



Winter Feels – A Guide for Young People

Winter can be tough. The days are short, the weather's gloomy, and sometimes it feels like the sun forgot to show up.

While it's normal to feel a bit low during this time of year, it's important to take care of your mental health.

Whether you're juggling school, college, or just life stuff, there are some simple ways to boost your mood and look after your mental health this winter, and there's loads of support out there if you need it too.

Why Winter Can Mess With Your Mood

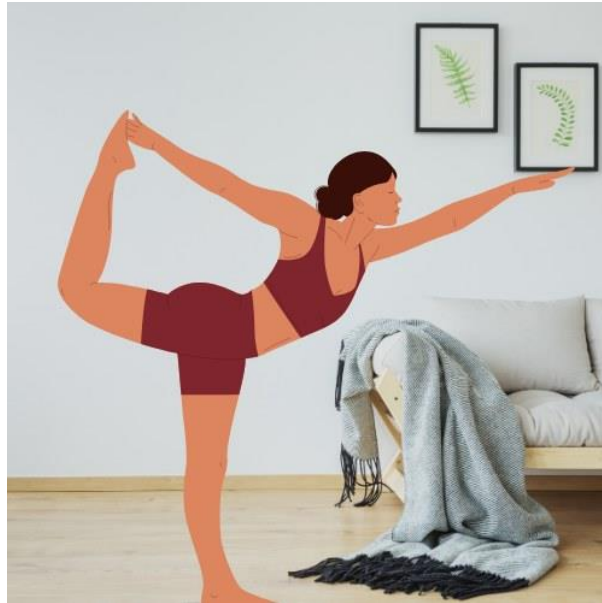
- **Less sunlight** can affect your energy and sleep.
- **Cold weather** makes it harder to get outside and stay active.
- **More time indoors** can lead to feeling isolated or bored.
- **School stress** or upcoming exams can add pressure. Our [2025 Exam Support Guide](#) is full of advice and guidance for dealing with exam stress.



Top Tips to Beat the Winter Blues



1. Get Outside When You Can Even a short walk in daylight can boost your mood. Fresh air helps clear your head.



2. Move Your Body Try dancing, stretching, or following a workout video. It doesn't have to be intense—just get moving!

3. Keep a Journal Have you ever felt like your thoughts and feelings are all jumbled up inside? Journaling can help! It's like having a conversation with yourself on paper. You can write about anything – your day, your dreams, or even things that are bothering you.

Why Journal?

- **Feel Better:** Writing down your thoughts can help you understand and manage your emotions.
- **Stay Positive:** Keeping a gratitude journal helps you focus on the good things in life.
- **Get to Know Yourself:** Journaling helps you learn more about what makes you happy, sad, or excited.

How to Start

- **Find a Quiet Spot:** Choose a place where you can relax and think.
- **Grab a Notebook:** Any notebook will do. You can even use your phone or computer.
- **Write Regularly:** Try to write a little bit every day or a few times a week.

There's no right or wrong way to journal. Just be yourself and let your thoughts flow.

Are you confused by your feelings? Want to understand more about the changes taking place in your brain? Then take a look at [Your Amazing Brain](#).



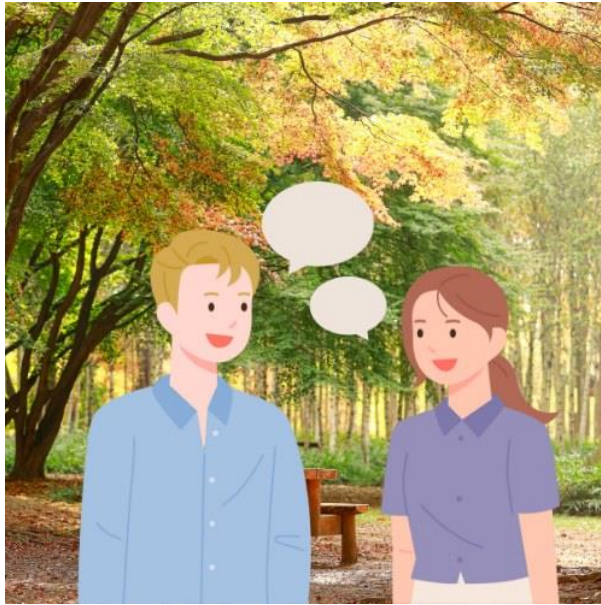
4. Put Your Phone Down Before Bed Scrolling late at night messes with your sleep. Try reading, listening to music, or just chilling without screens before bed.

5. Make a Plan (But Keep It Real) Set small goals—like drinking more water, going for a walk, or texting a friend. Tick them off and celebrate your wins!



6. Keep a Routine Having a regular sleep schedule, meal times, and daily goals can help you feel more in control.

7. Learn to Breathe (Properly!) Breathing exercises can calm your mind and help you feel more focused. There are loads of free tutorials online—give it a go!



8. Talk to Someone If you're feeling down, anxious, or just not yourself, reach out. Friends, family, teachers, or youth support services are there to help.



**YOU ARE
STRONG,
CAPABLE
& WORTHY**

9. Say Something Good About Yourself Every Day Start your day with a positive thought. It might feel weird at first, but it really helps build confidence and self-love.



10. Do Things You Enjoy Watch your favourite show, listen to music, draw, game—whatever makes you feel good.

Start the Conversation – Because Talking Helps!

Did you know that 1 in 4 people deal with a mental health issue each year? That’s a lot of us—and it’s totally okay to talk about it. It might feel awkward at first, but opening up can actually make things way better. Here are some chill ways to get the conversation going:

Go for a Walk and Talk

Fresh air + movement = good vibes. Whether you’re chatting about how you’re feeling or just giving a mate space to open up, walking together is a great way to start.



Check In – For Real

People often say “I’m fine” even when they’re not. That’s why it’s worth checking in again—whether it’s a quick message, a call, or just showing up. Knowing someone’s got your back can mean a lot.

You don’t always have to ask directly. Sometimes the best way to start a real conversation is just by spending time together. If you’re worried about a mate, being there—without pressure—can open the door to something deeper.

Speak Up – If You Want To

You don’t have to lay it all out—just share what you’re comfortable with. You’d be surprised—people can handle a lot when you’re straight with them. Opening up a little can go a long way.

Find What Helps You Switch Off

Not sure what works for you? Ask your mates what they do when they’re stressed. You might pick up some solid ideas—and realise you’re not the only one who has rough days.



Say Thanks – It Matters

If someone’s done something decent, let them know. A quick “thanks” can kick off a good conversation and make their day. It doesn’t take much, but it means a lot.

Reach Out for Help

Whether you’re struggling yourself or supporting someone else, it’s okay to ask for help. There are free services in Kent that are ready to support you—by phone, text, or online. You’ve got options, and you’re not alone.

Need advice?

There's no shame in asking for help. In Kent, there are free services just for young people. Whether you want to talk to someone or get advice, help is out there.

Sometimes seeking advice is all you need. Whether you want to just read about useful hints and tips, or speak to someone, either over the phone, or even by text, there is support for you! And don't forget, an adult you feel you can trust, whether that be a teacher, a parent, or even someone in your local community, can be a great source of guidance for you.

Websites

There are loads of great websites out there offering support, advice, and information — and everyone has their own preferences when it comes to design, layout, and how things are explained. That's why it's worth checking out **all four of these sites**, because each one offers something a little different and could be just what you're looking for:

MoodSpark – This site is all about emotional wellbeing. It's packed with tips and advice to help you feel your best, and while some opportunities are Kent-based, the guidance is useful for anyone.

[Health for Teens](#) – If you're curious about feelings, relationships, health, or even sex, this site breaks things down in a way that's easy to understand. It's designed especially for young people and covers what's normal, how to cope, and where to get help.

[A Better Medway](#) – Although it's not written specifically for young people, there's still loads of helpful info here for anyone living in Medway. It covers support services and wellbeing topics that are totally relevant.

[Kent & Medway Wellbeing Hub](#) – This is your go-to place for finding support across Kent and Medway. Whether you're feeling low, anxious, or just want to know what help is out there, the Hub brings everything together in one easy-to-use space. Why not take a look at each one and see which feels right for you? You might find something really helpful or discover a new way to boost your wellbeing.



Messaging services

If you're finding things tough or just need someone to talk to, there are loads of free and confidential ways to get support — and you don't have to stick to just one.

[Kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com) is a safe online space for anyone aged 10–25 in Kent, offering free counselling, self-help tools, and a supportive community. If you need to talk right away, [Release the Pressure](#) is available 24/7 — just text **SHOUT to 85258** or call **0800 107 0160** to speak to someone who's trained to help with anything you're going through.

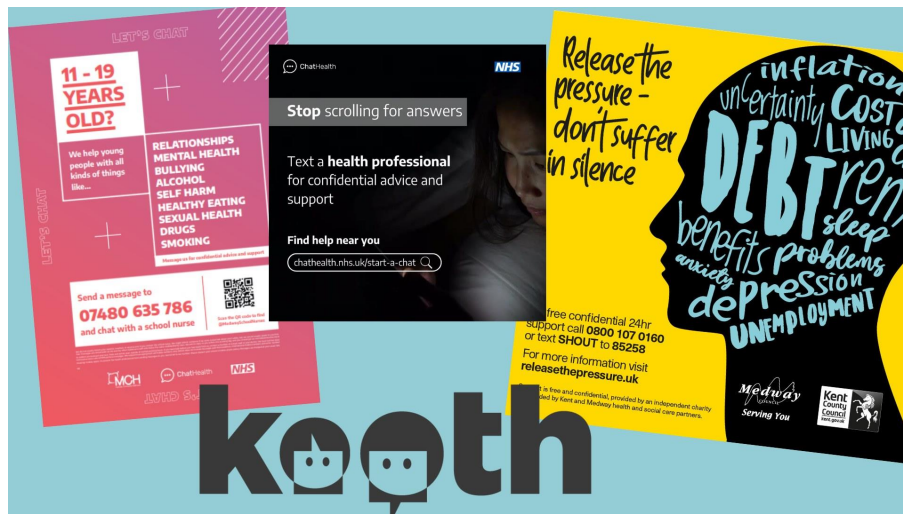
Prefer texting? **ChatHealth** is a confidential service where you can message a school nurse about anything physical or emotional. If you're in **Kent**, text **07520 618850**, and if you're in **Medway**, text **07480 635786**, (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm).

You can try one, or all of them — sometimes the first person you speak to isn't the right fit, and that's okay. Keep reaching out until you find the support that works for you.

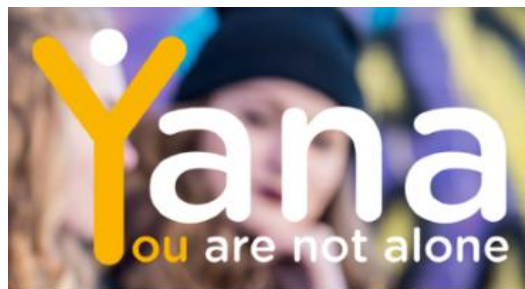
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Getting help



YANA aims to help you develop resilience and emotional wellbeing. The project raises awareness of mental health, develops understanding of what that looks like for the individual, and explores what you can do for yourself and where you can go for further support.

You will need a trusted adult to complete a referral for this service.



The BeYou Project connects young people in Kent and Medway who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary or are questioning their sexual orientation and / or gender identity.

We offer a safe, welcoming and non-judgemental space where you can meet to socialise, have fun and help each other. Want to find out more? Contact them by emailing beyou@porchlight.org.uk.

Kent Young Carers is the countywide service for Young Carers aged 5-18 across Kent. You are a young carer if you are taking on caring responsibilities for a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse issue.

If you are under 16 years of age, you will need a trusted adult to complete a referral for this service.



withyou

Mind and Body in Kent supports you if you are self-harming, at risk of self-harming or struggling with your mental wellbeing.

We help you find positive ways to manage difficult thoughts and feelings, working with you in small groups in your secondary school or in the community.

Porchlight Adolescent Wellbeing Service (PAWS) is a service for 13-18 year olds in Ashford, Dover, Deal, Folkestone and Thanet who are experiencing anxiety, a breakdown in family communication, or a breakdown in relationships with their school or peers.

You will need a trusted adult to complete a referral for this service.



Healthy Empowering Relationship Advisory Service is designed to support and empower young women and gender diverse individuals aged 10-18 years who live in Kent to make informed choices about the emotional and physical relationships that you have and give you the confidence and emotional resilience to put them into practice.



***CHUMS** deliver the Kent Bereavement Service for under 25-year-olds across Kent and Medway. The service is available to individuals from Preschool age (3 ½) up to 25 years old (until 26th birthday) who are registered with a Kent or Medway GP and require specialist bereavement support to cope with complex grief.*

This support does require a referral form from a trusted adult for this service.

Getting more help



*Phone 0800 011 3474 for our Single Point of Access, who will be able to provide you with support and advice and assist you to reach the right help. The **Children and Young People's Mental Health Service** (CYPMHS) is provided by NELFT who can signpost, give advice and accept a referral to mental health support. If you are in **crisis**, call this number for help 24 hours a day.*
