

A Self-(are Toolkit



#### Hello

Rediscovering You

Welcome to a new approach to looking after you. We hope that you are as excited as we are ... or you may be a little concerned that this might not work for you?

We know that if you consistently try something new for 21 days you create a habit. How wonderful would it be to create a habit of self-care, improve your well-being, self-worth and self-esteem? We really want you to get there and this little book is here to make it easier for you. Designed to be carried around, picked up and put down when you need to.

Use it as your new friend, encouraging you to look after yourself, be kind to yourself and start new habits that will see you move forward in a calmer, happier way. There are lots of ideas for you to take your journey further and many reasons to celebrate being you.

Good luck ... you are awesome, maybe you just don't know it yet.



Written by Emma Stephens at Splitz Support Service and Jeanette Brown at More Positive Me.

THERE ARE 365 days IN A YEAR 24 hours IN A DAY THAT'S 1,440 minutes

# TRY AND MAKE AT LEAST 0 OF THOSE minutes for you.

#### Make it Work

#### Consistency is vital to your success on this self-care journey.

Set a good time each day to look at your book and action its contents, a page or even a paragraph or a sentence at a time will do. This in itself is committing to your self-care, it is a gift you are giving yourself, it is honouring yourself. So set a time each day, set a reminder, do what you need to, to have the mindset that this is your time, create a pattern, form the habit.

Often when we forget, miss a day, we create a downward spiral, the negative self-talk kicks in, you don't then self-care for days on end, nothing changes. We sometimes start a new healthy eating plan every Monday and when we 'fail' on a Wednesday we give up again. Let's do it differently, can you do this for you? You can come back to it when you are ready, pick up the book when you are feeling low, make it part of your self-care first aid. You can choose to start from the beginning again, you can start from where you left off, you can randomly flick to a page that fits with where you are right now. You can come back to it when you are ready to do this for you.

There is no failure, only feedback. When we learn from our feedback we grow.

Go to the centre of your book and pull out the 'Bill of Rights'. Colour it in if you like, read it through, put it up on your fridge door so you are reminded of your rights every time you see it, or put it in your bathroom so you read it every time you brush your teeth. Are there any rights you think do not apply to you?

Everyone has this 'Bill of Rights'. If you feel some of the rights do not apply to you, this will change as you work through the book.

An empty lantern carries no light. Self-care is the fuel that enables you to shine brightly Unknown



#### Who am 1?

Who are you, what makes you tick? What brings you joy? What do you like to do? What's your favourite food?

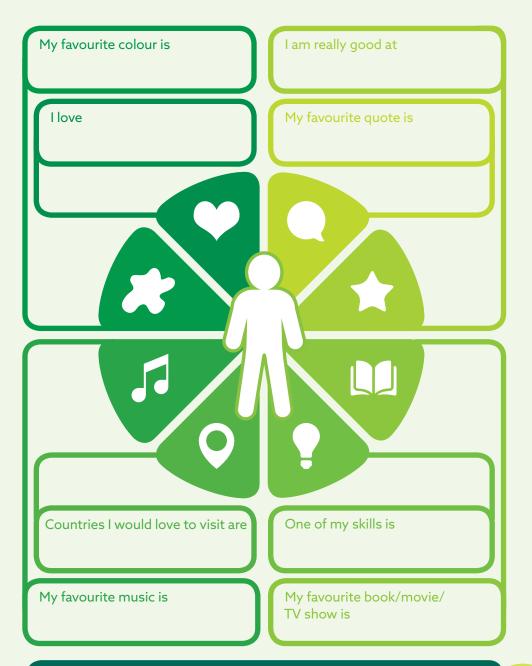
The answers may come easily but if they don't, be curious!

Fill in the page opposite. Give it a go. If you start down the path of negatives, then stop. Only positives are allowed here.

This may need exploring over a few days, add to it when ideas come to mind, either on the sheet or in a journal. It needs to be something you revisit, especially on the low days.

Are you already confident and know who you are and what you like? Write a list of your values or create a 'family values' list and get the kids involved. Find the words and then explain why they are your values and what they mean to you. Aim for around 3 to 10 values.

> "I am who I am. Not who you think I am. Not who you want me to be. I am me" Brigitte Nicole



🛛 You Are Fantastically Vnique 🏓

# Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale

Calculate your score by selecting A to D for the questions below:

for the questions below.		Strongly Agree	٩ ٩	Disagree	Strongly Disag
STATEMENT		Stro	Agree	Disa	Stro
1	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	А	В	С	D
2	I feel that I have a number of good qualities	А	В	С	D
3	I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	D	В	С	А
4	I am able to do things as well as most other people	А	В	С	D
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	D	В	С	А
6	I take a positive attitude toward myself	А	В	С	D
7	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	А	В	С	D
8	I wish I could have more respect for myself	D	С	В	А
9	I certainly feel useless at times	D	В	С	А
10	At times I think I am no good at all	D	С	В	А
My score is: As Bs Cs Ds Ds If you have mostly As and Bs you are within the normal range. If you have more Cs and Ds you have low self-esteem. We can work on this.					

#### Are you looking for Self-(are Ideas?



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#### Sleep

#### How much sleep is enough sleep?

Even if you are asleep for the recommended minimum of seven hours a night, what about the quality of your sleep? Stress can leave you struggling to sleep deeply for years so you always wake up shattered. Nightmares might plague you, but with a few small changes you can start to wake up feeling refreshed and ready for your day.

Download a sleep app, or use a smart watch, to record your sleep quality to help you achieve your optimum sleep.

- No tech in the bedroom, that means charge your mobile downstairs and no television
- Have a glass of water by your bed in case you are thirsty in the night
- Avoid caffeine after 4pm
- Change your pillow every 18 months
- Layer your bedding so you can adjust your temperature as you need to
- Write a journal of your thoughts and a 'to do' list before you switch off your lights
- No screens for at least 30 minutes before bed
- Body scan and focus on breathing to clear your mind

"Sleep is the golden chain that binds our health and bodies together" Thomas Dekker

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# Hydration

Yes, we get it, water is boring! Water's bland, it's flavourless or, if you drink tap water, you may find it has an odd taste that you don't like very much.

The truth is, without water our bodies do not function. When we dehydrate we feel rough, head-achy, hungover and in the long term it can lead to health problems.

If you are not used to drinking water I doubt you even have a thirst for it. But when you get into the habit of drinking water you become thirsty, your body starts to crave it.

Did you know that when you drink water:

- Your kidneys function correctly, eliminating harmful toxins
- You naturally lose weight
- Your brain function increases
- Your skin clears and brightens
- ... to name but a few benefits.

Imagine, if you will, a dry hanging basket. When you pour water in, it runs straight out. Now if that hanging basket is watered daily, it doesn't run out, the basket retains it. That's what we need for our bodies.

You need to find what's right for you. There are apps to remind you to drink; you could have a glass of water every hour, on the hour. You could buy a water bottle with time slots on the side to remind yourself. Find what works for you but start drinking around 1.5 litres a day. Don't drink it all in one go either, think about the hanging basket, little and often. Flavour the water if you must, but do try to drink pure water. If you find yourself making excuses, ask why? "Water is the driving force of all nature" Leonardo Da Vinci

#### Nutrition

How is your nutrition? Are you running on empty or possibly comfort eating?

To function at our best, we need a well-balanced diet but we cannot achieve this overnight. By making small changes to our diet though we can start to feel better in ourselves.

#### Nourishment is a huge part of self-care.

Here are some simple ideas to start with. Try to eat mindfully, not in front of the TV or with your phone in your hand. Enjoy and taste what you eat. This applies to over- and under-eaters, as well as those with unhealthy habits.

When we nourish our bodies they function better; we feel less tired, achy and bloated, more energised and alive. Our skin looks fresher and clearer, we heal faster and avoid colds and viruses.

- Eat your five a day, that is five pieces of fruit or veg a day
- Cut down on caffeine or try drinking a glass of water every time you make a tea or coffee
- Don't go longer than five hours between meals
- Eat your meal away from the television, smartphone or desk
- Cut back on sugary snacks, try fruit as an alternative

"Food is essential as fuel for the body, but good food is fuel for the soul" Malcolm Forbes

# Digital Detox

#### Have you noticed how much technology has taken over our lives?

A recent study discovered that we look at our smart phones on average every 12 minutes. Think about that for a moment.

We are so pre-occupied with what's going on, so overwhelmed with information, that we forget to live in the moment and enjoy it. We ignore company when eating out as we want to show the world our plate of food, or we sit looking at our phones instead of talking with those around us. "We take better care of our smart phones than we do ourselves. We know when the battery is depleted & recharge it" Arianna Huffington

Today, think about how often you pick up your phone, to scroll, or log in to check your emails or social media. Do you know how much time you could save? You can decide on a time to check your phone or give yourself a digital detox, remember it's what works for you. Make an effort to put your phone down, or away, when in company.

The next generation are growing up in a photoshopped world; social media and apps provide filters which produce unrealistic, enhanced images. Set a great example by making digital-free family time.

# Get Moving

You're doing well. Plain sailing from here on in! If you have managed to keep up so far, the odds are you will get to the end. Go you!!

Today is about getting moving. However much you exercise, let's look at increasing it. It is shown that 30 minutes to 1.5 hours of exercise, 2-3 times a week, not only improves our physical health, but our mental health too.

What works for you? The gym isn't for everybody, just as country walks aren't for others. Find what works for you, be curious, explore, give things a go. I tried yoga and found it hilarious, then gave pilates a go and discovered it's just right for me.

You can count your steps with a pedometer, or free app on your phone and then set step challenges with friends.

Have a go at something new today, or at least book it in your diary for a future date.

> Exercise is really for the brain, not the body. It affects mood, vitality, alertness and feelings of well-being John Ratev

# Laugh

Funniest Ted Talks' online When did we become so serious? When, in fact, did you last have a really good belly laugh?

We get so caught up in the business of life that we don't have time, or don't feel we have the right, to have fun. Children make fun a priority, top of life goals. Somewhere in life that changes.

#### If you would like the science, then remember laughter boosts the immune system

Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals.

Today, find time for fun. This is easier if you have children, come down to their level and surprise them, they will love it. Have a movie night... Put on a comedy... Search YouTube for funny animal videos... Make slime... Be spontaneous! Dance around the kitchen whilst cooking... Hold a funny face contest!

It's your call, think about what you can do today that will be fun and raise a giggle.

> "I think people should have fun. And don't get so down on yourself. Enjoy life and be the best person you can be Keke Palmer



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MY MIND

# Ny Bill of Rights

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I have the right to be me

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I have the right to be safe I have the right to love and be loved I have the right to be treated with respect

I have the right to be human - **not perfect** 

I have the right to be angry and protest if I am treated unfairly or abusively by anyone

I have the right to my own privacy

I have the right to my own opinions, to express them and be taken seriously

I have the right to control my own money

I have the right to ask questions about anything that affects my life

I have the right to make decisions that affect me

I have the right to grow and change (and that includes changing my mind)

I have the right to say **NO** 

I have the right to make mistakes

I have the right not to be liked by everyone

I have the right to control my own life and change it if I am not happy with it as it is

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### Affirmations

Whether you believe a positive affirmation or not, what we repeatedly tell ourselves we start to believe.

Affirmations are about you and start with 'I am', or 'I can...', etc.

Today, find some affirmations that resonate with you and put them somewhere you will regularly see them. This could be in your purse, on the front of your journal or tucked into the corner of your mirror. Say them out loud, say them regularly to yourself.

The 'Bill of Rights' is a fabulous affirmation. Have you put it on your fridge door yet or somewhere else where you will see it daily? Find a page on Facebook so your daily feed starts to fill with affirmations that resonate, cut out the affirmations at the back of this book or create your own. Put them where you will see them, on your desk at work or pop one in your kids lunch box. Write your favourites in your journal.

They will give you hope and build self-belief.

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"It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief, and once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen" Habeeb Akande

#### Boundaries

Where do we start with boundaries? It's a huge subject.

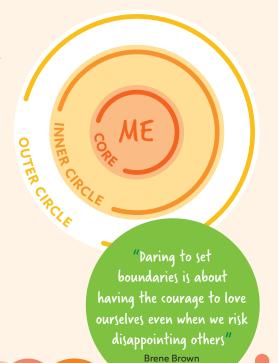
The easiest way to look at this is in conjunction with your 'Bill of Rights'. Your boundaries protect your 'Bill of Rights'. A good way to gauge if you have overstepped someone else's boundary is to think about whether you have affected their 'Bill of Rights'.

Knowing you have the right to set a boundary is key here, we cover it in the courses we run.

We know when our boundary has been overstepped as it makes us feel awful, taken advantage of, and worthless. Have a think about a boundary you need to set, then really focus on keeping it in place, this can be hard as those who take advantage will push to get their own way. So, start with a simple boundary.

For example, children are very quick to notice where your boundaries are. How many times do they have to ask before you give in? How difficult is it now to put that boundary back in place because 'last time you let me.'

If someone asks you to do something you don't want to, do you struggle to say no without making up an excuse? Recognise when you do this. Try not to start every answer with 'sorry but' as you have nothing to apologise for (unless you are stepping over someone else's boundary of course).



## Gratitude

#### Gratitude practice is commonplace amongst successful people.

It changes our mindset so we no longer focus on the things we don't have, or the things we aren't, but recognise the things we do have and the things we are. For example, there will always be something we have that others strive to have. Saying thank you is a gift to ourselves as well as those we thank. When someone thanks us, it reinforces appreciation and makes us want to give more.

Thank you for showing up today. It means the world to us that you are committing to improving your life through selfcare, we really hope you are beginning to feel the benefits.

Choose something you do every day, for example, brushing your teeth before you go to bed at night. In that five minutes as you brush your teeth, think of three things you are grateful for that day. Each day choose three new things. Or, if you are journaling, write down ten things you are grateful for each day. Do this for at least 21 days.

> "I may not be where I want to be but I'm thankful for not being where I used to be" Habeeb Akande

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#### Shelve It

Today is all about making time to worry.

I know it seems odd, advising you to worry as part of your self-care, but there is structure to this. Worry can consume our every thought, we stop listening, we stop being in the moment and our minds run away thinking about 'what if' and 'what could be'.

Setting aside some worry time brings us back to the here and now so we can focus on the task in hand. When you notice your mind starting to race so you miss what is going on around you, recognise this, don't spiral into anxiety, instead decide to worry later. Set some worry time for when you get home and have the chance to sit down and reflect.

#### Every time the thought creeps in, tell it to wait for worry time.

This takes practice, granted, but it means you can enjoy the day with worry having less impact. Often when you get to the allocated time to worry most of it has dissipated and things make more sense. Your worry time can take five minutes, or be a chance to talk things over with a friend, or write concerns in your journal, rather than worry ruining your whole day. Some worries are bigger than others, but worry time can also give you chance to arrange to discuss concerns with a friend, or a professional.

This technique is also recommended as part of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.



"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength" Corrie Ten Boom

#### Mindfulness

Do you find yourself dwelling on the past or worrying about the future?

Is your head overwhelmed with a list of things you must do? Do you have panic attacks when it all gets too much, or maybe you get to a point where you keep making mistakes? Maybe your mind buzzes with overuse, like an old computer struggling to keep up, or is that just mine? Imagine your mind constantly contracted like a muscle. Mindfulness helps us relax that muscle, giving our minds a break and a chance to heal. It's all about the present, coming back to where you are, grounding.

We lead such busy, hectic lives. Here is how to give mindfulness a go. Use your senses, ask yourself the questions:

What can I see? What else ..? What can I hear? What else ..? What can I feel? What else ..? What can I smell? What else ..? What can I taste? What else ..?

If you really stop and take note, you become aware of so many different things. Mindfulness can be used in everything we do. The more you practice, we suggest five times a day, the more peace you will find. There is happiness in the wonder around us, just being in the moment. Really notice the here and now, give yourself a break from the hurt of the past and the anxiety of the future.

For panic attacks use the above technique but count down from five, five things I can see, four things I can hear, and so on. "The present moment is filled with joy and happiness. If you are attentive, you will see it" Thich Nhat Hanh

use an app headpace calm etc.

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### Positive Self-Talk

Negative self-talk, we all do it, we are our biggest critics. Do you find when someone puts you down your inner critic joins in to reinforce those negative beliefs?

It's so important you learn to turn that around. It eats away at your self-esteem, it stops you becoming everything you can be.

- Firstly, start recognising when you do it.
- Secondly, be curious, ask yourself why you do this? Explore your ideas. You may want to start a journal and write your thoughts down. This really helps you to process information and make sense of it. Write down what it was you said to yourself, 'I'm stupid', 'I can't', 'I'm not good enough', for example, and then write down how you feel about this.
- Thirdly, think about how you could be nicer to yourself, after all you wouldn't talk to a friend like that, so become your own best friend.

Negative talk sends us on a downward spiral, we want an upward spiral. Of course, this takes practice, and that's why we are here. Small steps, right direction.

We believe in you, when you start to believe in yourself, that's when the magic happens. You are enough.

"Self-talk is the most powerful form of communication. Because it either empowers you or defeats you" <sup>unknown</sup>

# The Mirror

We've left this one towards the end of the book. If you have been reading each day you should be feeling much better about yourself.

Not everyone struggles with this but I've been amazed at just how many people are unhappy with their reflection and really avoid being in photos.

Today, look in a mirror and tell yourself a positive affirmation. You can start with 'I am' or 'you are', as your reflection is going to say it right back at you.

If you are struggling to say something just look. If you catch the critical thinker coming out, put them straight, right away, you've had enough criticism. Stay there or keep coming back until you can see your reflection with empathy. You need to become your reflection's best friend.

Put up your affirmations by the mirror and practice saying them daily to your reflection. The harder this is to do, the more you need to do it.

If you feel you can, take some selfies. You don't have to post them on social media but you can if you want to. Get used to how you look to the world. Tell yourself you love you every day.

Search YouTube for '**The Art of Being Yourself**' by Caroline McHugh, TEDxMiltonKeynesWomen.

"Smile in the mirror. Do that every morning and you'll start to see a big difference in your life" Yoko Ono

#### Look in the mirror, what do you see?

Look in the mirror, what do you see? A shadow of the person you used to be,

You've taken a leap, you've broken those chains, Now it's time to start living your life again,

> Down deep there's a flicker, it needs to be tended, Start loving yourself and your light can be mended,

> > Self care is the answer, one step at a time, To believe in yourself, and trust your own mind,

> > > Accept help that's offered, I know this is hard, But to trust there's good people, will help soothe your scars,

Read, take walks, relax, enjoy nature, Take time for yourself, find your truth, self nurture, For giving yourself time, and finding your peace, Will enable your worries and fear to release,

Your flicker will grow, and you'll suddenly find, You're shining, you're happy, and now is your time,

> Take a look in the mirror, now what do you see? A strong, shining, survivor, Who's proud to be free.

> > Vicky Ryan



# MY SOUL

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#### Back to Nature

There is such a lot to be said for the healing benefits of connecting with nature.

I watched a documentary recently about the hard-working, stressed out Japanese being given 'Forest Bathing' as part of a work-care package. It entailed walking through forests and absorbing nature. Very simple, very effective. Any chance to get outside in the fresh air will do you good. You could go that extra step and plan a trip to the woods or you might find the sea more therapeutic. Whatever you do, get yourself outside today, or plan a trip. Ten minutes outside during your lunch break will clear your head so you start your afternoon afresh. Walk outside and look up at the sky. Never skip your lunch break, you will work more efficiently as a result.

If getting out and about is too hard for you at the moment, then how about taking your morning coffee in to the garden? It's a start. If it's raining, just open the door and enjoy the moment or sit under a parasol. If you are feeling up to it, and you can dry off afterwards, go and stand or dance in the rain. It's amazing how it can lift your spirits.

Try to practice your mindfulness, taking in everything around you. Notice how you feel and record it in your journal. Is it a clear night? Find a vantage point and watch the sunset, or sunrise if you are an early bird. Already dark? Count the stars.

"I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and have my senses put in order" John Burroughs

#### De-(lutter

Have you ever heard the phrase cluttered head, cluttered home? Or is it the other way round?

There is a clear correlation though. Just organising and having a clear out of even a drawer can have a positive impact on you. Be careful of being overwhelmed though. You may have a whole house to do and then resort to de-cluttering nothing. You could work through your wardrobe, under the bed, a kitchen cupboard, or a bathroom cabinet. Is there something you are keeping hold of that really doesn't belong in your life anymore?

Make de-cluttering a little project today. If you don't have time today, schedule a time to do it. Note how you feel after achieving this and congratulate yourself.

Create a de-clutter schedule. You could create three piles as you start to have a clear out. One pile to throw away, one for the charity shop and one to sell on ebay or at a car boot sale.

to throw

away

"(lutter is not just the physical stuff. It's old ideas, toxic relationships and bad habits. (lutter is anything that does not support your better self" Eleanor Brown

to keep

# Music

Music always speaks to us. It's as if when something is going on in your life, you always hear a song that has the Today is about creating your 'happy' play list. It needs to be your 'go to' lyrics that speak to your soul. play list that lifts your spirits when you are down and makes you want

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Dear music,

thanks for always

clearing my head,

healing my heart and

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to sing and dance. Play it when you're cooking, when you're doing your housework and, yes, when you feel low. What is on your playlist? Ours includes Take That's 'Shine', Katy Perry's 'Firework' and MC Hammer's 'Can't Touch This' for starters.

Ready for the challenge? Create an empowering playlist and a relaxing lifting my spirits playlist too. Endeavour to listen to your happy Lori Deschene music at least once a day. How about putting it on instead of the depressing news station? Can you set your morning alarm to be a song that empowers you? My Happy Playlist 'Go to' music when I'm feeling low

# Sanctuary

Rediscove

Let's create sanctuary, somewhere we can be surrounded by the things we love and find peace.

Sanctuary needs to be a physical place you make your own, whether it is just your side of the bed, a spot in the garden or a whole room. Make the space yours, fill it with things you love and have fun with it.

If this isn't possible, think of a place you like to go, to watch the sea perhaps, or a bench in the woods, or by a river. A place where you can reconnect with you.

> Sanctuary, on a personal level, is where we perform the job of taking care of our soul Christopher Forrest McDowe

# Asking for Help

We have looked at how it takes 21 days to form a habit, so that self-care becomes part of your daily routine.

We hope we have shown you that self-care isn't just about a box of chocolates or getting your nails done, in fact, self-care doesn't have to cost a penny.

So today is about looking forward. It's about not feeling you have to do this alone. If you are still struggling then we encourage you to ask for help, explore and be curious. Recognise when your negative thinking kicks in and challenge it. Connect with friends and accept help and support when it is offered.

Do you remember the quiz you did at the beginning? Now is your chance to do it again and compare your score.

Keep this little book with you, use it regularly to remind yourself how important you are. If you don't manage to complete it all then try and revisit it again and again.

Be proud of yourself.

With love, Jeanette and Emma "Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction ends up being the biggest step of your life. Tip toe if you must, but take the step" Naeem Callaway



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#### Empowerment After Domestic Abuse

We provide personal development training, online and in person, for people who have experienced domestic abuse to help them break the cycle, feel empowered, move forward and live more positive lives.

We recognise the long-term effects of domestic abuse and its impact on self-esteem and self-worth. We work to rebuild that self-belief. We see time and time again, when this improves then lives improve. We believe in the journey from Victim, to Survivor to Thriver.

07510 515160



#### **Splitz Support Service**

Devon Domestic Abuse Support Service is the Devon County Council commissioned Domestic Abuse service led by Splitz Support Service.

Our service offers support to people experiencing domestic abuse including; Women and men of all ages, specialised support for young people, Consultation and support for other professionals, behaviour change support and advocacy for those wanting to change their abusive behaviour.

0345 155 1074

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#### **Empowerment After Domestic Abuse**

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Splitz Support Service does its utmost to ensure that all information is based upon accurate research and our wealth of experience. We urge users to determine the suitability of the information for individuals requirements. Please feel free to contact our fully trained and experienced staff, who are able to advise you. Splitz Support Service 2018