



# Kooth:

## A Handy Guide for GPs & Healthcare Professionals

The Free NHS-Commissioned  
Online Mental Health Platform  
for Children & Young Adults



[koothplc.com](https://koothplc.com)

# Welcome

Welcome to Kooth's GP & Healthcare Professionals Information Guide. The aim of this guide is to help GP's and practice managers find out more about our children and young adults service so that we can help support more young people. We have filled it with plenty of information, including an overview of the services we offer, the different types of interventions we offer and ten considerations for talking about mental health with a young person.

About Kooth	3
Accreditation	4
Outcomes	4
4 Key Domains	5
Intervention Types	6
Talking To CYPs About Mental Health	8
Kooth by Numbers	10
Free CPD Webinars	11
Information for Practice Managers	12
Promoting Kooth	14
Sanaya: A Case Study	15

# About Kooth

Kooth is a transformational digital mental health platform that launched in 2004. It gives children and young people (CYPs) immediate access to an online community of peers and a team of experienced, accredited counsellors.

Access is free of the typical barriers to support - no waiting times, no referrals, no thresholds to meet and complete anonymity. The service is open for support 365 days per year, between 12pm-10pm on weekdays, and 6pm-10pm on weekends and holidays. Kooth is available in over 140 CCG's and is delivered in Wales through the local Health Boards and Councils.

Kooth.com offers a wide range of support services:

## Online Magazine

An online magazine with age appropriate, clinically moderated articles written by the Kooth content team. CYP's are also to contribute their own content and approximately 70% of the content is user generated. Articles can also be commented on to facilitate discussion and peer support. All articles and comments are moderated to ensure they adhere to Kooth's community guidelines.

## Forums

Moderated peer-support communities for CYP's to connect and engage in a safe space.

## Asynchronous Messaging

CYP's can send and receive messages to qualified counsellors and emotional wellbeing practitioners. Our message inbox is monitored by our service delivery team, made up of both counsellors and EWPs, where messages are responded to as soon as possible.

## Live Chat Sessions

Our team of counsellors are on hand to provide safe and effective support 365 days a year. The sessions are up to 1 hour long and are available on a drop in basis or via booked chats. Drop in sessions focus on intermittent support. Planned or structured sessions occur either over several weeks or over a few months. These sessions target a range of issues at different levels of complexity.

# Kooth's Accreditation

Kooth is a fully accredited counselling service with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). All counsellors receive regular clinical supervision in accordance with BACP guidelines.

For the past two decades, we have worked in tandem with the NHS to improve mental health in England and Wales. As a trusted delivery partner of the NHS and with over 19 years of data, Kooth is able to deliver support in line with LTP priorities.



## We are Outcomes-Driven.

At Kooth, we care about the outcomes that our service users care about and we measure what matters to them. Setting goals and measuring progress using a range of validated and reliable methods helps ensure that each individual continually benefits from the treatment and care they receive.

Kooth uses the CORE system, specifically CORE-10 and Young Person's CORE (YP-CORE), in the measuring of our treatment effectiveness.

CORE-10 is a session by session monitoring tool for older children with items covering different presenting issues such as anxiety, depression and trauma. The measure has six high intensity/ severity items and four low intensity/ severity items.

YP-CORE is a shorter, ten item measure designed for younger people who fall within the 11-16 years age range.

# Our 4 Key Domains

We work with children and young people across a number of domains:

## Structured Domain

CYPs work with a counsellor over a fixed period of time (usually 4-10 weeks) to focus on a specific area (eg school-based stress, sadness or relationship issues) with clearly identified goals that are identified collaboratively with the CYPs and the practitioner and monitored throughout the intervention. CYPs present with a wide range of issues in this domain but generally they fall within the mild-moderate category in terms of severity.

## Ongoing Domain

This domain is for those with more complex needs and who might benefit from a longer term intervention with a designated practitioner. Like the structured domain, the range of presenting issues is wide, however, typically includes complex attachment issues and trauma related presentations, hence the importance of a trusting, ongoing relationship.

## Reactive Domain

Young people are able to 'drop in' and gain access to support according to their level of need. Our Emotional and Wellbeing Practitioners utilise skills such as problem solving and motivational interviewing to help young people understand how to move towards their goals, whilst our experienced counsellors are on hand for more specialist support. All of our practitioners are trained in risk assessment and management and whilst we are not a crisis service, we are experienced and confident in holding young people in crisis and utilising safeguarding principles to govern practice.

## Community Domain

Our community domain consists of everything that does not involve one-to-one support from a practitioner; including educational content, peer support, self help activities and moderated discussion forums. Everything that is published on our site is moderated and anything considered to be unhelpful (either to an individual or to the wider community) is withheld; with additional support being offered as appropriate.

# Intervention Types

## Resilience Training

Based on a universal precautionary approach to trauma to PREVENT delayed adverse reactions to challenging and potentially traumatic events which, left untreated, can result in serious mental health complications.

## Solution-Focussed

Short term interventions based on cognitive behavioural techniques such as problem solving, to enable management of mild-moderate difficulties and promote sense of hope and control.

## Self-Care Training

Utilising compassionate focused therapy techniques to promote self confidence and self care in spite of personal challenges.

## Motivational Training & Goal Setting

Matching readiness for help/change to achievable targets and promoting autonomy in progressing personal goals.

## Integrative Counselling

Psychotherapeutic counselling offers to address deep rooted issues maintaining unhelpful behaviours/ thoughts, to promote self awareness and ultimately resolution of destructive vicious cycles that impact day to day functioning.

## Therapeutic Writing

Low key, highly effective intervention to enable emotional expression in a safe and supported setting with a view to reducing psychological distress and barriers to emotional wellbeing.

## Risk Management & Relapse Prevention

A proactive approach to risk using Kooth specific online tools to manage current risks and also avoid future setbacks.

## Skills-Based Training

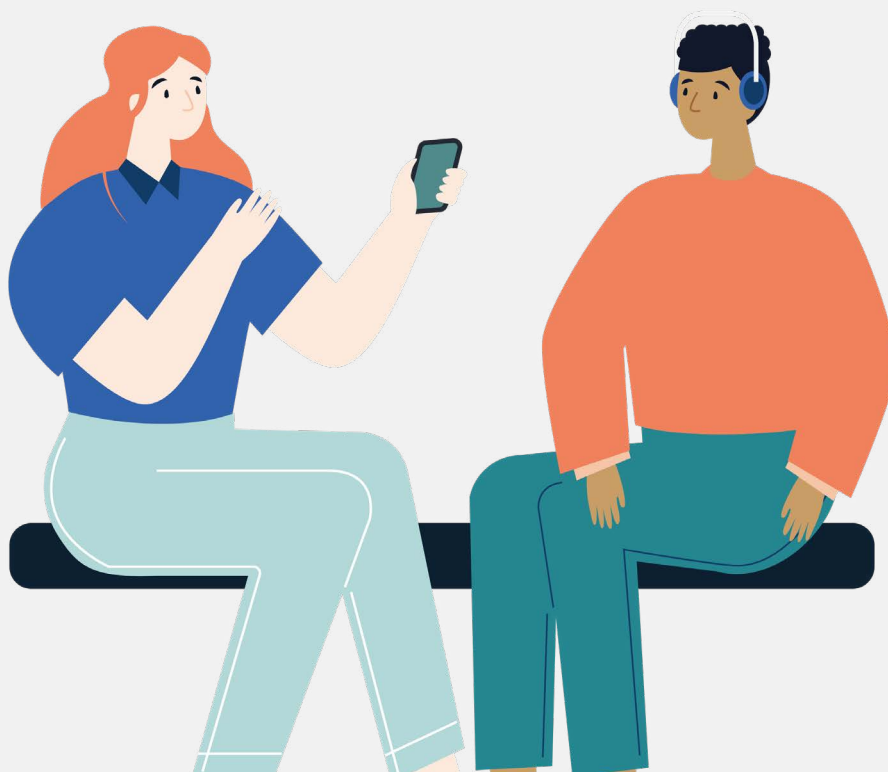
Strengths-based assessment and intervention to empower individuals to build on transferable skills and assets whilst encouraging a shift away from unhelpful deficit modes.

## NICE Informed Approach (Evidence Based)

Targeting specific anxieties including health, social and general, with opportunities for both individual and (moderated) peer support as appropriate.

## Stress Reduction Programmes

Based on evidence-based interventions for depression and low mood, including activity scheduling, distraction and mindfulness techniques.



# Talking to Children & Young People About Their Mental Health

Disclosing sensitive information about mental health can be difficult for children and young people. And for you, the GP, it can be tricky to know what are the right things to say to put the young person at ease. Providing a calm and welcoming environment, and showing that you are willing to take the time to listen to your patient, are important first steps in helping to start the conversation.

Our clinical team has put together ten important considerations for engaging and supporting children and young people in conversations around their mental health.

## Here to Help

Let the young person know that first and foremost you're here to help them and try to create an environment where there is space for them to talk or express how they are feeling....the following tips should enable this.

## No Pressure

Shifting early questions away from 'what's wrong' to 'what's happened' can be a really useful way of helping young people to tell you about themselves without feeling pressured to respond to a question that they may not have an answer to ('what's wrong' typically leads to a 'don't know' or a 'you tell me' response).

## I'm Worried

Let the young person know that you are worried about them - many young people feel their mental health related difficulties are trivial and that they should not be bothering other people with them.

## Open Ended

Asking more open ended questions generally encourages meaningful conversation whereas questions with yes/no answers (whilst sometimes necessary) can shut young people down in the early stages.



### Don't Downplay

Try to avoid the temptation to down-play how a young person may be feeling, even if this is a well intended attempt to 'normalise' their experiences. This may be helpful further down the line - but taking this approach too early can be off putting for young people - sit with their feelings for a while first.

### Not Alone

Not to be confused with 'normalising' too quickly, do remind the young person that they're not alone – just hearing this can be powerful and you can do this without minimising their experiences.

### Hear Me Out

Try not to jump too quickly to solutions/advice giving; linked to the above, it is actually more helpful to spend time in the early stages focussing on the 'problems' - not only does this help young people feel heard; they often start to naturally talk about some of the solutions themselves and that sense of self discovery is important.

### Balancing

In the early stages, finding the balance between listening and asking questions is tricky! As a general rule, the more a young person feels listened to, the more likely it is that they will value the interaction and come back for more help. Ask questions, but try not to overload them!

### Reactions

Be mindful of your own reactions - if a young person feels 'judged' (no matter how unintentional), they are unlikely to feel able to be open with you.

### Respect Privacy

Lastly, always respect the young person's privacy and be clear about confidentiality - young people just want to know where they stand and feel you are being transparent with them when it comes to sharing of information.

# Kooth By Numbers

94%

of Children and Young People would recommend Kooth to their friends.

5,400,000

Children and Young People have access to Kooth across the UK.

80%

of all CCG areas commission Kooth as of January 2021.\*

3,500+

Children and Young People logon to Kooth each day.

3,000,000

minutes of chat sessions took place in 2020 as Kooth supported young people through text-based sessions.



# Free Continuing Professional Development Sessions for Clinicians

Kooth will be launching a free monthly webinar series for clinicians aimed at educating healthcare professionals about children and young people's mental health as well as helping to increase awareness of issues related to mental health. Each webinar will provide an opportunity to hear from a leading subject expert. Participants will also have the opportunity to ask questions in these interactive webinars.

Over the next few months webinar sessions will cover topics including:

Anxiety

Depression

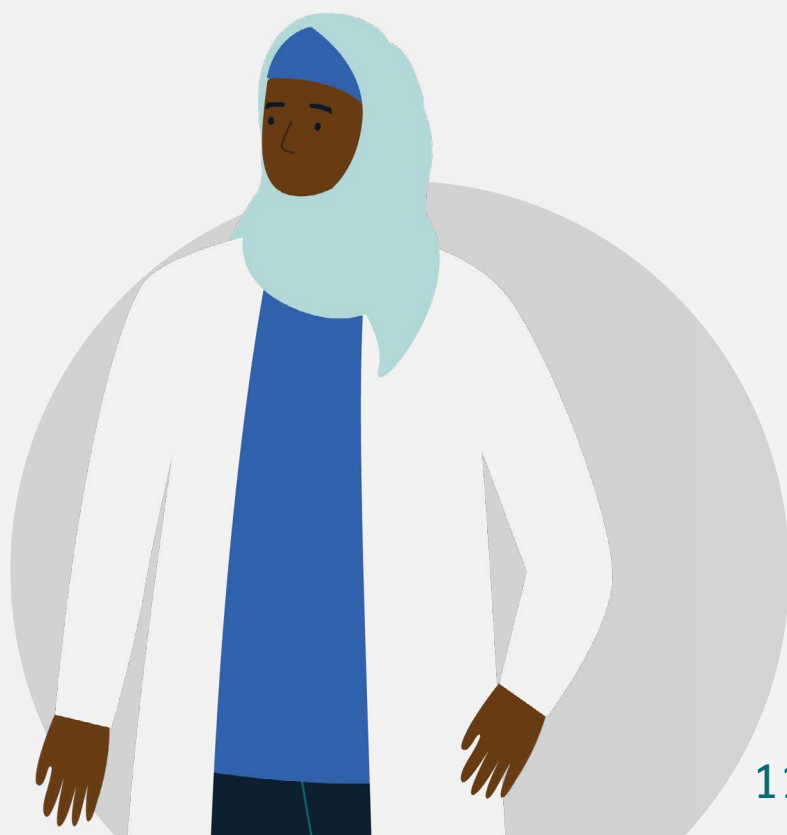
Eating Disorders

PTSD

If you are unable to attend the live sessions, we will record the session and post them on Kooth. At the end of each webinar, you will be able to download a CPD certificate as proof of your learning.

To book onto a webinar,  
or register your interest,  
please email:

[gpwebinar@kooth.com](mailto:gpwebinar@kooth.com)



# Information for Practice Managers

Practice managers can play an active role in signposting users to Kooth. Find out answers to frequently asked questions so you can help inform GP's about our service.

## How much does Kooth cost to use?

Kooth is completely free.

## Who can use Kooth?

Depending on the area you live in and what is currently commissioned, Kooth is available for 11 -25 year olds. No-one is prevented from accessing our service, our “open-door” policy ensures all CYPs can contact us if they are experiencing emotional or wellbeing issues.

We can support people with all ‘levels’ of presentations, from preventative work, through the mild/moderate, to severe end of difficulties. We acknowledge our limitations and sometimes, especially for those with more severe difficulties, we will work alongside other services, e.g. CAMHS or social services. We can also adjust our ‘offer’ as someone’s presentation changes, e.g. if things worsen or improve.

## When can children and young people contact Kooth?

Kooth is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Our experienced counsellors are available via drop-in or pre-arranged online chat sessions everyday of the year. Sessions are available from noon until 10pm on weekdays and from 6:00pm until 10:00pm on weekends.

## Do patients need referrals?

Kooth offers immediate and effective support. There are no referrals or waiting lists to access our services. Another unique aspect of Kooth, is that we are able to work with people who wouldn't yet meet the thresholds for NHS services, in order to prevent them ever doing so.

### **Are Kooth's counsellors qualified?**

All our counsellors are accredited (or actively working towards accreditation) by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy or equivalent.

### **What issues can counselling help with?**

CYP's come to Kooth for a variety of reasons. During the COVID-19 pandemic (March-October), our top six presenting issues amongst CYP's were:

- Anxiety
- Self Harm and Suicidal Thoughts
- Relationship Issues (Family, friends etc)
- Sadness
- Self Worth
- School/College Issues

In addition, we work with young people who have a specific diagnosis, such as an Eating Disorder or Aspergers. Where it is not appropriate or possible to provide a full evidence based service for these individuals, we work alongside other services to provide support in line with evidenced clinical approaches and/or prepare/motivate youngsters for specialist face to face treatment if required.

There's no problem too big or small that Kooth can't support CYP's with.

### **Is Kooth confidential?**

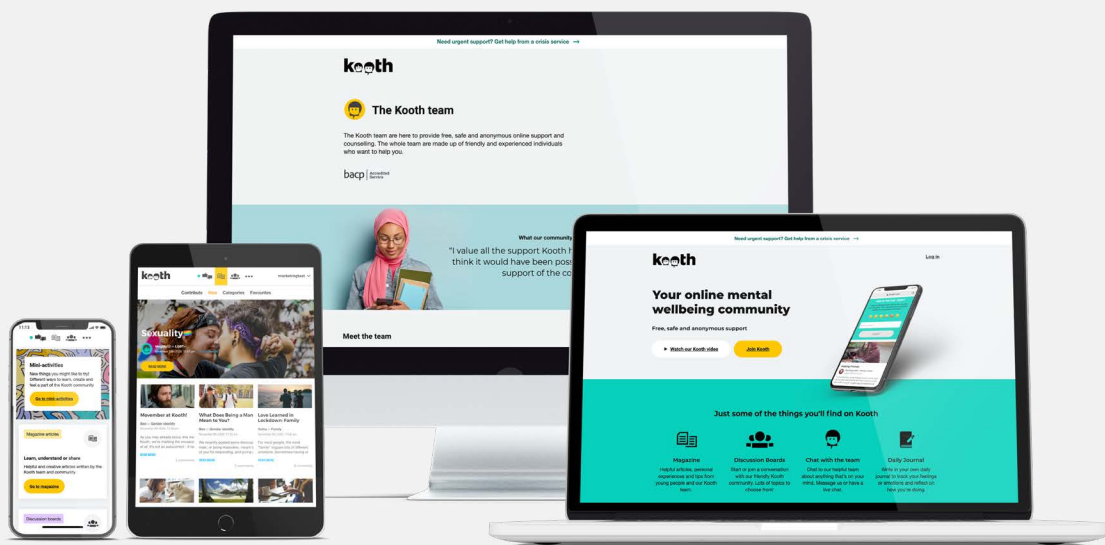
Yes, Kooth takes confidentiality extremely seriously. Any information we collect will not be shared unless the user is at risk. In these cases, our practitioners will always seek consent before sharing any details so they can refer to the most appropriate services (though sometimes it is necessary to refer on without consent in high risk situations).

### **Is Kooth anonymous?**

Kooth is a completely anonymous service. We can provide a safe and supportive space for those to seek support without fear of judgement. There is no need for family, friends or teachers to know that your patients are getting help. It is a service for young people to talk about what is going on for them.

# Promoting Kooth

We have a range of relevant resources that you can display around your practice. You can find resources by visiting [promote.kooth.com](https://promote.kooth.com) and searching for “GP” in the search bar.



Alternatively, when visiting [promote.kooth.com](https://promote.kooth.com), select “all promotional materials” - “Kooth” - “General Resources” and then “Print Posters”. Here, you’ll again find some suitable print posters that you can display in your practice.

As well as print posters, you can also find a range of digital posters, that you can also use on your social media accounts.

If you have any questions at all about the easiest ways to promote Kooth, please do get in touch with us at [contact@kooth.com](mailto:contact@kooth.com) or [marketing@kooth.com](mailto:marketing@kooth.com).

[promote.kooth.com](https://promote.kooth.com)

# Sanaya: A Case Study

**Sanaya\* is 13.**

Sanaya had issues with her food and her body. Her parents and friends were really worried about her weight and behaviour but they didn't know how to talk to her or where to go for help.

One day at school, a Kooth Promotion worker spoke in assembly about her own issues with eating and how Kooth can help.

That evening Sanaya logged onto Kooth anonymously from her phone.

She read an article from another user on how her eating disorder made her feel. Sanaya then posted on a forum and the Kooth moderator encouraged her to chat to a counsellor.

The Kooth counsellor worked with Sanaya over 4 sessions to explore feelings of shame or anxieties about accessing help, working within NICE guidelines, the counsellor encouraged Sanaya in the promotion of regular eating and worked with her to explore the function of the eating disorder using a CBT model. This was followed by motivational work to help encourage Sanaya to seek specialist treatment. Sanaya was referred to the local CAMHS service. Sanaya logs on to Kooth to share her stories and participate in forums when she feels she needs a little extra support.

## **Sanaya says:**

"I am really happy today. it's really weird [cus] one moment I was so upset and lonely now I just feel much better. this is because on Kooth I posted a discussion and someone helped me. My counsellor helped me believe in myself. Kooth helps me when I need it and that's made me have hope for the better."

## **Dr Lynne Green, Chief Clinical Officer says:**

"I'm so pleased for Sanaya that she came to Kooth. Through the anonymous pathway she was able to gain enough trust to reach out. The trusting therapeutic relationship she has built with the community and her counsellor has meant she has got specialist intervention quickly preventing deteriorating physical and mental symptoms. As a result of the work with Kooth she will be more engaged in her CAMHS treatment and has additional peer support when she needs it. Go Sanaya!"

\*for anonymity, Sanaya is a pseudonym.

## Get in touch

If you have any questions regarding Kooth, please get in touch and we'll help answer as best we can.

**General Enquiries**  
[contact@kooth.com](mailto:contact@kooth.com)

**Clinical Enquiries**  
[clinical@kooth.com](mailto:clinical@kooth.com)

**Promotional Enquiries**  
[marketing@kooth.com](mailto:marketing@kooth.com)

**Safeguarding Enquiries**  
[safeguarding@kooth.com](mailto:safeguarding@kooth.com)