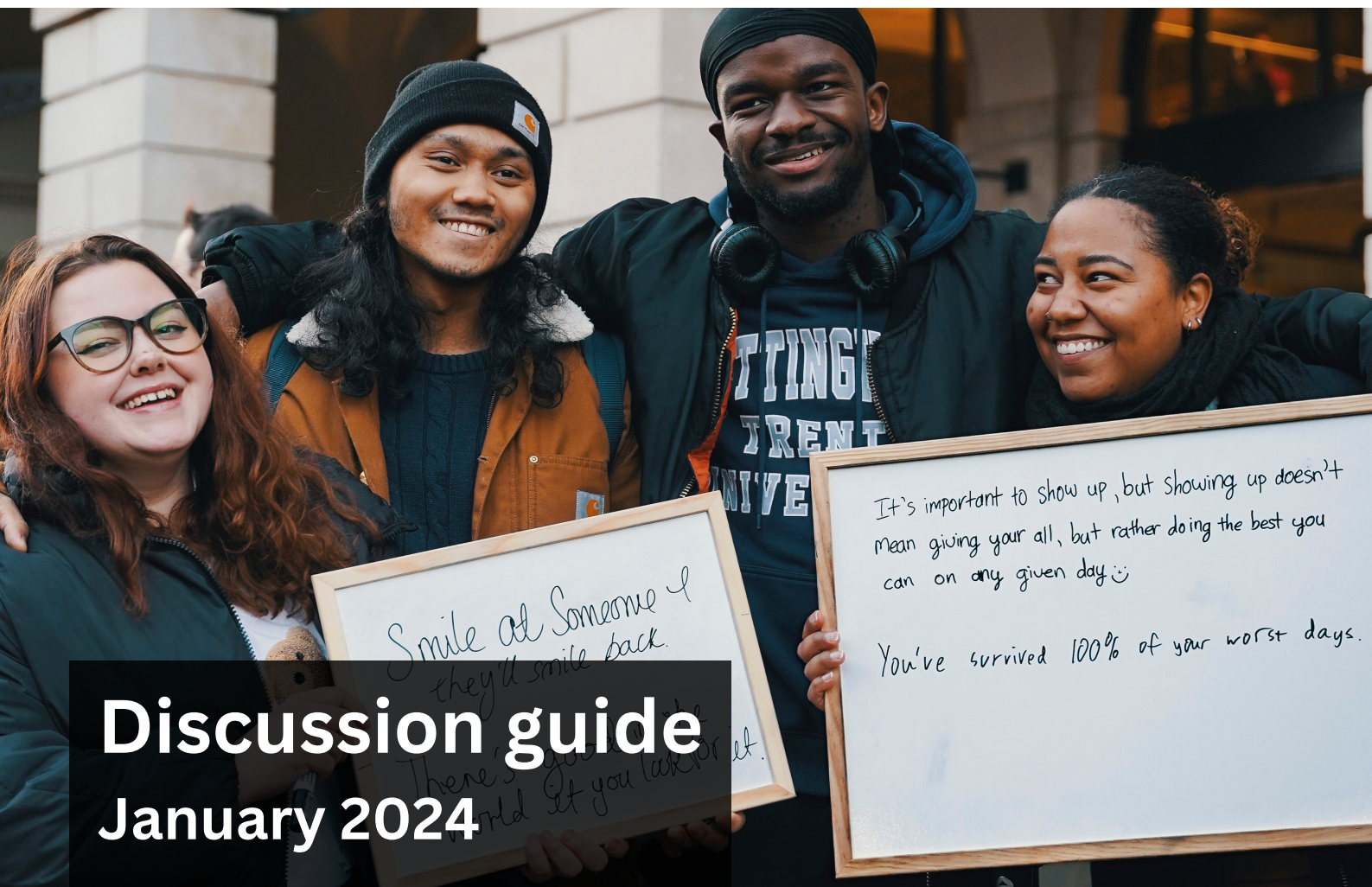


# Connections

A short film about finding hope



**Discussion guide**  
**January 2024**

# Introduction

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This discussion guide has been written to help start conversations about how we can connect and support each other's mental health.

We have designed this to support a small group activity and would take around 45-60 minutes depending on the depth of discussion.

We've based this around the short film Connections, where, during December 2023, Londoners wrote messages of hope and support to anyone feeling alone and unconnected.

The release of the film coincides with Great Mental Health Day 2024, when we are encouraging everyone in London to talk, connect, and get through difficult times together.

The key message for the video is:

**You are not alone.  
It gets better.**



# About Connections

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*Connections* is a short film created by Messages of Hope and The Speakers Collective that explores how we can find hope through connection.

We set out to capture Londoners writing messages of hope for people struggling with their mental health and we discovered just how connected we truly are.

*Connections* is proof that somebody out there really does care about you.

None of us are alone.

Connections is funded by the Mayor of London. The project was commissioned and supported by Thrive LDN as part of Great Mental Health Day.



# 1. Introduce the film

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**Introduce the Connections film to the group.  
(10 minutes)**

The film can be played via Thrive LDN's YouTube channel or downloaded to used locally. A version with subtitles and BSL has also been created.

[Connections \(YouTube\)](#)

[Connections \(Google Drive download\)](#)

Connections is around 4 minutes long. There is also a 'Making of Connections' film of similar duration which we recommend watching after the main film.

Introducing the films:

*"Connections is a short film created by Messages of Hope and Speakers Collective that explores how we can find hope through connection. It captures Londoners writing messages of hope for people struggling with their mental health. It has been launched to mark Great Mental Health Day 2024, to show us that none of us is alone, and that somebody out there really cares about you."*

# 2. Ice breaker

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## **Ice breaker: What is connection? (15 minutes)**

After viewing the films, spend the next 15 minutes using or adapting the following questions for the group to discuss:

Who do you feel most connected to?

What makes those connections work for you?

What messages in the video reflect what connection means for you?

What would your message of hope be for someone else?

# 3. Starting the conversation

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**Note to facilitator:** download Thrive LDN's conversation starter guide which follows a SIGNSS framework (Situation, Initiate, Guide, Nudge, Support and Signpost) to support this discussion. This framework aims to help people begin talking about how they are feeling and would support your group discussion by following the 5 steps, as seen below:

## **Situation (5 minutes)**

Think of spaces you access and ways of communicating. We have included some suggested prompts below:

Where do think you would feel most comfortable talking to friends about your or their mental health?

What method of communication do you feel most comfortable with (face to face, phone call, messaging e.g. WhatsApp, Snapchat, anything else?)

# 3. Starting the conversation

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## **Initiate (10 minutes)**

Think about how you might want to start this conversation. We suggest that as facilitator you may find it helpful to note down the words or phrases your group uses.

How would you start a conversation about mental health?

*Facilitator to note down words and phrases used.*

Depending on confidence of the group/how well they know each other, this could be a short role play session if additional time available.

# 4. Maintaining the conversation

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## **Nudge (10 minutes)**

What prompts can you use to get people talking? We have included some questions to ask the group to get them reflecting on their approaches.

How can we encourage someone to open up more?  
What does a good listener do/not do?

Encourage participants to give examples of when they felt listened to / not listened to and note the characteristics and behaviours of a good listener.

## **Guiding (5 minutes)**

How can you help someone through this conversation. Sometimes people dont have the words, what questions do you think would be helpful to ask someone to encourage them to open up?



# 5. Supporting beyond the conversion

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## Support and Signpost (5 minutes)

You aren't alone here and don't always need to have the answer.

There are a range of support services designed to support people. In the last 5 minutes discuss support people have found useful, and suggest places to go.

*Ensure all participants receive a list (printed or shared online/ messaging) of resources.*

*Some of these are listed in the Thrive LDN conversation starter.*

*More can be found at Good Thinking.*



# 6. Session close

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## **Sharing a message**

To bring the session to a close, participants could be asked to write their own message of hope.

You might want to display these in your setting or share on your social media.

If you do share, please use #GreatMentalHealth and #MessagesOfHope.

If time is limited, this is something participants can do in their own time, on their social media channels. Again, people can use the campaign hashtags to add to the campaign's collection of messages.

## **Colouring pages**

Alternatively, you can also download a selection of blank colouring pages produced by Messages of Hope.

[Download the Messages of Hope colouring pages.](#)

***Thank you for being part of the discussion.***