

**small talks,
big difference**

World Mental Health Day

Friday 10th October



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

What is Small Talks?

Small Talks is YMCA England & Wales' mental health campaign aimed at breaking the stigma around mental health through the power of positive conversations.

Sometimes, talking about your mental health isn't always easy, but by kicking off those initial chats with friends, colleagues and family members, we can encourage more people to talk honestly about how they feel.

This pack will give you all the tools, activities and information you need to get you, and your YMCA, involved.

Created in 2021, the campaign has gone from strength to strength with over 50 YMCAs now having been involved in some capacity over the past three years. For this year, we have a special event you can get involved in, read more to find out.

With World Mental Health Day taking place on Friday 10th October, we are calling on even more YMCAs to get involved.



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What's included in this pack?

1. What is Small Talks?
2. Great YMCA Bake Off
3. How to get involved
4. Assets

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Your guide to Small Talks

Mental health, like physical health, is something that we all have. More and more, people are opening up about their mental wellbeing, but starting that conversation can feel tricky. That's why Small Talks was created.

By taking the time to have positive conversations with the people around you, and making yourself available to listen, you can make a difference.

This is especially important for the young people we work with. When they feel confident and supported in talking about their mental health, it helps them grow, learn, and build resilience for the future.

Everything in this pack has been designed to make those small talks easier for you and your YMCA community.

Not sure where to begin? Remember to **T A L K**.

You will see this acronym popping up on posters, graphics and on our web page to help promote the message.

Take the time

In your day-to-day chats, check in with those around you and make an effort to ask people how they are doing.

Ask twice

"I'm fine" can be an instant response when people ask how we're doing. Asking a second time can lead to a more honest and open response.

Learn to listen

Allow people the time needed to talk about their feelings. It may not come all at once, but make sure you're letting them say what they need to.

Keep it up

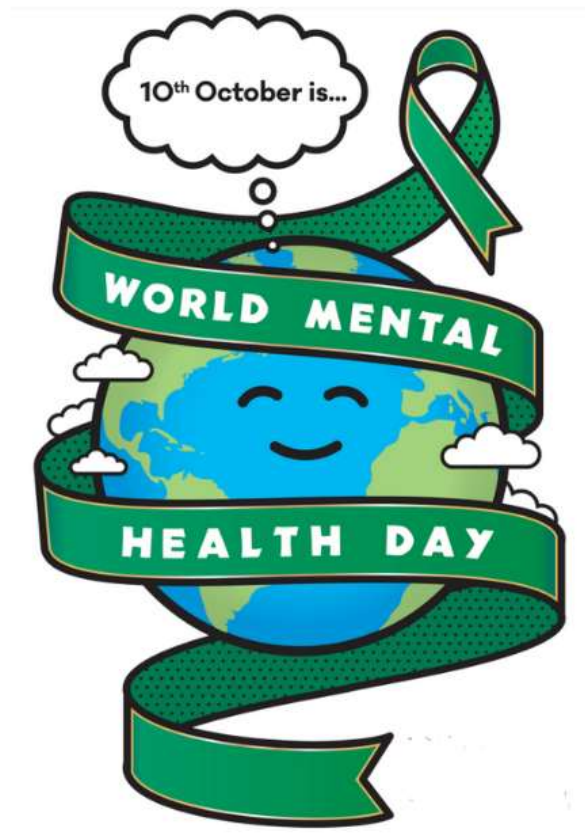
Don't stop with one chat. Remember to continue checking in to see how those closest to you are doing.

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World Mental Health Day



World Mental Health Day takes place each year on 10 October and aims to raise awareness of mental health issues worldwide. This year, it falls on a Friday, but we encourage everyone to consider hosting activities around that date if it works better logistically.

This year's theme is **access to services**, which reflects the significance of supporting people in protecting their mental health, regardless of their circumstances.

At YMCA, the services we provide - whether through providing housing, recreational spaces, advice and guidance, gym facilities, or early years support - play a vital role in promoting mental wellbeing. World Mental Health Day is an opportunity to reflect on that and speak proudly of the impact we achieve together.

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Great YMCA Bake Off

You may be spending some of your evenings tuning into The Great British Bake Off at the moment, but now it's your time to shine - by hosting a Bake Off at your YMCA!

Bake Offs are a wonderful way to bring people together, spark conversations, and enjoy something we can all agree on: delicious cakes and bakes.

To make things simple, we've put together some helpful assets you can print - scorecards, posters, certificates and bunting - to help your event feel really special.

All you need to bring are a few enthusiastic bakers and plenty of taste testers and you'll be ready to create your own Great YMCA Bake Off.

We'd also love to see your star bakes, so send your photos to campaigns@ymca.org.uk or share them on social media using #SmallTalks.

For more information, check out our Great YMCA Bake Off event pack:

[Download the pack](#)



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Tea Talks



Tea Talks is an opportunity to spark positive conversations around mental health and wellbeing with those in your YMCA, but with the added bonus of tea and cake.

You could organise a Tea Talks as part of a group, but you can also do this as individuals with a colleague, friend or family member.

We've created a host of tools, assets and activities to help you organise your Tea Talks. These include digital and physical assets. The physical assets, including our popular Small Talks tea bags, which can be ordered through our online shop.

[Order now](#)

Digital assets including branded bunting, message boards, and activities including bingo, word searches and colouring sheets can be found on the Small Talks portal.

[Download assets](#)

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Small Talks asset pack



Our Small Talks packs have been specially designed to allow you to promote the Small Talks campaign and organise your own events and activities such as Tea Talks and Small Notes.

The assets below can be ordered as part of the pack ahead of World Mental Health Day.

We'd encourage you to place your order as soon as possible – **no later than Thursday 2nd October** – to allow enough time for delivery. Assets are free to order while stocks last.

[Order now](#)

Included in the pack are:

- 25 x Tea Bags
- 2 x Small Talks T-Shirts
- 8 x “Here to Talk” Badges
- 50 x A5 Leaflets
- 10 x Balloons
- 5 x A4 T A L K Posters
- 25 x Conversation Starter Cards
- 1 x Sheets of Small Talks Stickers



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Assets

You can download a mixture of digital and printed assets via our Small Talks portal which you can use to promote Small Talks in the run up and during World Mental Health Day.

[Download more assets](#)

As previously mentioned, you can order your Small Talks pack to help you organise your very own Tea Talks via the Small Talks shop.

The assets are listed below:

Digital assets

There are various assets available on the portal to help promote Small Talks and related activities. We'd encourage you to share our Small Talks video, which showcases what the campaign is all about and tends to perform well with our online audience.

Printable assets

To help make World Mental Health Day engaging, we have created assets for you to use.

These can be included as part of your Tea Talks event or just to decorate your YMCA on the day itself. Some of the printable assets include:

- Tea Talks bunting
- Message board
- Small Notes template

Activities

There are a host of activities available on our Small Talks portal for you to download and encourage positive conversation. These include bingo, colouring sheets as well as our youth packs to use when working with a younger audience.

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Engagement levels

We understand that capacity can be at a premium when it comes to promoting Small Talks and getting involved, therefore, we have three levels of engagement.

Depending on how much time you have, you could choose one of the example engagement levels below.

Engagement level 1

Promote the campaign across your social media and at your YMCA

- Print off posters and display across your YMCA
- Share the Small Talks campaign on social media

Engagement level 2

Engage with staff, volunteers and young people throughout World Mental Health Day

- Organise your own Tea Talks event
- Hold your own Great YMCA Bake Off
- Use the youth pack in your youth work or with housing residents
- Encourage people to take part in a Small Walks

Engagement level 3

Embed the campaign into the work your YMCA does all year round

- Ask staff to include T A L K guidance in their conversations
- Hold regular events (e.g. Small Walks) to engage with staff, volunteers and young people
- Promote Small Talks all year round on social media



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Feedback

Small Talks has gone from strength to strength over its many iterations, reaching more and more young people and their YMCAs every year. A large part of that is down to the helpful feedback you offer us.

If you have any feedback from using the pack ,or organising events and activities for Small Talks, then please do let us know.

Following World Mental Health Day, we'll be in touch with a short survey to gather your initial reflections. Our Campaigns Officer Dom Taylor would also be keen to meet via Teams and gather your thoughts in greater depth.

For this, or any other enquiries, please contact the team at campaigns@ymca.org.uk

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