Ready2Comply
TOOLKITS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

DIRECT WORK RESOURCE · EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Ride the Wave

Self-harm and big feelings

A calm, colourful, ready-to-use direct work pack to help young people understand big feelings, build a calm-down toolkit and a safety plan, and know who to talk to – written to safe-messaging guidance.

- Ages 11–17
- 1:1 or small groups
- 3–4 sessions
- Editable Word

SAMPLE

Worker's guide

Session plans, responding to self-harm, escalation to the DSL, safe messaging, recording

Activity sheets

Understanding big feelings, feelings detective, 12 scenario cards, calm-down toolkit, safety plan

Check-in

Unscored young person's check-in with worker guide, observation checklist, record sheet – plus a certificate

For children's homes, supported accommodation and schools · British English · Version 1.0 · November 2026

Guidance and helplines were checked against NICE NG225, NHS, Samaritans and Childline sources in November 2026 (see Sources, page 21). No methods are described anywhere in this pack.

Ready2Comply is independent and is not affiliated with, or endorsed by, NICE, the NHS or any charity named in this pack. Services are listed so young people and staff know where to get help.

Understanding big feelings

Everyone has them – here's how they work

Feelings are waves

They build, peak and pass – even the really big ones.

💡 You can ride the wave.

Your alarm system

When you feel under threat, your body gets ready to fight, run or freeze.

💡 It's trying to protect you.

Body clues

Hot face, tight chest, fast heart, clenched fists, tummy ache.

💡 Spot them early.

Thoughts aren't facts

When you're upset, your mind can tell you the worst story.

💡 Ask: is it really true?

Bottling it up

Pushing feelings down can make them come out bigger later.

💡 Let them out safely.

Self-harm

Some people hurt themselves to cope when feelings feel too much.

💡 It's a sign of pain – help is there.

Talking helps

Saying it out loud can make a feeling smaller.

💡 Pick someone you trust.

Your toolkit

Different things help at different times – breathing, moving, music.

💡 Find what works for you.

You matter

However you feel, you deserve support.

💡 Asking for help is strong.

Did you know?

Talking about difficult feelings doesn't make them worse – it's often the first step to feeling better. **Childline** is free and there day or night on **0800 1111**.

SAMPLE

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Real-life situations

Cut out the cards or pick one. What's going on? What would you do?

1 Bad day

Someone laughed at your answer in class and now everyone's joking about it. Your face is hot and you feel like you might explode.

How might they feel? What could help? Who could they talk to?

2 Contact cancelled

You've been looking forward to seeing your family all week. An hour before, you're told it's been cancelled.

How might they feel? What could help? Who could they talk to?

3 Left out

You see photos of your friends at a party you weren't invited to. Nobody has replied to your messages all day.

How might they feel? What could help? Who could they talk to?

4 Exam stress

Your exams start next week. Every time you open your books your chest feels tight and your mind goes blank.

How might they feel? What could help? Who could they talk to?

5 Can't sleep

It's 2am. You're exhausted, but your mind keeps replaying everything that went wrong today.

How might they feel? What could help? Who could they talk to?

6 Explosion

You lost your temper, shouted and slammed a door. Now you feel embarrassed and think everyone is angry with you.

How might they feel? What could help? Who could they talk to?

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