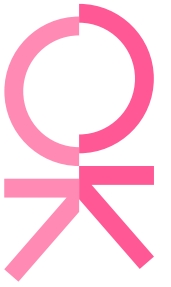


# Problem Solving Booths

Create your own: a toolkit



# How do they work?

Problem Solving Booths create a space for members of a community to have conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

A booth simply consists of two chairs and some signage, encouraging passers-by to sit and take the role of either the 'helper' or 'helped' and have a conversation about how they feel, or anything that they would like advice on.



# What are they?

**Thrive LDN** co-developed 'Problem Solving Booths' in partnership with the **Owls Organisation**, a social enterprise. The initial idea came from a young person who was asked what could help support people with everyday stresses where he lived. He said, "a problem solving booth right here on my street."

**Problem Solving Booths are not a professional therapy tool and do not require a clinical lead to run**, but rather provide an opportunity or 'permission' to talk to others. They can change in appearance and be adapted to suit whatever location or audience you want to reach.



# Why should we do this?

Thrive LDN is at heart a citywide movement to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Londoners. It is about empowering individuals and communities to lead change, to address inequalities that lead to poor mental health, and to shape their communities and environments to improve mental health and wellbeing.

*Problem Solving Booths are a great way to get Londoners thinking and talking more about mental health and wellbeing. The booths also provide an opportunity to hear and encourage ideas Londoners have for improving mental health and wellbeing in their communities – and can even lead to new partnerships and projects!*



## *Before you begin*

*Think about why you want to run a booth – are you trying to understand more about a particular issue? Or reach a particular group? Or ‘take the temperature’ of residents’ concerns? This will help you to decide the best location and time of day for your booth. For instance, if you’d like a random sample of local residents, try setting up in an area with high footfall at a peak time (like lunchtime).*

# Running a booth



## Setting up

To set up a booth, you will usually need:

- ✓ 2 chairs
- ✓ Handwritten cardboard signage:
  - 'Problem Solving Booth'
  - 'Helper'
  - 'Helped'
  - 'What It Is'
  - 'What It Isn't'
- ✓ Some stationery to put it all together:
  - Gaffer tape, string, scissors, pegs
- \*To make a free-standing booth, if you're not able to attach your cardboard signs to a nearby wall, surface or railing, you can use bamboo canes or something similar as signposts (perhaps taped to the legs of the chairs so that they stand upright).
- ✓ 'Need help?' leaflet (see page 7 and example on page 9)



# Running a booth



## Ready to help?

*To run a booth it's best to have at least two people, ideally three – that way, if one of you is in the booth talking to someone, then the other person is available to interact with passers-by and answer any questions.*

*Running a booth is a great way to work in partnership with people and organisations in your community, so perhaps invite them to help you run the booth. With appropriate supervision, it's also a good activity to do with volunteers (see page 7 on safeguarding and how to support on the day).*

## Getting people talking

*Below are some possible steps for getting conversations started with people in and around the booth:*

### 1 Approach passers-by

“Hello, we’re here testing out a Problem Solving Booth today. It only takes five minutes, so I was wondering whether you have time to quickly help me with something.”  
(Lots of people like to feel that they can help someone else!)

### 2 Ask for help

Take a seat and ask for help with something related to mental health or wellbeing to get a conversation started. Perhaps choose something fairly general and relatable, like asking for advice on sleep, anxiety, or stress.

### 3 Have a conversation

Listen and converse in a friendly and non-judgemental way — keep it informal! If you both have time, you could try swapping roles as ‘helper’ and ‘helped.’

### 4 Say “thank you” for taking part!

### 5 Ask about their experience and collect feedback

If you are running a booth for a particular reason, for example to understand more about a particular issue, you can ask participants if they are happy to provide some feedback. You could use a feedback sheet (see example on page 8).



# Safeguarding

*Below are a few safeguarding items to keep in mind as you plan a booth:*

## **Permissions for location of a booth:**

Some spaces are privately owned, so you may need to check for permission before you set up a booth. However, public spaces such as parks are a good option for somewhere you could set up a booth quickly and easily.

## **If people need help with something more serious:**

Problem Solving Booths are not a clinical service or professional therapy; as such, it is not the remit of people in the booth to address serious issues or people in crisis. In the unlikely event that a participant seems to be in serious difficulty or crisis, the booth can be equipped with a 'Need help?' crisis numbers leaflet (see page 9).

## **Wellbeing of people running the booth:**

We always encourage having a de-brief with any volunteers running the booth afterwards, so that we can discuss everyone's experiences and any learning points for next time.

## *Getting involved*

*For more information on Problem Solving Booths or on Thrive LDN, visit our website or follow us on social media:*

 @ThriveLDN

 [www.instagram.com/thriveldn](http://www.instagram.com/thriveldn)

 [www.facebook.com/AreWeOKLDN](http://www.facebook.com/AreWeOKLDN)

[www.thriveldn.co.uk](http://www.thriveldn.co.uk)



# Feedback form



Name ..... Surname .....

E-mail address ..... Borough .....

Your age  under 18  18-35  36-45  46-59  60+

What did you discuss today?

*(Feel free to use key words or a description)*

.....  
.....  
.....

*(Tell us about the advice you have received)*

.....  
.....  
.....

How useful do you think booths are?

unhelpful  not that useful  I'm not sure  somewhat useful  very useful

How would you change or improve booths?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Thrive LDN is working towards a happier, healthier city – what do you think of our ideas?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



# Need help?

Good Thinking is an online mental health at [www.good-thinking.uk](http://www.good-thinking.uk)

You can find tools and resources to help yourself and others to feel better. From managing your anxiety to meeting like-minded people, whatever it is you need, Good Thinking can help you find it.



*If you are in crisis, feel suicidal, or feel like harming yourself or other people:*

- Call **999**
- Go to your nearest Accident and Emergency department (A&E). You can search for your local department through the **NHS Choices website**

*If you need to speak to someone urgently, the following service is available:*

- Call Samaritans free helpline on **116 123**

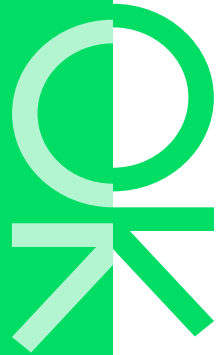
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