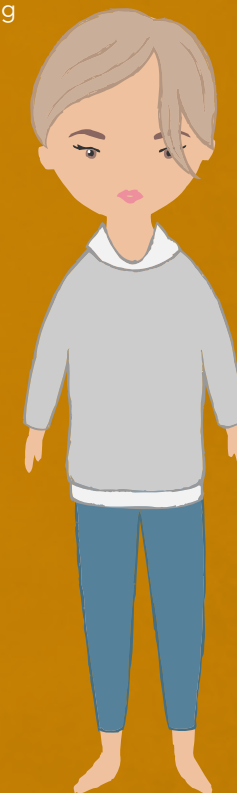
The perpetrator (the person who committed the act of sexual violence) can be anyone. They could be a family member, friend, a boyfriend or girlfriend, another young person who goes to the same school, or a stranger.

We use the word 'survivor' to describe a person who is a victim of sexual violence, because this word highlights that you have been through a lot, and you can now take the first steps towards feeling good again.

Any words that could be new to you are written in **GREEN** and you can find an explanation of them on page 30.

Everyone's experience of sexual violence is different, and different people find different things supportive. We hope this book will help you find out what works best for you.

Keep yourself safe when you read this; only read what feels comfortable for you. You can see all the topics and their page numbers on the contents page, which means it's easy to skip to the bits you find useful, and avoid the ones that aren't.



# TAKING THE FIRST STEPS

It may not be easy to talk about what happened and you may worry that others will not believe you.

However, it can also be very difficult to 'just forget about it', even if it happened some time ago, no matter how hard you try. Expressing your thoughts and feelings (such as talking to someone, writing or drawing) might help you feel better, and can be an important part of the healing process.

Healing from sexual violence can take time, and it is important to be patient with yourself and take things at a pace that is comfortable for you. There is no right or wrong way and the most important thing is to trust your own feelings. If it feels right, talk to someone you trust. It may be painful at first, but it can help.

You can contact STAR by text, phone or email and we will listen to you, believe you and work together with you. We will not tell you what to do. We will invite you to meet with a STAR worker at our centre, where we can talk to you about the different types of support we offer.

**THIS IS YOUR BOOK, WHICH MEANS IT IS COMPLETELY UP TO YOU HOW YOU USE IT. IT'S OKAY TO READ IT IN ORDER, SKIP TO THE BITS YOU WANT TO READ, OR EVEN LEAVE IT ALTOGETHER UNTIL YOU FEEL READY. IF YOU FEEL YOU NEED HELP STRAIGHT AWAY THERE ARE A LIST OF SUPPORTIVE ORGANISATIONS ON PAGE 27 WHO WOULD BE HAPPY TO LISTEN.**

**IF IT FEELS DIFFICULT TO TALK TO SOMEONE, THERE IS ALSO A LIST OF APPS YOU CAN DOWNLOAD ON PAGE 29.**

**REMEMBER IF YOU SHARE SOMETHING WITH PROFESSIONALS THAT MIGHT MAKE THEM THINK YOU OR ANOTHER YOUNG PERSON IS AT RISK OF HARM OR DANGER THEN THEY MIGHT HAVE TO TELL SOMEONE ELSE, LIKE THE POLICE. YOU CAN ASK TO TALK THROUGH THEIR 'CHILD PROTECTION' RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE YOU TALK TO THEM.**

# LOOKING AFTER MYSELF

Although working your way through this book will hopefully feel helpful, it's also important to prepare yourself for feeling upset too. Some of what you read may make you think about what has happened to you and you might remember things you didn't before or things you haven't thought about for a while. You might feel upset, angry or even that you don't know how to feel.

Here are some ideas to think about before you start:

*Where is a quiet, relaxing place I can read/fill out this book?*

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Like we talked about before, there is a contents list at the start of this book. Have a read of this to see if there are topics you might find more difficult and decide whether you feel ready to read these parts.

*The parts I do not want to look at just now are:*

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If you feel ready, take some time to fill out the First Aid Kit on the next page.

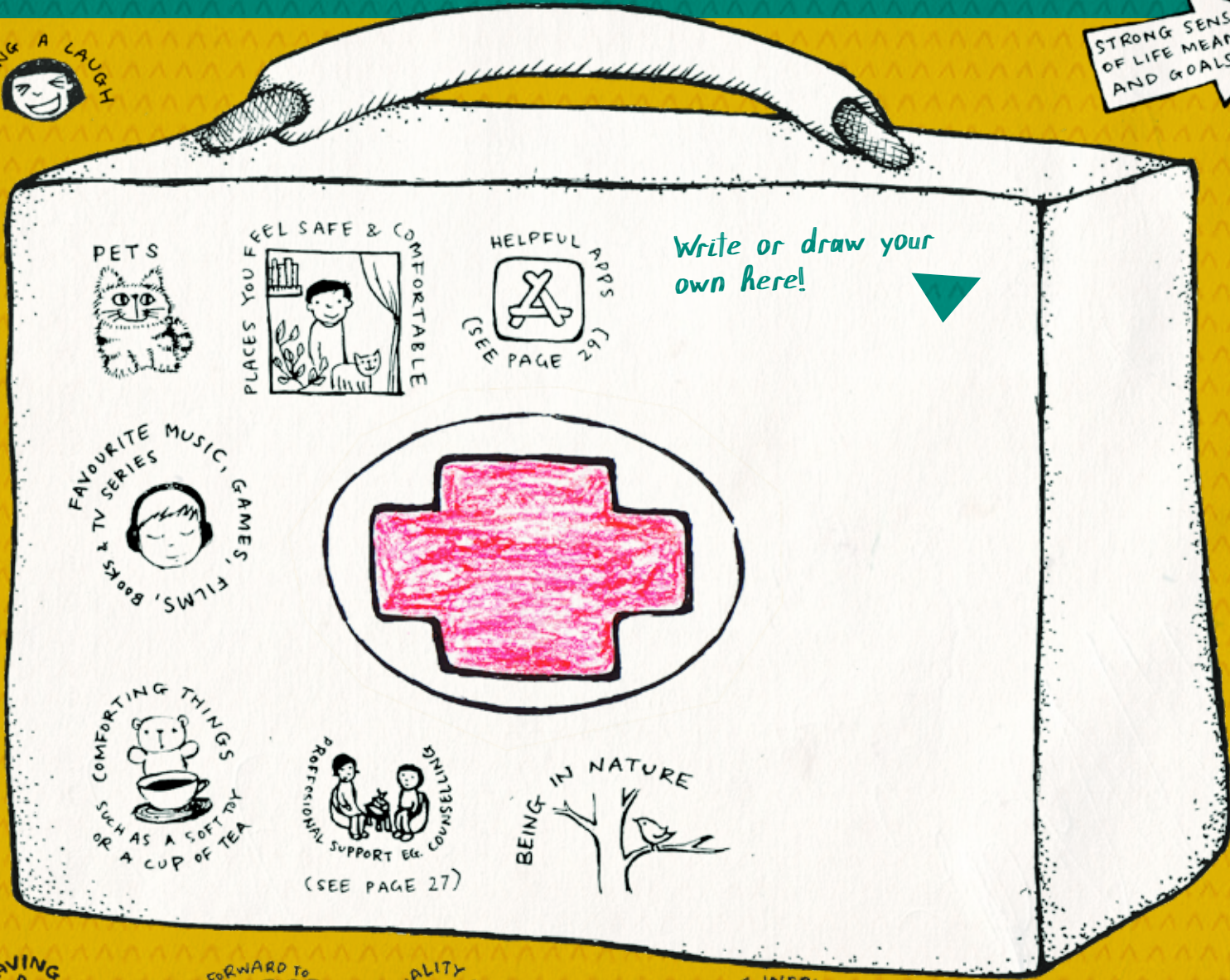
Feel free to take time to fill this in stage by stage.

It can be nice to pick something from your First Aid Kit to do afterwards to help you feel a bit better.

# FIRST AID KIT



STRONG SENSE OF LIFE MEANING AND GOALS



PETS



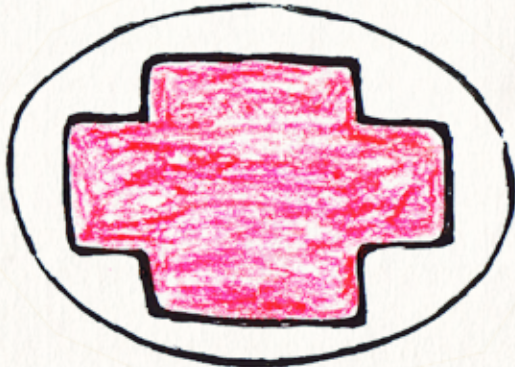
PLACES YOU FEEL SAFE & COMFORTABLE



HELPFUL APPS (SEE PAGE 26)



FAVOURITE MUSIC, GAMES, FILMS, BOOKS & TV SERIES



COMFORTING THINGS SUCH AS A SOFT TOY OR A CUP OF TEA



PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT E.G. COUNSELLING (SEE PAGE 27)



BEING IN NATURE



TIME FOR YOURSELF SELF-REFLECTION



LEARN A NEW SKILL



SELF-BELIEF



LIFE EXPERIENCE WISDOM KNOWLEDGE



EXERCISE



SLEEP



EATING WELL



HAVING A ROUTINE



SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO FUTURE PLANS



SPIRITUALITY RELIGION



ROLE MODELS



SOURCES OF INSPIRATION STORIES QUOTES



SELF CARE RELAXATION



THE HERE & NOW PRESENT FOCUS



# I'M A SURVIVOR!

Experiencing sexual violence can be life changing and we understand you may be going through a difficult and confusing time. However, it is also important to recognise your **SURVIVAL**.

It can be uplifting and empowering to celebrate your survival. Some ideas to do this might be to go for a meal, buy yourself a gift, or doing something fun with a friend.

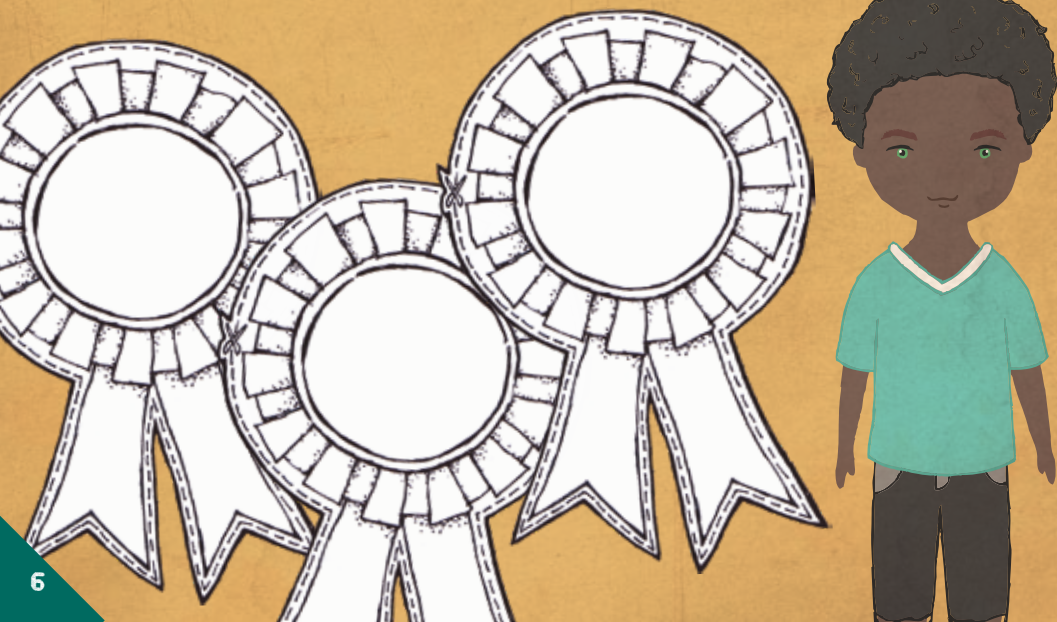
We use the word 'survivor' to describe a person who has experienced sexual violence, because this word highlights that you have been through a lot, and you can now take the first steps towards feeling good again.

## How will you celebrate your survival?

Fill in the medals with your achievements. Some examples might be:

*I made myself a cup of tea, listened to music that made me feel good, went out with friends, did some art work, dragged myself to school, washed my hair, went out for a walk, got out of bed or I let someone know how I am feeling.*

**What happened to me does not define who I am!**



# WHAT IS TRAUMA?

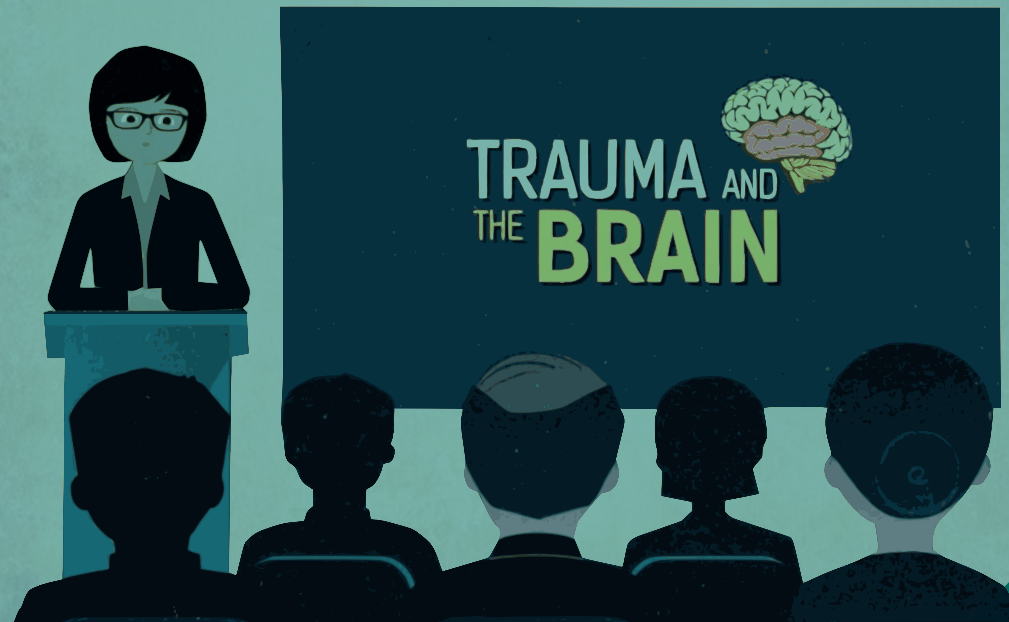
Sexual violence can cause **TRAUMA**. Trauma is a word that describes how some peoples' minds and bodies react when they experience or see something that is dangerous or threatening, and is out of their control. Some of these reactions can include feeling really scared, not wanting to go out and see or speak to people, problems sleeping, feeling angry towards other people, feeling as though the experience is happening again, or always feeling on guard or jumpy.

It might feel like you're going mad but it is a normal response to what you have gone through.

NHS Lanarkshire have made a short video that explains what happens in the brain during trauma. You can watch the video at this URL:



[bit.ly/ercctruma](https://bit.ly/ercctruma)



# WHAT AM I FEELING?

Everyone who has experienced sexual violence will feel differently and there is no right or wrong way to feel, but there are lots of common feelings and ways of coping.

Below is a picture of Sam, who is a survivor of sexual violence. The illustration shows some of the more challenging feelings and experiences that Sam is having.

Mark the words that match how you are feeling.

To find out more about each feeling, you can go to the page number marked below it.

feeling unsure about the person who did this to me p16  
 struggling with eating p21  
 questioning my sexual feelings p26  
 numb p14  
 lonely p19  
 angry p9  
 anxious or panicked p15  
 ashamed, guilty or to blame p18  
 self harming p20  
 low confidence and self esteem p17  
 taking risks p20  
 having nightmares or flashbacks p12  
 untrusting p19

MAYBE YOU'RE FEELING OR EXPERIENCING SOMETHING THAT SAM ISN'T. YOU CAN WRITE THESE ON THE BLANK SPACES IF YOU LIKE.

# "I FEEL ANGRY"

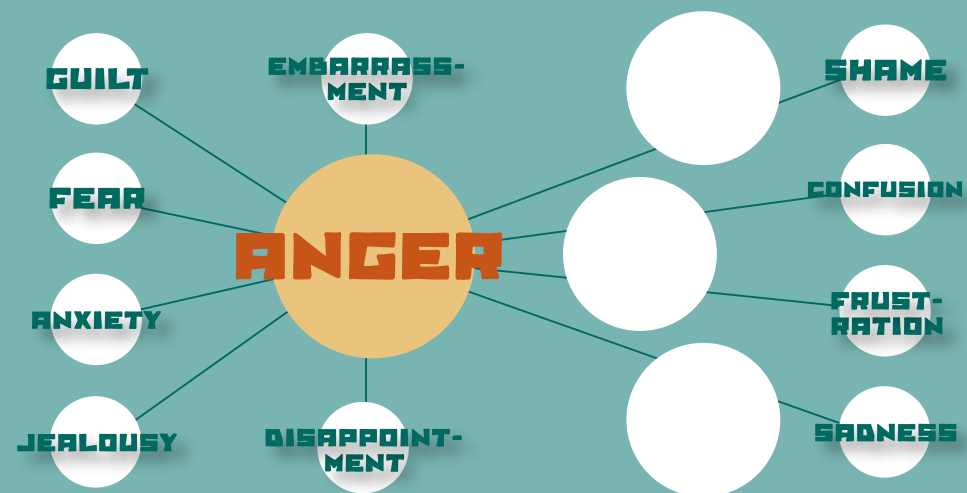
Lots of people can find it hard to show anger. We are told from an early age that being angry is not 'nice' so we learn to hide it. However, expressing anger can be helpful. Talking about or exploring anger creatively can be good for us and can give us the energy to find courage, power and strength to make helpful changes in our lives.

Some forms of anger can be less helpful and can sometimes be destructive. This can include bottling up angry feelings and not letting them out. Letting out these feelings in a safe way can help us understand our feelings better and be kind to ourselves.

## EXERCISE

SOMETIMES WE SAY THAT ANGER CAN'T GO ANYWHERE ALONE, IT NEEDS FRIENDS TO HELP IT ALONG. OFTEN WE CAN'T SEE THESE FRIENDS BECAUSE ANGER CAN BE SO BIG!

BELOW ARE SOME OF THE FRIENDS ANGER HAS, DO YOU THINK YOU FEEL ANY OF THESE EMOTIONS BEHIND YOUR ANGER? COLOUR IN THE ONES WHICH YOU HAVE FELT, OR DO FEEL NOW. THERE ARE ALSO SOME BLANK CIRCLES TO ADD YOUR OWN.



You may feel strange, tired or upset after thinking about anger. Remember to be kind to yourself and that you are brave and strong to face up to these difficult feelings. Taking deep breaths can help, drinking a hot drink, doing an activity or something that makes you feel good.

# “I KEEP REMEMBERING SCARY THINGS AS THOUGH THEY’RE HAPPENING AGAIN”

When we remember things as though they are happening to us again we call them **FLASHBACKS**. Flashbacks can be scary and frightening. They can last a long or short time and are not like an ordinary memory, but like you are actually experiencing a frightening event again. A flashback can come back to us through what we see, hear or feel.

They are a normal part of your body and mind trying to make sense of what happened and can get less scary and happen less often as you start to feel better.

## Things to remember

What is happening is normal.

Remind yourself that this a flashback and you are not being hurt now.

If a flashback happens when you are not at home try and find a place where you feel safe and focus on your breathing.



Flashbacks can be tiring and it might take a while until you feel okay. Try to do something that makes you feel good such as listening to your favourite music or going for a walk.

Take a look at page 29 for useful website/apps for relaxation and breathing exercises.

## Things to help after a flashback

Try and notice what is around you just now:

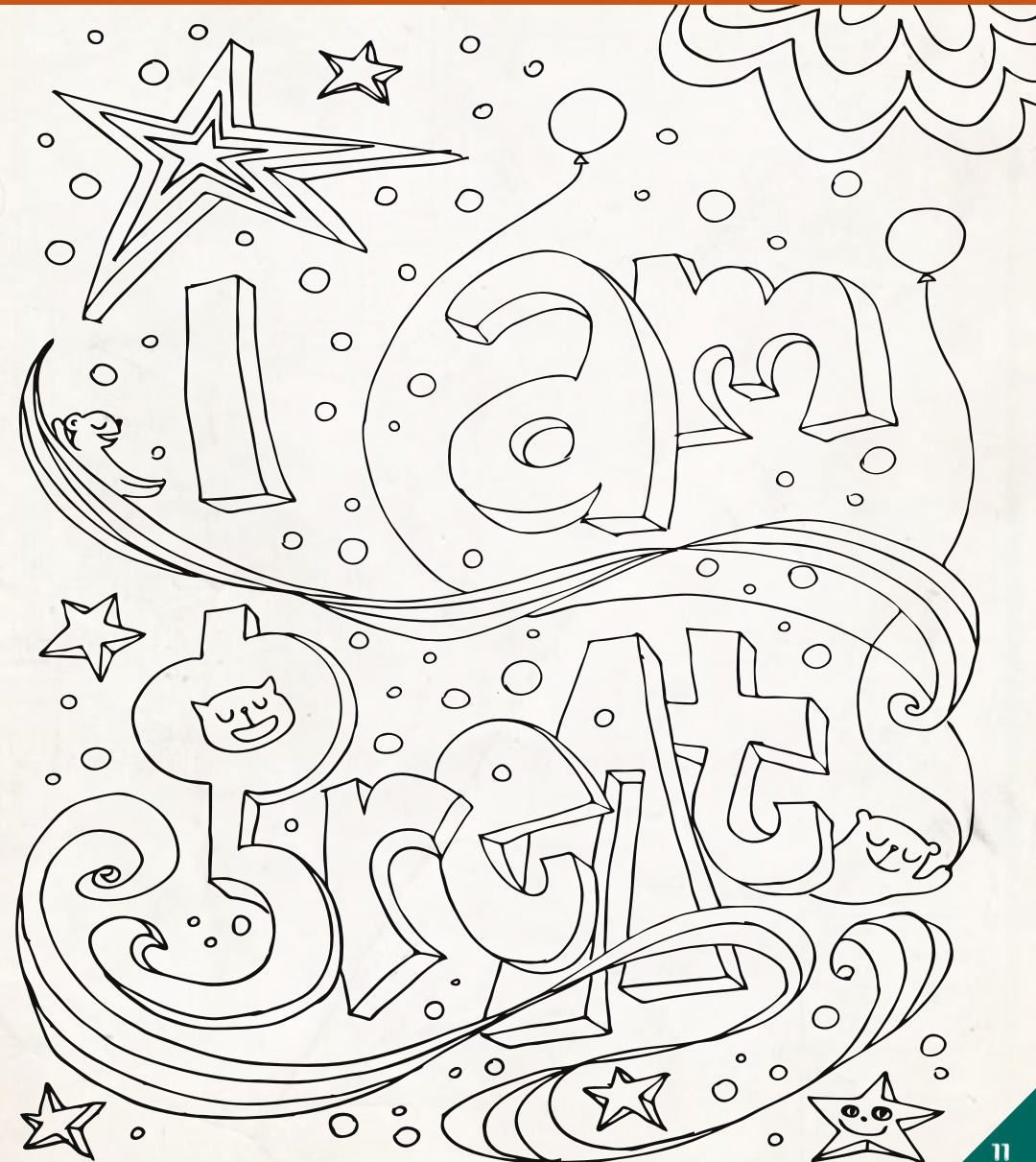
- What is around you now?
- What can you see and hear?

Putting an elastic band around your wrist and ‘pinging it’ can help to remind yourself you are safe, and not back in the memory.

Carrying something like a small stone or a pebble to hold can also help to comfort people.

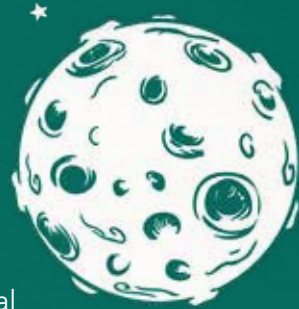
# COLOURING PAGE

Give yourself permission to take a break. Working through this book can be hard (and it’s important to look after yourself as much as you can). Why not take a breath, grab a drink and a snack and take some time to colour in the drawing below.



# “I AM HAVING TROUBLE SLEEPING AND HAVE SCARY NIGHTMARES”

Nightmares and **NIGHT TERRORS** are common for people who have gone through something frightening. They're one of the ways your brain tries to make sense of what happened.



When you wake from one it's useful to remember where you are and that you are safe. Nightmares are a strange experience of pictures, feelings and sounds which are no longer real or happening to us but which feel very real at the time.

After a nightmare people can sometimes feel scared, upset, shaken, tense and confused. It can be helpful to ground yourself in the present. Try to do something to relax such as having a hot drink, watching TV or listening to music. Sometimes if there is someone who is kind to you at home, it can be good to find them and tell them what is happening for you so they can comfort you.

Find further support on page 29 for useful website/apps for relaxation and breathing exercises.

## EXERCISE

REMEMBER NIGHTMARES ARE NOT REAL, THEY ARE JUST STORIES. IF YOU HAVE REGULAR NIGHTMARES THAT FEEL SIMILAR IT CAN BE HELPFUL TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOU CAN CHANGE THE STORY AND HOW YOU FEEL. CHOOSE A POINT IN YOUR NIGHTMARE TO INTRODUCE A CHARACTER SUCH AS SOMEONE YOU LOOK UP TO OR A MADE UP CHARACTER SUCH AS A SUPERHERO. CHANGE THE STORY SO THAT THE NIGHTMARE HAS A GOOD ENDING.

Draw or write about the good ending here:

A large white rectangular box intended for drawing or writing about the good ending of a nightmare.

You might want to think about your new story before you go to sleep next time.

# SADNESS & LOSS

People affected by abuse can experience extreme sadness, **DEPRESSION** and a feeling of **LOSS** – a loss of what they were like before the trauma; a loss of happiness, joy, fun, and adventure; a loss of knowing who you used to be.

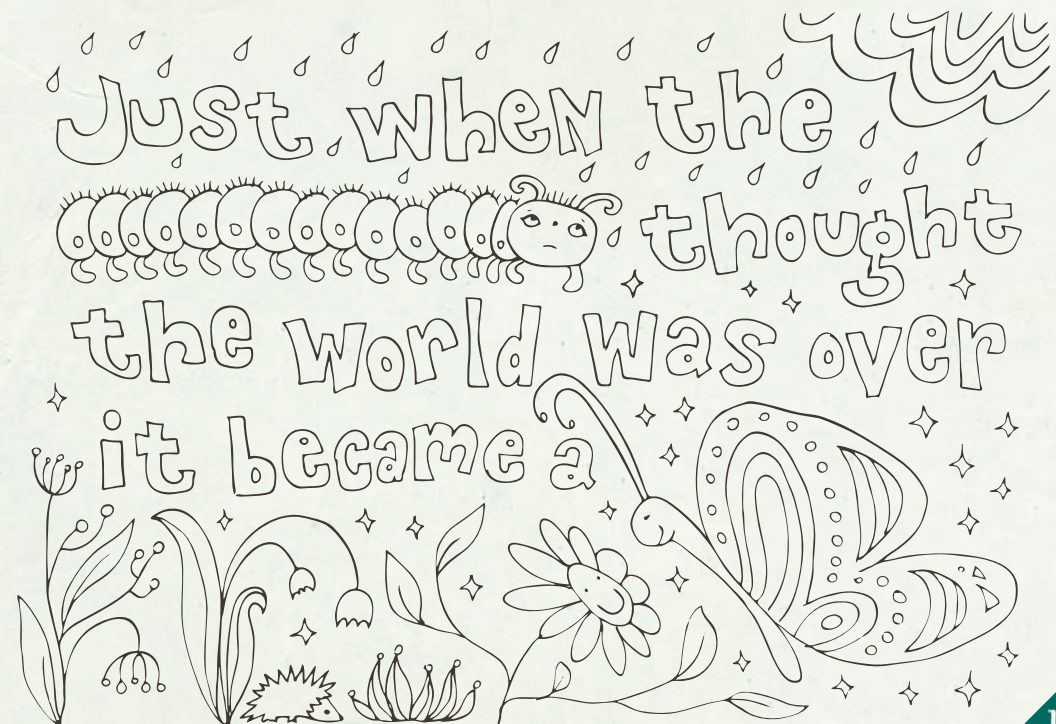
These feelings are common and it's okay to feel sad and cry.

## EXERCISE

ALLOW YOURSELF TO THINK ABOUT ANY FEELINGS YOU MAY HAVE OF SADNESS OR LOSS.

BEFORE EXPLORING THESE FEELINGS THINK ABOUT WHAT IS COMFORTING FOR YOU SUCH AS A WARM BLANKET OR CUDDLING A SOFT TOY.

REMEMBER NO FEELING WILL LAST FOREVER.





# NUMBNESS & SPACING OUT

Sometimes survivors of sexual violence can feel numb, shut off and spaced out. This is called **DISSOCIATION**. It is a way in which the brain disconnects from the body and the environment. Everyone dissociates now and again when they daydream, but for people who have survived trauma it might happen more often or more intensely. Dissociation can happen when what is happening, or what has happened, to someone feels like it's too much to handle.

One young person, Ellie, has shared what dissociation is like for her:



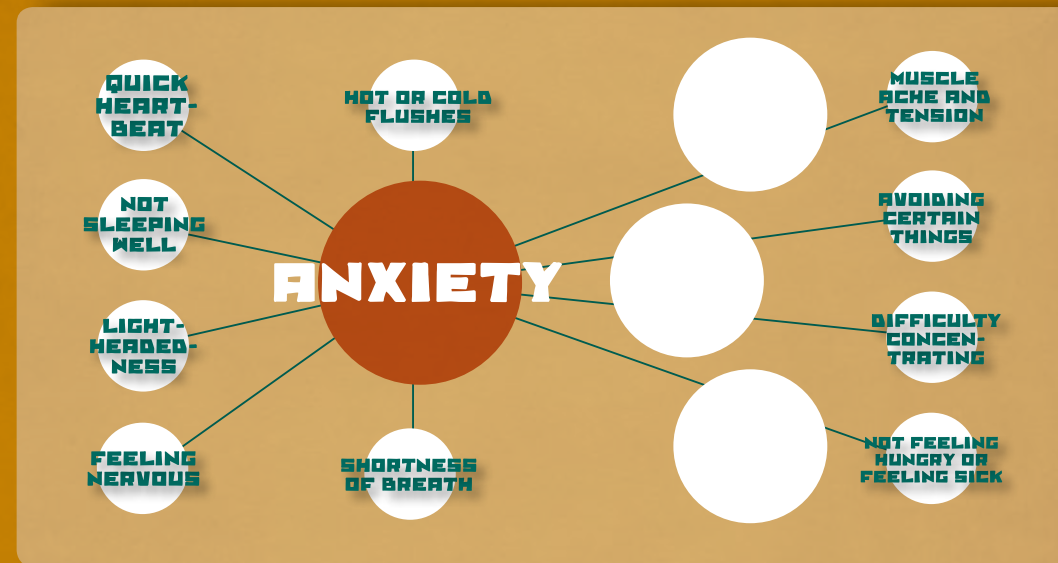
*"It can feel like time speeds up or slows down, or I can just zone out. Sometimes, if I look at an object like a lamp or a picture, it can seem sharply focused at first, but then it goes hazy. There is no emotion, I feel floaty and it's kind of cold. I feel like I'm not totally there, like I'm separate, watching a movie, a bit distant. Occasionally I can tell it's going to happen because I start to feel a bit separate from my body, and floaty. But often I don't really know till afterwards that I've 'left the building', so to say."*

For some people, touching a stone or shell can help, so they keep one in their pocket or bag. For others, counting their breaths or focusing on how their feet feel when they stand up helps them to feel **GROUND** again. It might be helpful to experiment to find out what works for you. There are more examples in the support page at the back of the book (see page 29).

# FEELING ANXIOUS & PANICKY

Most people feel **ANXIOUS** and panicky now and again, for example, just before an exam. However, some people who have experienced sexual violence can feel it so strongly and so often that it gets in the way of their everyday lives. Different people experience anxiety and panic in different ways.

Do you have any of these signs and symptoms of anxiety? Colour the ones you have experienced, there are also some blank spaces for you to add in your own.



Samantha, a young person who has worked with one of our Counsellors, has some advice:

*"I found that doing exercise has really helped me to cope. When I go running, it makes me feel as if I have power over my panicky feelings. I feel out of breath and my heart is beating fast because I'm choosing to push myself. Not because of panic. But I know that running is not for everyone. Maybe you can go walking, ride a bike or even swing your arms around a few times a day."*

If exercise doesn't work for you, the following relaxation exercises might help:

- ✔ Breathing in slowly, counting to three, holding your breath as you count to two, then breathing out slowly, counting to six.
- ✔ Sitting down, tense the muscles in your thighs as you count to five then slowly and in a controlled way, release the tension.
- ✔ Gently tap the inside of one of your arms with a flat hand, working up from your wrist to the top of your arm, then tap the outside, working downwards. Repeat on the other arm.

# “I HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THE PERSON WHO DID THIS TO ME”

Very often, people who have experienced sexual violence were assaulted by someone they know. So they are likely to have mixed feelings about the person. Sometimes people only have one clear feeling about the person and that is normal too: everyone is different.

Sarah, one of the counsellors at STAR, wants to share what she has learned from working with young people:

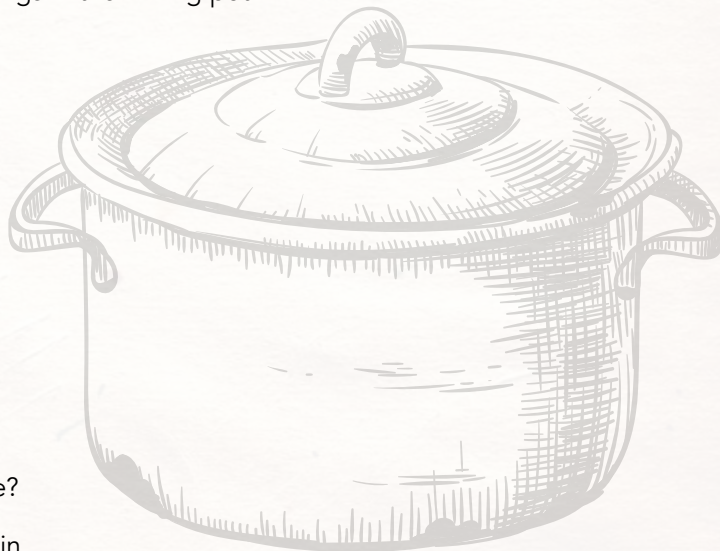
*“I have worked with many young people who have mixed feelings about the person who perpetrated the sexual violence. They might feel angry about what has happened, frightened and sad, yet they might also care about the perpetrator and not want them to be hurt or embarrassed. The young person might also feel love towards the perpetrator, and remember some of the good times they shared. This is especially common if the perpetrator was or is a boyfriend or girlfriend, a friend or a family member. It can be hard to cope with all these feelings.”*

How do you feel towards the person who did it? Write all the words you can think of to describe your feelings in the mixing pot.

Some examples are: ‘angry’, ‘rage’, ‘sad’, ‘disappointed’, ‘let down’, ‘scared’, ‘hate’, ‘love’, ‘tender’, ‘caring’, ‘pity’, ‘cautious’, ‘disgust’, ‘warm’, ‘hopeful’, ‘frustrated’.

What colour is your mixing pot, containing all the feelings you have?

If you want to, colour it in.



# CONFIDENCE & SELF-ESTEEM

Often after going through a trauma your **CONFIDENCE** and/or **SELF-ESTEEM** might be knocked. Think about how good you felt about yourself before the trauma and how you feel about yourself now.

CIRCLE THE NUMBER IN THE BEFORE COLUMN THAT FITS THE BEST.

THINK ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL NOW AND CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT FITS.

## BEFORE

## NOW

- |   |                            |   |                           |
|---|----------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | I DIDN'T LIKE MYSELF       | 1 | I DON'T LIKE MYSELF       |
| 2 | I LIKED MYSELF A LITTLE    | 2 | I LIKE MYSELF A LITTLE    |
| 3 | I LIKED MYSELF QUITE A LOT | 3 | I LIKE MYSELF QUITE A LOT |
| 4 | I FELT GREAT ABOUT MYSELF  | 4 | I FEEL GREAT ABOUT MYSELF |

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

YES

NO

What are 3 things that you would like to be able to still do now, but that you find difficult since the trauma? (for example speaking out in the classroom)

What are 3 things you have found difficult since your trauma, but that you have managed to do anyway? (for example going to school)

# SHAME, GUILT & BLAME

No matter what happened you are not to blame. However, after going through sexual violence, lots of young people (and adults) say they feel **ASHAMED, GUILTY**, and like they are to blame. Here are some things that young people might say and how we would respond:

*"Everyone knows I fancied them. Who will believe that they did this to me?"*

Knowing someone fancies them does not give the perpetrator the right to sexually assault or rape the person. You have the right to say what you do or do not want to do sexually, regardless of whether or not you fancy the person.

*"I had too much to drink."*

If you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you are not able to give **CONSENT** to sexual contact, and the person who takes advantage of that vulnerability is guilty of rape or sexual assault.

It is **not** your fault. No one asks to be sexually abused. **The only person to blame is the person who abused you.**

If you're still struggling with blame, why not try to separate fact from fiction:

## FICTION



I think it was my fault because

## FACT



... but it wasn't my fault because

*E.g. I didn't agree to it*  
*E.g. I didn't get to make a choice*

# TRUST & ISOLATION

After experiencing sexual violence sometimes you can feel like you don't want to talk anyone and would prefer to be on your own, but the downside of this is that you can then feel isolated and lonely.

There is no right or wrong way to be. Why not have a think about what you like about being on your own and what you like about being with others.

*What feels good about being on my own?*



*What feels good about being around others?*



It is very common after experiencing sexual violence to feel less trusting of those around you, especially if the perpetrator was someone you knew and trusted before. You may find yourself questioning whether you can trust your friends or family members. It can take time to trust your own instincts and those around you again.

Think about who or what you trust. For example, you might have friends or family you trust, or even a pet. You might also find trust in other ways, such as being able to express your feelings creatively by writing or drawing, or having a place that feels safe and just for you.

## WHO OR WHAT I TRUST



# SELF-HARM

Sometimes people cause physical harm to themselves. There are many forms of self-harm which include cutting, burning, bruising, taking dangerous risks, excessive drinking or drug taking.

**i** There are different reasons why people self-harm. Some feel that it can help them feel better emotionally, while others feel that it gives them a sense of calm and control, but this relief often doesn't last long. People who self-harm often hide their injuries because they fear others' reactions or disapproval, and this can affect relationships and make them feel more alone. Try not to be angry or blame yourself for your self-harm; self-harm is a way of coping when things feel too difficult, but there are lots of things you can do if you would like to stop.

If you self-harm, you might want to think about:

- ✓ Talking to someone you trust and find supportive
- ✓ Doing something that helps you relax and feel good about yourself (see the First Aid Kit on p4)
- ✓ Contacting a professional who can help with your self-harm and ways to keep safe (see p27 for helplines & apps)
- ✓ Developing new ways to release strong feelings such as:

<p><i>Drawing or painting what you feel inside</i></p> 	<p><i>Throwing stones into the river or sea</i></p> 	<p><i>Drawing a picture or writing a letter of what's bothering you, &amp; ripping it up</i></p> 	<p><i>Tearing or scrunching up scrap paper/newspapers</i></p> 	<p><i>Pinging an elastic band on your wrist</i></p> 	<p><i>Going for a walk, run, swim or any other form of physical exercise</i></p> 
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# SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

After experiencing trauma you might feel very low and alone, it may feel like you cannot cope and even that you don't want to be here anymore, which can lead to thoughts of **SUICIDE**. It can feel like you will always feel like this and that there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

Sarah, a STAR Young Survivors' Counselling Support Worker, shared: 'I know this may be impossible to believe, but you will not always feel this way and things CAN and WILL get better. I have supported many young people who felt suicidal and had lost all hope of ever feeling like themselves or happy again. Over time they have been able to move on with their lives, and many have even felt better than they did before.'

No matter how alone you feel with these thoughts there is always someone you can talk to and who will listen,

# COMFORT EATING & LOSS OF APPETITE

During times of stress, many people find that their eating habits are affected. Some people lose their appetite and eat a lot less, while others eat for comfort.

You might have an eating problem if you try very hard to control what and how much you eat, feel out of control with food, or eat and then make yourself sick. You are not alone. Many people find that when some parts of their lives don't feel right, they try to cope by controlling their eating.

Sometimes it can be helpful to think of this way of eating as a 'frenemy'. Initially, this friend felt comforting, kind, and perhaps helpful to have around. They made you feel better when you felt low or sometimes when you felt nothing at all. But soon this friend started to take control, encourage you to do things that weren't so good for you, things that made you feel hungry or sick. Maybe this friend even started to turn on you, say nasty or negative things to you or put you down.

They've turned into a frenemy. This frenemy might start to go everywhere you go, and it can be hard to figure out which thoughts are yours and which thoughts belong to them. It can be helpful to try and take back a little control from this eating 'frenemy' and put them somewhere we can't see or hear them.

EXERCISE

IN THE SPACE, DRAW THIS FRENEMY - IS IT A PERSON? AN ANIMAL? A WORD? MAYBE EVEN A COLOUR? BESIDE THIS FRENEMY DRAW A BOX. YOU CAN LET THE FRENEMY KNOW WHEN THEY'RE NOT WELCOME AND PUT THEM INTO THIS BOX.

*Try to speak about your experience with someone you trust. You can also contact the agencies or use the apps listed on page 29.*

"The darkest hour is just before the dawn."

whether this be a family member, friend, teacher or by contacting one of the helplines below:

**Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline:** 08088 01 03 02  
[www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk)

**Childline:** 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**HOPELINEUK:** 0800 068 4141 [papyrus-uk.org/hopelineuk](http://papyrus-uk.org/hopelineuk)

**Samaritans:** 116 123 [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

# MAKE A SELF-CARE BOX

A 'self-care box' is a box for you: a place where you can put things to help you feel good, especially for those difficult days.

You can draw your 'self-care box', find or buy a box, or even decorate an old shoe box.

## What can I put in my 'self-care box'?

You can put anything in your self-care box that makes you feel happy, comforted or calm. Think of your self-care box as being there to look after you when you need it most.

Everyone is different and finds different things helpful. You might not be sure what helps yet. Over time you can change and add items into your box to make the best self-care for you. Perhaps taking some time out to:

- have a hot chocolate
- look at photos of family, friends or pets who make you smile
- enjoy a bubble bath
- read inspirational quotes that help to cheer you up.

You don't need to be feeling low to use your self-care box; it is there for you anytime you want to take some time. You could aim to use something from your box once a week.



# WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT BEING ME?

Write or draw as many positive things as you can about being you. It may feel difficult at first but it's important to remember that even in difficult times there is always something positive, even if it feels like a small thing.

Try and think outside the box. The positive things can be anything about you or your life. Some examples might be you're good at sports or a good listener or that you have caring people around you.



Now have a think about what you'd like in the near future, for example to feel more confident or to do well at school. Think about what will make you happy! Add these to your picture.

## WHAT ARE MY HOPES FOR THE FUTURE?

What are the top 3 things I want first...and how can I work toward them?

WHAT I WOULD LIKE	HOW CAN I WORK TOWARD IT?
1.	
2.	
3.	

# RELATIONSHIPS

Having people around for support can help your **RECOVERY**. These are the people who believe what happened to you and won't make you talk about things if you don't want to.

Some people might not know how to react when you tell them about what happened to you. This is not your fault: it may just be a shock to them. Remember you are not alone and can call, text or email STAR.

**THINK ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE WITH SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY OR FRIENDSHIP GROUPS. YOU MIGHT WANT TO TRY THIS WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE TOO, SUCH AS YOUR TEACHER OR PET.**

## EXERCISE

Who is this person to you?

What is good about the relationship?

What is bad about the relationship?

How much do you trust this person? Do you trust them in some ways and not in others?

How do you help them?

How do they help you?

How has your relationship been affected by what has happened? What would you change about this?

What are your hopes for the future of this relationship?

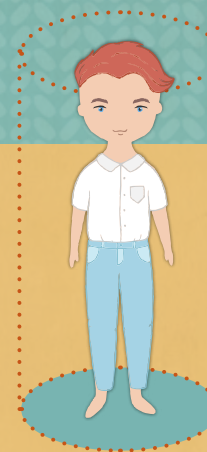


# BOUNDARIES

**BOUNDARIES** are personal rules that can help us to be clear about what is ok for us in different relationships and what is not. It might be physical closeness, it might be about what people say or don't say or whether another person is supportive to you or not.

For example, you might feel happy and comfortable for one friend to hug you, but you might not like a hug from a different friend.

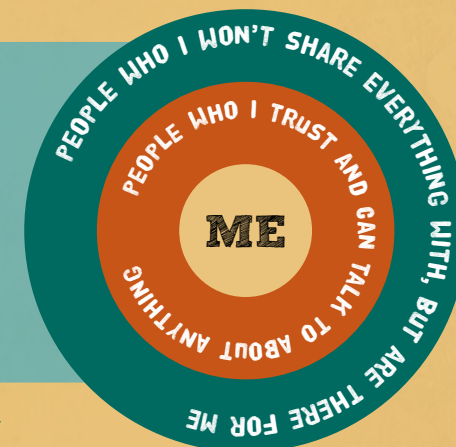
MY PERSONAL AREA



DON'T STAND IN IT!

## EXERCISE

IMAGINE YOU'RE STOOD IN THE YELLOW CIRCLE ON THE RIGHT. THINK OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU SUCH AS YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, TEACHERS, DOCTORS, LOCAL SHOPKEEPER, NEIGHBOURS. WOULD ANY OF THESE PEOPLE BE WITH YOU IN THE YELLOW CIRCLE? WHO WOULD BE IN THE ORANGE AND GREEN CIRCLES? WHO WOULD BE OUTSIDE OF ALL THE CIRCLES?



Now think of what boundaries or rules you have for each of the people in each circle.

Try to list things you are ok with and things you are not for each person. There might be some things you're unsure about which is fine, it can be a helpful exercise for people to realise that they have boundaries in place already – they are just things we don't usually actively think about.

PERSON	OK	NOT OK	UNSURE
My doctor	Take my blood	Give a kiss	Talk to about my feelings

### i

Everyone has boundaries. They keep us safe, and help us to feel comfortable. After **TRAUMA** our boundaries can sometimes change – it's okay to readjust your boundaries to help you feel safe and comfortable again.

People can *push our boundaries*, which means they're testing how strong our boundaries are. Talking to people and being clear about your boundaries is important so people close to you can understand what's ok for you and what's not.

# SEXUAL FEELINGS

During this point in your life there are going to be so many changes happening to you. Changes to what you believe, who you want to be, what you want to do, and most visibly – changes to your body! These body changes may mean that you start to experience new feelings or sensations you've never felt before. You may be starting to figure out who you're attracted to, and if you do find someone attractive your body might show it!

## All these changes are totally normal.

However, these feelings and sensations can be even more confusing if you experienced physical pleasure during the assault or abuse. You might feel guilty or shamed for having these feelings, but it is important to remember that your body is designed to have automatic responses to certain physical contact, and these can include the feeling of sexual pleasure even when it is not wanted.

### REMEMBER...

You have no reason to feel **GUILTY** or **ASHAMED**, no matter how your body responded to what happened. It's always your choice if, how, and when you would like to have sex or do something sexual.

## SPOILER ALERT: IT'S OKAY TO BE CONFUSED!

If you feel confused about sex and your body, or you're not sure what (if anything) you want sexually, don't worry! Almost everyone goes through periods of sexual confusion in their life, even those who seem totally sure of themselves. *Sexual uncertainty is 100% normal.*



# PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

There are many **AGENCIES** and places you can get professional support to talk about or explore what is happening for you.

Have a look through the list below and you can also have a look through their websites to look into what types of support they can provide.

## HELPLINES, TEXT SUPPORT, AND ONLINE SUPPORT

### GENERAL

STAR Project at Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre: **07583 158 058** or [star@ercc.scot](mailto:star@ercc.scot)  
Rape Crisis Scotland: **08088 01 03 02** or [www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk)  
Childline: **0800 1111** or [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)  
Young Minds: text **85258** or [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
NHS 24: **111**  
Police Scotland Non-Emergency: **101**

### BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY

Multi-Cultural Family Base: **0131 467 7052** or [www.mcfb.org.uk](http://www.mcfb.org.uk)  
Saheliya: **0131 556 9302** or [www.saheliya.co.uk](http://www.saheliya.co.uk)  
Scottish Refugee Council: **0141 223 7979** or [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)  
Shakti Women's Aid: **0131 475 2399** or [www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk](http://www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk)

### DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Crew: **0131 220 3404** or [www.crew.scot](http://www.crew.scot)

# PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

## HELPLINES, TEXT SUPPORT, AND ONLINE SUPPORT CONTD.

### EATING DISORDERS

Beat Eating Disorders:  
[www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

### SEXUAL HEALTH

Chalmers Sexual Health Centre:  
**0131 536 1070** or  
[lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk](http://lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk)  
Caledonia Youth: **0131 229 3596**  
Archway: **0141 211 8175** or  
[www.archway.sandyford.org](http://www.archway.sandyford.org)

### LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender)

LGBT Youth Scotland: Text **07786 202 370** or [www.lgbtyouth.org.uk](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk)  
Lothian Lesbian and Gay Switchboard: **0131 556 4049**  
Lothian Transgender Support Programme:  
**0131 523 1104** or [www.scottishtrans.org](http://www.scottishtrans.org)

### Specifically for those identifying as MEN & BOYS

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably): [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)  
Men's Health Forum: [www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)  
M Power: **0808 808 4321**

### SUICIDE & SELF-HARM

NHS 24: **111**  
PAPYRUS:  
**0800 068 4141** or  
[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)  
Samaritans:  
**116 123** or  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)  
Breathing Space:  
**0800 838587** or  
[www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot)

## APPS

### RELAXATION

Headspace      Smiling Mind      Colorfy: Colouring Book  
Calm              Mindful Gnats

### MOOD BOOSTERS

SuperBetter  
#Reasons2

### SELF-HARM & SUICIDE

Calm Harm  
Stay Alive

### ANXIETY, DEPRESSION & LOW MOOD

MindShift  
Mood Tracker

### RECOVERY FROM EATING DISORDERS, & BODY IMAGE

RR Eating Disorder Management  
Rise Up: Eating Disorder Help





# GLOSSARY (THE BIT THAT EXPLAINS WHAT THINGS MEAN)

## AGENCIES

Safe spaces, phone lines, text support or web chats with professionals who will be happy to help you

## ASHAMED

Feeling embarrassed or guilty about something that has happened or something you've done

## ANXIOUS

Feeling or showing lots of worry or nervousness about something

## BOUNDARIES

Rules about behaviour that is and isn't okay

## CONFIDENCE

The quality of being certain of your abilities or of having trust in people, plans, or the future

## CONSENT

Giving permission for something to happen. Consent means 'free agreement'. If someone is doing something because they feel like they have to, or like they don't have a choice not to do it, or they don't understand what they are doing or aren't in control, then that isn't a 'free' agreement, and so it's not consent. If someone is drunk or under the effect of drugs, or being threatened, coerced, or pressured, then they aren't in control of what is happening to them and can't give 'free agreement' – they can't consent. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity, which means that you are allowed to stop at any point. Just because someone consented to something in the past, doesn't mean that they then automatically consent to doing it again in the future. Similarly, just because someone consented to one particular sexual activity, doesn't mean that they consent to also doing another activity. If someone doesn't say 'no' that doesn't mean they have consented - consent isn't the lack of a 'no', it is a clear, informed, and enthusiastic yes!

## DEPRESSION

A feeling of emptiness, sadness, and wanting to be alone that goes on for a long time

## DISSOCIATION

A feeling of being disconnected from yourself or the world around you

## FLASHBACK

A recurring, very real feeling mental image of a past traumatic experience

## GROUNDED

Having an awareness of your surroundings and feeling connected with your body in the present; feeling emotionally stable and well balanced

## GUILTY

Feeling of responsibility for something that happened

## LOSS

Feeling without something you used to have

## NIGHT TERRORS

Feeling of fear which wakes you up from sleep

## PERPETRATOR

The person who caused the sexual violence

## RAPE and SEXUAL ASSAULT

Rape and Sexual Assault are serious crimes which happen when someone is made to take part in sexual acts which they do not consent to (freely agree to). In law, if a man or boy forces their penis into another person's vagina, anus (bottom) or mouth, this is classed as rape. Rape can happen to anyone, of any gender. Sexual assault includes many forms of sexual violence, ranging from unwanted touching or kissing, to being forced to perform sexual acts

## RECOVERY

A return to a 'normal' state of health, mind, or strength

## SELF-ESTEEM

Confidence in yourself and the things you do

## SUICIDE

Suicide means to end your life intentionally. Experiencing thoughts of suicide can be frightening. Thoughts of suicide can seemingly come from nowhere or begin as fleeting thoughts of wanting to disappear or escape. They may progress into feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness and planning or taking steps to end your life. You may feel alone, but in fact, it is estimated that 1 in 4 young people experience thoughts of suicide at some point in their lives. If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide, it's important to know that there is help available (PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide, from [papyrus-uk.org/feeling-suicidal](http://papyrus-uk.org/feeling-suicidal)). See page 20 for more information about Suicidal Thoughts and where you can get help

## SURVIVAL

Continuing to live or exist even after something bad has happened

## TRAUMA

How some peoples mind and bodies react when they experience or see something that is dangerous or threatening, and is out of their control

# NOTES

Use this page for anything you feel you might want to explore or think about further or use it to do an exercise again or just doodle if that feels right!



edinburgh rape crisis centre  
supporting survivors of sexual violence

17 Claremont Crescent, Edinburgh, EH7 4HX  
Business: 0131 557 6737 // info@ercc.scot  
Support service: 0131 556 9437 // support@ercc.scot  
Facebook Edinburgh RapeCrisis // Twitter @EdinRapeCrisis

Registered in Scotland as a private company limited by guarantee No.291742 and recognised as a charity in Scotland: Ref SC 006208

# QUOTATIONS

*Everyone has inside them a piece of good news. The good news is you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is.*

Anne Frank

*In times of stress, the best thing we can do for each other is to listen with our ears and our hearts and to be assured that our questions are just as important as our answers.*

Fred "Mister" Rogers

*Fall seven times, stand up eight.*

Japanese Proverb

*Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.*

Attributed to Carl Bard

*There is nothing permanent except change.*

Heraclitus

*Don't feel stupid if you don't like what everyone else pretends to love.*

Emma Watson

*Create a life that feels good on the inside, not just one which looks good on the outside.*

Unknown

*Courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid. Courage means you don't let fear stop you.*

Bethany Hamilton



