



# Nurturing Mental Health with Wellbeing Apps for Young People

■ Child and adolescents are experiencing a mental health crisis that is affecting all areas of education. How can schools and teachers help students build resilience and positive mental health so they can cope with the increased stress of modern society? Our editor, Jory Debenham, explores some of the apps available to help support our young people.

It is difficult to know exactly why there is what seems to be a sudden increase in mental health problems in young people. Provision for mental health wellbeing is being made at all levels of policy, in governments, schools, trusts, etc., but still the problem persists. It is possible that in some cases, the increase may be related to increased awareness, which accompanies overall improvements in knowledge about wellbeing and an increased belief that everyone has the right to feel good about life and have all their needs met. This situation is much different from past generations where hardship and trauma were more widespread and therefore people had different expectations and ways of coping.

School plays a large part, not only in a child's academic attainment and cognitive progress, but also emotional control, behavioural development and physical and moral development, all of which both affect, and are affected by, mental health. And, as such, schools offer the most accessible and familiar setting for good mental health practice and early intervention in mental health problems for young people.

We have looked at some of the apps that are available to help schools work with students toward improving their mental wellbeing and to support them as they work through anxiety, depression and stress and as they navigate the world of cyberbullying and online exploitation.

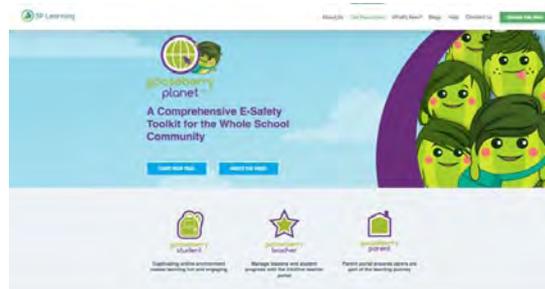


**GOOSEBERRY PLANET**  
[WWW.3PLEARNING.COM/UK/GOOSEBERRYPLANET/](http://WWW.3PLEARNING.COM/UK/GOOSEBERRYPLANET/)

The experts at 3P Learning have put together a comprehensive online learning package to teach e-safety for students aged 5-13. Connected to the National Curriculum, this app provides a gamification method for students to work through the learning material, which consists of more than 50 age-appropriate interactive games and more than 100 workbooks and 60 lesson plans that all include motivational elements and engaging characters.

The programme is comprehensive, based on a 12-week programme that can be implemented easily for a whole-school approach. There is a parental component as well so parents can receive email notifications and be part of their child's learning journey, keeping them up-to-date on the latest safeguarding issues.

The scenes are set in virtual communities, starting with the playground for the smallest students and expanding to street, village, town and city as the students get older. Starting when students are 8 or 9, the scenarios start to include Facebook and other social networking sites, along with teaching them about webcams and live gaming. As they get older, the conversations about social media, sexting, downloading and digital footprint begin. For the 10-13 year olds, the scenarios focus social media and online gaming.



The child plays on the Gooseberry Planet 'Student' app via an avatar who collects stars, family members and items while competing against the other classmates. In the course of the game, children are exposed to online issues requiring a response, such as meeting strangers, bullying, grooming and sexual exploitation. As the game progresses, the questions gradually get more sinister and suspicious individuals try to gain the trust of the player.

The Teacher app supports the student app, recording how each child reacts to the scenarios and monitoring the class as they play. The software will show if a student is not responding in the correct manner and it will also allow the teacher to see exactly how that student is scoring. There is a comprehensive resource area with e-safety lesson plans, e-safety workbooks, presentations and posters. Teachers can choose additional lesson plans and worksheets that cover a large area of online safety, including:

- Clickjacking & Grooming
- Sexual Exploitation
- Emailing & Live Gaming
- Web Cams & Live Streaming
- Social Networking
- People Online
- Radicalisation
- Meeting Up & Chat Rooms
- Online Bullying
- In-App Purchases



As a final bonus, the programme involves teacher CPD modules and documentation to demonstrate the whole school approach and progress to Ofsted.

Although this is not specifically a mental health app, it gives students the knowledge and tools to effectively deal with the online sphere, which is where many problems that affect teen wellbeing begin, such as bullying and exploitation. This education is an important step to looking after the mental health of our young people.

**WORRINOTS**  
[HTTPS://WWW.  
WORRINOTS.COM/](https://www.worrinots.com/)

Many schools and classrooms use a worry box or jar to help primary-aged students deal with anxiety and fears, and to cope with problems they have at home. The premise is that students can write down their problems/worries/fears and put them in a container. On a very simple level, this gives an outlet for children to externalise their anxieties and frees them up to focus on other things, like learning. It also allows teachers to get a sense of what kinds of things their pupils are dealing with and lets them address it either in a class discussion, one-on-one or by notifying the appropriate safeguarding lead for further action.

Worrinots is a technology-driven worry box that aims to provide children with a platform that they can use to communicate their worries, fears and anxieties. The Worrinots application and characters have been developed with the help of child psychologists to



10% of children in Great Britain aged between 5 and 16 have a mental health problem

The award winning Worrinots is the first social app designed for children from the age of 5 and has been specifically created to tackle the worrying increase in mental well-being problems in young children.

Developed with the help of child psychologists, counsellors and teachers, The Worrinots provides children with a safe place to share their fears and anxieties, which in turn provides them with practical and fun coping mechanisms for their fears using one of the four Worrinots characters.

Making the application fun, and safe has been at the forefront of The Worrinots development. Children instinctively understand how to use the technology and embrace each of the characters welcoming them as part of the child's trusted network.



The Worrinots allow children to seek out advice and information immediately, giving them the tools to make informed decisions

encourage children to share their concerns and deal with them appropriately.

Within the app, children go through four steps:

### **1. Pick a Worrinot**

There are four characters to choose from: Rip, Stomp, Shakey and Chomp. Each one has a different personality that students can choose between freely.

### **2. What's Up?**

Students can type or speak, letting the Worrinot know whatever is on their mind.

### **3. Make the Fear Disappear**

Depending on which Worrinot the child chose, their fear will be ripped, stomped, etc. and the child can watch it disappear on the screen.

### **4. Worri-Tips**

The Worrinots encourage children to read the age-appropriate Worri-Tips & learn life-long coping mechanisms.

Once the child has made the fear disappear, it is forwarded to the monitoring app, WatNot, which is a unique monitoring system designed specifically to help teachers and safeguarding officers identify and monitor fears that have been shared. If a response is required, the teacher or safeguarding officer can write a response that will appear in the child's private account from the Worrinot character they originally shared their fear with.

Worrinots provides a child-friendly way to help schools implement early intervention and have access to a tool that can provide discreet and effective monitoring of pupil's worries and anxieties. It is also Ofsted compliant so schools can be sure they are using the correct procedures to address these sometimes complex and difficult issues.



## MINDSHIFT CBT

[HTTPS://WWW.ANXIETYCANADA.COM/MINDSHIFT-CBT](https://www.anxietycanada.com/mindshift-cbt)

Mindshift CBT is an app designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety. It can help them change how they think about anxiety. Rather than trying to avoid anxiety, the app coaches them to face the issue and make an important shift.

Mindshift CBT addresses important issues relating to mental health. It has tools to help with relaxation, developing more helpful ways of thinking and identifying active steps to help teens take charge of their anxiety. In addition to everyday anxiety, it addresses specific issues such as:

- Making Sleep Count
- Riding Out Intense Emotions
- Test Anxiety
- Perfectionism
- Social Anxiety
- Performance Anxiety
- Worry
- Panic
- Conflict

In addition to delivering clear and relevant information that helps students learn about anxiety, assess their own situation and piece together a personalised plan to help manage the anxiety, the app has some great ‘chill out’ tools, such as relaxation exercises, visualisations and mindfulness strategies.

The screenshot shows the MindShift CBT website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Resources', 'Self-Help', 'Tools', 'About Us', and 'Get the App'. Below the navigation is the 'MindShift CBT' logo and a 'Free Evidence-Based Mental Health Relief' banner. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column lists various anxiety issues: Worry, Panic, Perfectionism, Social Anxiety, and Phobias. Below this, there's a 'MindShift Features' section with sub-sections: 'CBT-Based Tools' (describing cognitive-behavioral tools), 'Quick Relief' (for immediate help), 'Thought Alchemy' (transforming worries), 'Coping Cards' (for coping statements), 'Worry Experiments' (testing beliefs), 'Facing Fears' (gradual exposure), 'Expanding Your Comfort Zone' (building confidence), 'Chill Zone' (audio recordings), 'Check-In' (tracking anxiety), and 'Healthy Habits' (tips for better management). The right column features two smartphone images: one showing the app's main interface with a circular menu, and another showing a list of features. At the bottom, there are 'Download on the App Store' and 'GET IT ON Google Play' buttons, along with logos for 'THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA', 'UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO', and 'SFL'. A footer bar contains the text 'Download Our App' and 'Subscribe to eMPT'.

Teens start by selecting a situation they are struggling with from the list of 'My Situations' and then they can get the facts related to anxiety and the situation they are facing. Then they go through some 'Check In' exercises to see whether a particular situation is a problem. They can then develop their personalised program, starting with finding more helpful thoughts with a set of 'Thinking Right' prompts, then dialing down the anxiety with the 'Chill out Tools' and then identifying next actions in the 'Active Steps' area. There is a place to jot down thoughts and feelings and inspirational quotes to keep momentum going.

Although the app isn't especially school-based, it has great content that can be introduced in a PSHE class and then the app can support teens independently as they try to work with the relevant tools and approaches.



## Living with too much anxiety? *Resources, Results, Relief.*

Read-up on anxiety, download MindShift, watch our videos... Empower yourself. Stop anxiety from controlling your life.

[Learn More](#)



### QUICKLINKS

- ▣ Youth
- ▣ Educators
- ▣ Health Professionals



### MINDSHIFT

MindShift will help you learn how to relax, develop more helpful ways of thinking, and identify active steps that will help you take charge of your anxiety.

[more...](#)



### VIDEOS

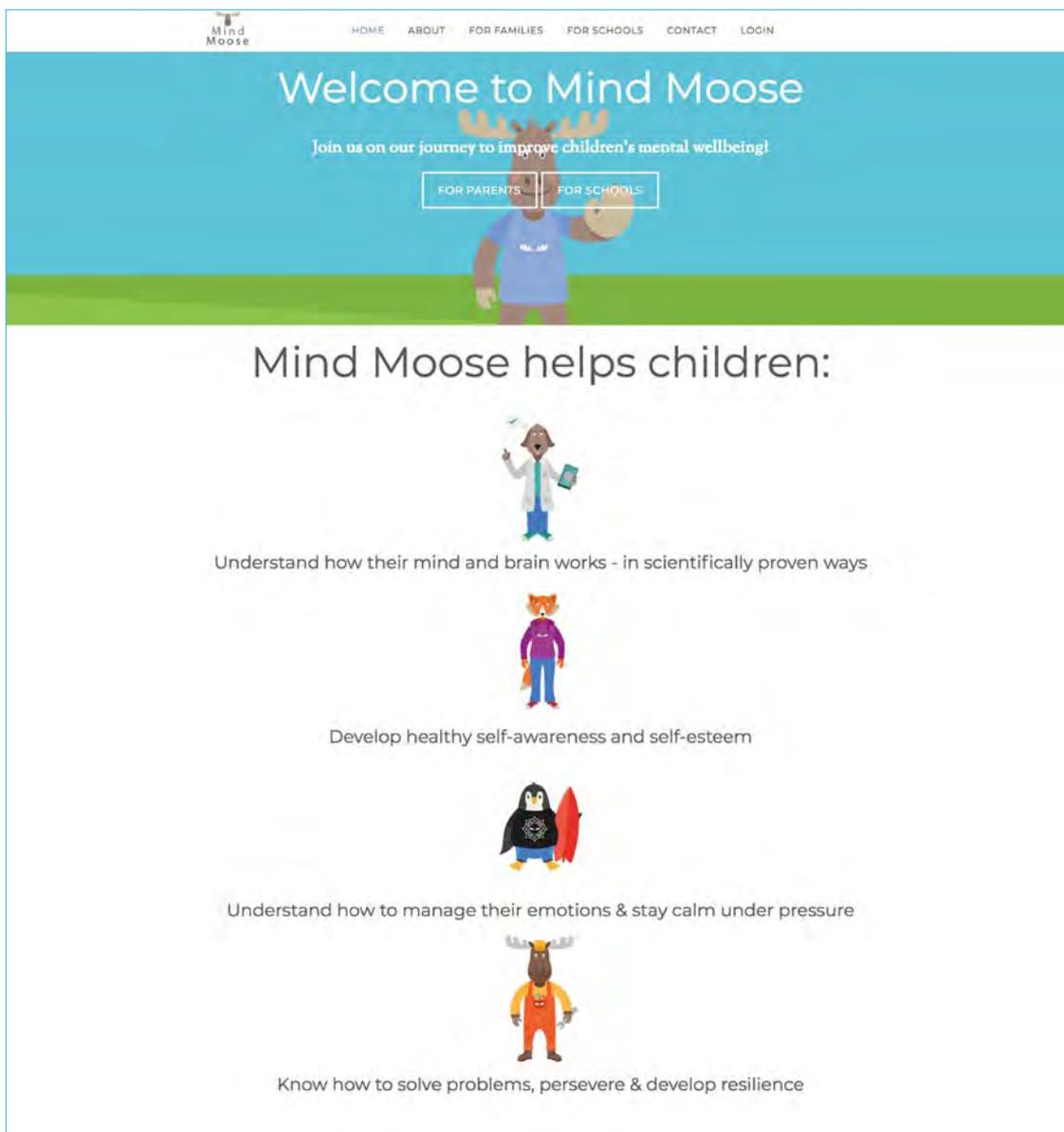
Access our comprehensive video library to supplement your learning. Videos cover a wide range of topics, from anxiety disorders in youth and adults, to personalized stories and experiences with CBT, and more.

[more...](#)

## MIND MOOSE

[HTTPS://WWW.MINDMOOSE.CO.UK/](https://www.mindmoose.co.uk/)

Mind Moose offers schools a way to support and monitor the mental wellbeing and emotional health of primary-aged pupils through a fun, online programme. Pupils go on a journey of discovery with Mind Moose and his friends, watching short, fun animations before completing reflective activities based on



HOME ABOUT FOR FAMILIES FOR SCHOOLS CONTACT LOGIN

# Welcome to Mind Moose

Join us on our journey to improve children's mental wellbeing!

FOR PARENTS FOR SCHOOLS

## Mind Moose helps children:

-   
Understand how their mind and brain works - in scientifically proven ways
-   
Develop healthy self-awareness and self-esteem
-   
Understand how to manage their emotions & stay calm under pressure
-   
Know how to solve problems, persevere & develop resilience

the topics. They earn badges and certificates along the way and they are given 'Moose Missions' to undertake in school, or at home. The programme aims to develop children's sense of self-worth, resilience and coping skills.

Mind Moose is most suitable for pupils in Years 4–6, although it can be used with younger pupils and can be a very helpful during the transition to secondary school in Year 7.

Within the programme, pupils learn to:

- recognise their good qualities, achievements and strengths
- develop and maintain healthy self-worth
- understand how they can deal with life's ups and downs
- manage big emotions using evidence-based techniques such as mindfulness
- use tools such as kindness and gratitude to help them feel positive about life

All children can benefit from Mind Moose as they learn specific tools to develop good mental wellbeing, although the lessons are particularly powerful for vulnerable children and those who are anxious, have low self-esteem or low levels of confidence, have special educational needs (such as autism), are having difficulties at home, are experiencing bullying or other difficulties at school, or who are worried about moving to another year, school or from primary to secondary school.

The company offers a school license that includes a teacher and parent guide, printable activity pack, assessment tools, stand-alone meditations to use with students, along with full digital access to the lessons and activities.



## CALM HARM

[HTTPS://CALMHARM.CO.UK](https://calmharm.co.uk)

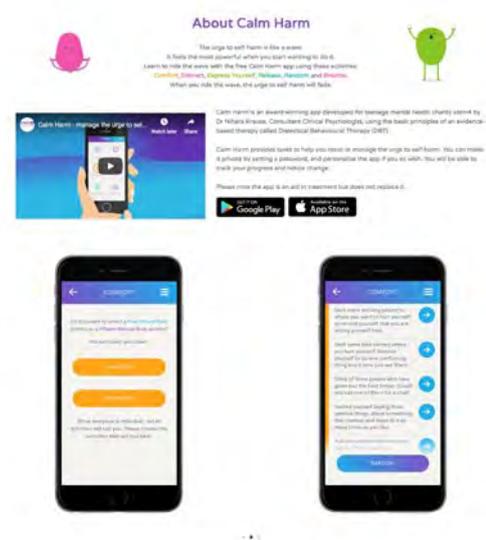
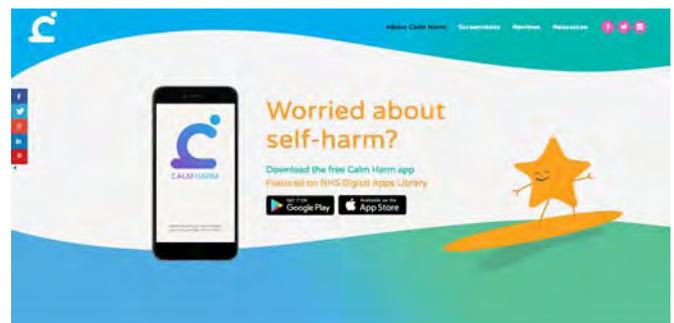
Self harm is an increasingly common behaviour that affects around 10 per cent of young people, especially girls. It is often a way for young people to cope with or release overwhelming, difficult and distressing feelings. Often, the physical pain of self-harm might feel easier to deal with than the emotional pain that's behind it. Sometimes it can also be a way for them to punish themselves for something they've done or have been accused of doing. It can make a young person feel they're in control of at least one part of their lives, when other areas seem out of control.

It isn't usually a cry for help and it shouldn't be seen as being equivalent to a suicide attempt, but it does need to be taken seriously. Once a person begins to use self-harming behaviours, it can become a compulsion and it can be difficult for them to actually address the underlying reasons or causes for the harming behaviour.

Calm Harm was developed to support teenage mental health and self-harm using the basic principles of an evidence-based therapy called Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT). It provides tasks to help resist or manage the urge to self harm and can allow teens to track their progress and notice change.

The opening screen of the app says:

*The urge to self-harm is like a wave. It feels the most powerful when you start wanting to do it. Learn to surf the wave by using the Five Minute Rule or Fifteen Minute Rule with these activities. Once you surf the wave the urge will fade.*



The user is then given the option to choose one of six activities: Comfort, Distract, Express Yourself, Release, Random and Breathe. They choose the amount of time they want to spend—five or fifteen minutes—and then are given a choice of activities to complete while the timer counts down.

Examples of comfort activities include:

- Stick some sticking plaster to where you want to hurt yourself to remind yourself that you are letting yourself heal
- Stick some fake tattoos where you hurt yourself. Remind yourself to do one comforting thing every time you see them.
- Think of three people who have given you the best smiles. Could you call one of them for a chat?
- Record yourself saying three positive things about something that matters and listen to it as many times as you like
- Look at a book that has pictures or wording you love.

At the end of the allotted time, the user is shown a screen with a star surfing a wave and a note that says 'The urge has passed, you have surfed the wave. Remember this activity next time you feel the urge.'

The reviews of the app show that it has a powerful impact and can help get young people on the right track with their mental health. It is a great tool to support therapy and to encourage healthier mental health behaviours.

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For articles from the TeachingTimes Library on children's mental health, check out our Knowledge Bank Understanding Mental Health and Young People at <https://www.teachingtimes.com/kb/119/understanding-mental-health-and-young-people.htm>

