Friday, 09 October 2026

Mental Health

Learning Objectives:

Understand signs of poor mental health
Identify healthy and unhealthy coping strategies
Understand the link between addiction and mental health
Know where to access help for yourself or others

1) Who could you talk to if you had worries about your mental health?

2) Where can you find reliable information about mental health?

Mental Health - In previous years, you've learned the basics about

- Lifestyle factors that promote good mental health e.g.

Balanced diet, exercise, time spent in nature, sleep, maintaining strong relationships, talk about feelings

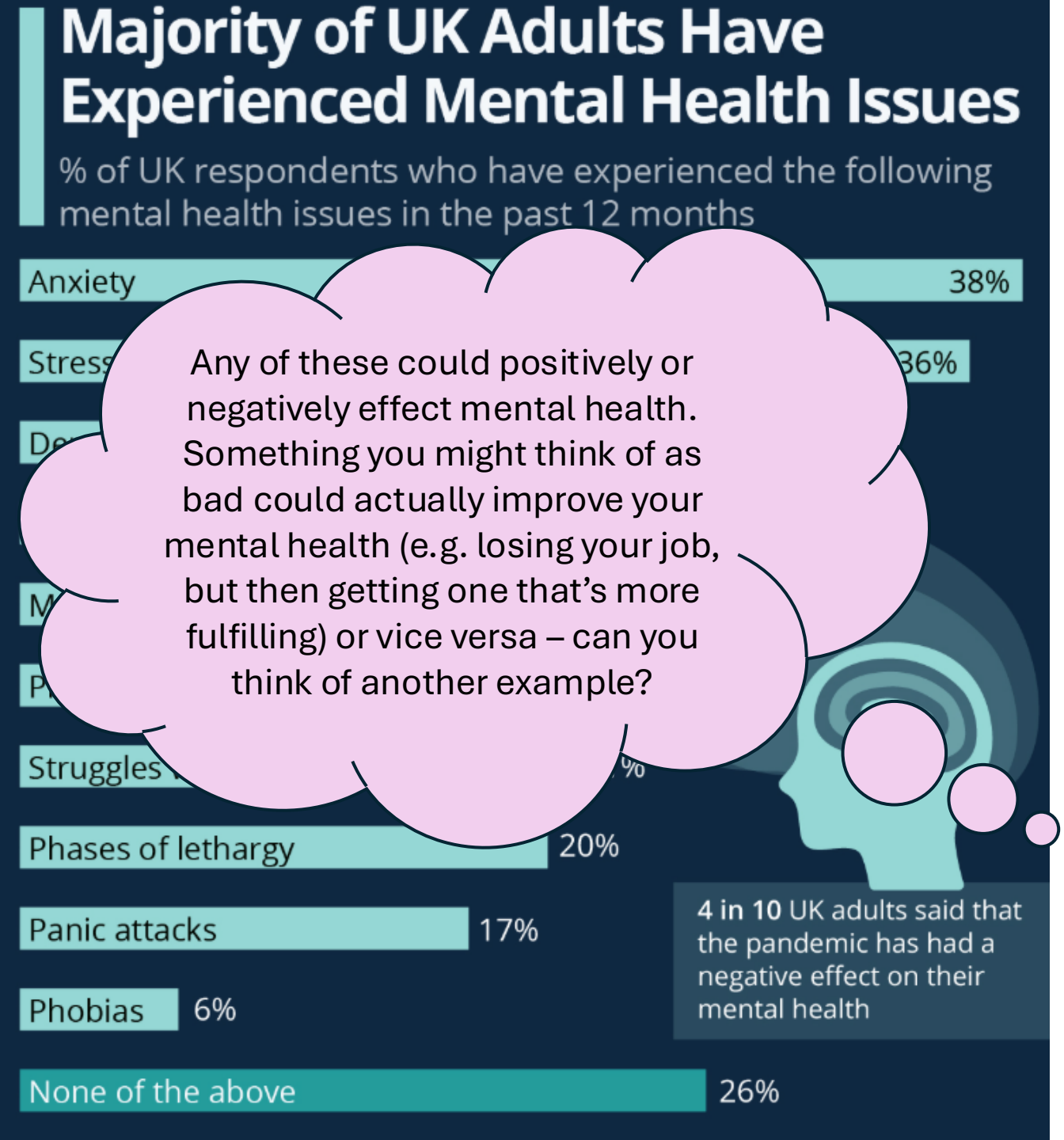
- Signs of poor mental health e.g.

Lack of interest in things you used to enjoy, strong feelings of sadness, anxiety or apathy for no clear reason, loss of appetite or digestive problems, feelings of exhaustion, being unable to control your reactions, feeling out of control, lack of hope for the future

- About services that can help

School, Childline, mind, Young Minds, NHS, Pause can all provide information or emotional support

Your GP can refer you for treatment



Today, we're looking at times across you life where you might experience mental health difficulties, and how we can respond to these.

This data shows how many people experienced mental health issues during COVID (note - these are not people diagnosed with mental health disorders)

Discuss – what other things in adult life could negatively or positively impact your mental health? Try to write down at least 8 things

Starting new job, moving house, moving out of family home, new relationships, break ups, changes in physical health, new family members, death or separation of family members, changes in educational setting, end of puberty, start of menopause, changes in friendships, having a baby, losing a job, getting or losing a pet.

Watch the video about two women who were able to overcome mental health struggles and answer the questions about how they did this

- Why did **Heemali** say it wouldn't "look like" she was struggling with her mental health?
- What things did she say contributed to her anxiety?
- What changed for Heemali
- What does Heemali say about talking about mental health?



- How does **Madhu** describe herself?
- What happened in her 40s?
- How did this impact her family?
- What changed for Madhu?



Watch up to 9:30



- **Why did Heemali say it wouldn't "look like" she was struggling with her mental health?**

She had a good job, a house, lots of friends

- **What things did she say contributed to her anxiety?**

She felt she didn't fit in, it wasn't very diverse where she lived, she didn't have any coping strategies, she didn't have anyone she could talk to

- **What changed for Heemali?**

She talked to her sister about her anxiety, she took a career break, she worked with a therapist to work through her trauma, she got a new job teaching yoga to other people with trauma

- **What does Heemali say about talking about mental health?**

In her community, mental health is generally not spoken about but when she did, it allowed others in her family to talk about it too

- **How does Madhu describe herself?**

Strong, wife and mother – she fitted into this role. Family means everything.

- **What happened in her 40s?**

She expected 40s to be great as she was more wise, but as she went through menopause experiences memory problems, brain fog. Felt panicky at work, not caring about her family

- **How did this impact her family?**

She became distance from them, her husband couldn't understand what was happening

- **What changed for Madhu?**

Her daughter encouraged her to seek help, she started seeing a therapist, she learned to take small steps each day to help improve her wellbeing started, gardening. She started writing things down, practised forgiving herself, being more open with her family.

A “coping strategy” is something you can do when you feel uncomfortable emotions.

It won’t always make the feelings go away, but it can help you get through them.

Write a list of **healthy** coping strategies.

<u>Healthy coping strategies:</u>

Listen to music
Talk about your feelings
Play with a pet
Go for a walk, run or play sports
Do some deep breaths
Read a book
Meditate
Have a laugh with your friends
Distract yourself (temporarily-but don’t ignore the feelings)
Ask for help
Go on childline
Do something creative
Positive affirmations (you’re going to be okay, you are strong, you can do this)
Spend time doing something you’re good at

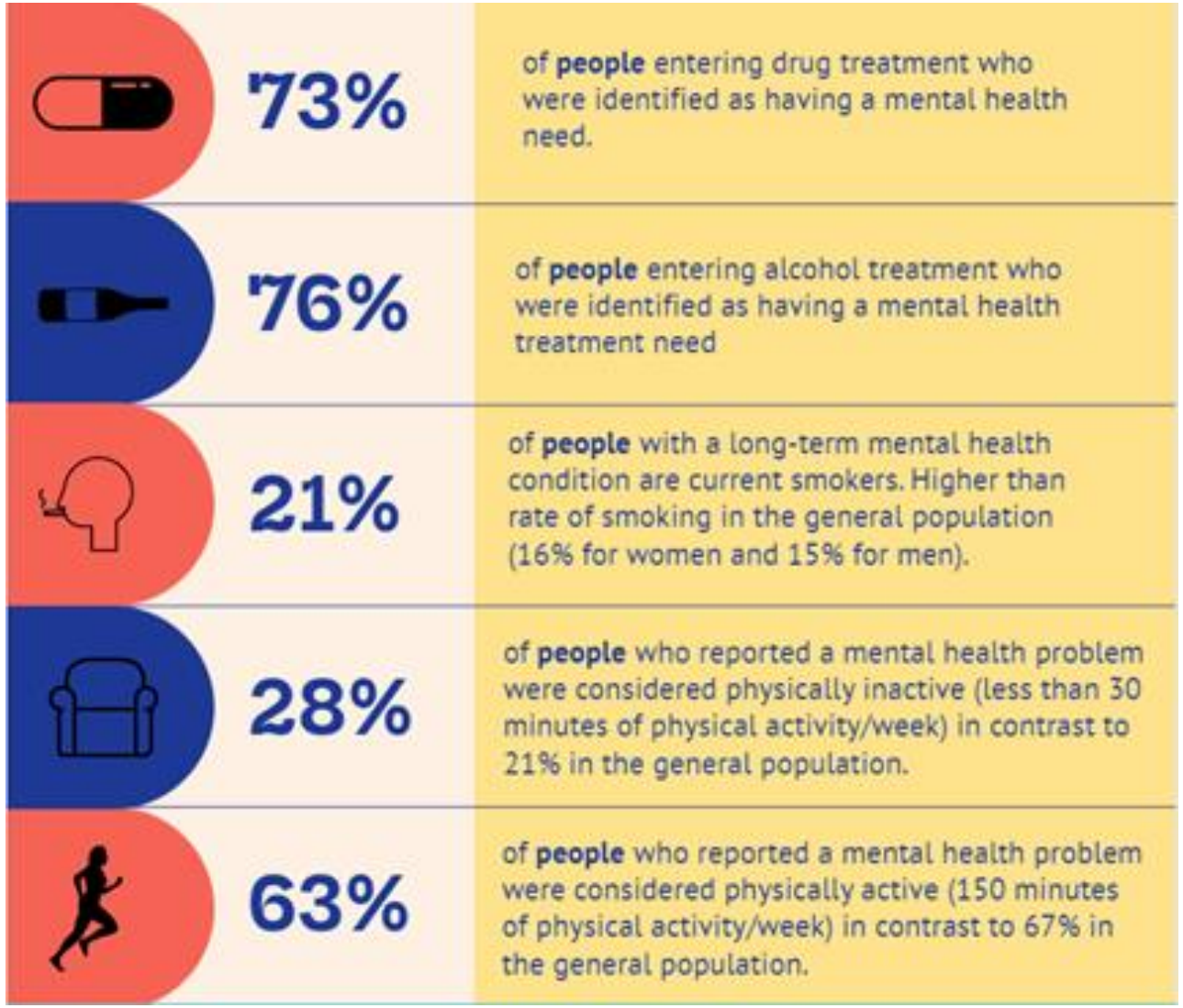
A “coping strategy” is something you can do when you feel uncomfortable emotions.

Some coping strategies are not healthy – they might temporarily distract you from the negative emotions, but they have a negative impact in the long run. Some healthy coping strategies (e.g. exercising) can become unhealthy if done to excess

Unhealthy coping strategies:

Completely ignoring the emotions
Exercising too much
Drinking alcohol or taking drugs
Spending lots of time online
Eating in ways that is not helpful for your body
Arguing with people
Pushing loved ones away
Gambling
Physically hurting yourself
Taking risks / doing things that are very unsafe

Some unhealthy coping stragies could be classes as "self harm" as they can do damage to your body and wellbeing.

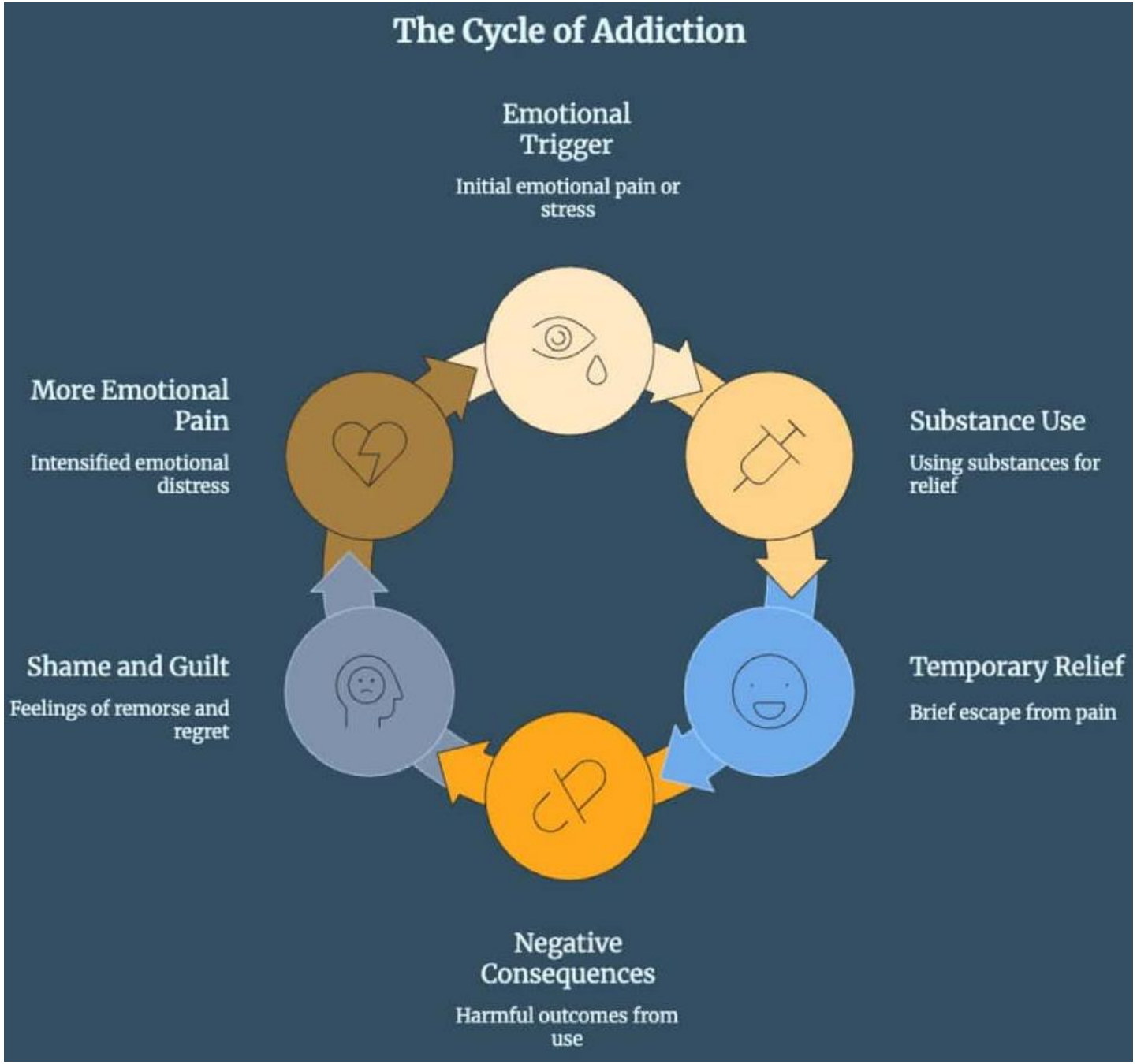


What do these statistics show us?

There is a correlation between poor mental health and problematic alcohol and drug use, smoking and inactivity.

Do these things cause poor mental health, or does poor mental health make people do these things?

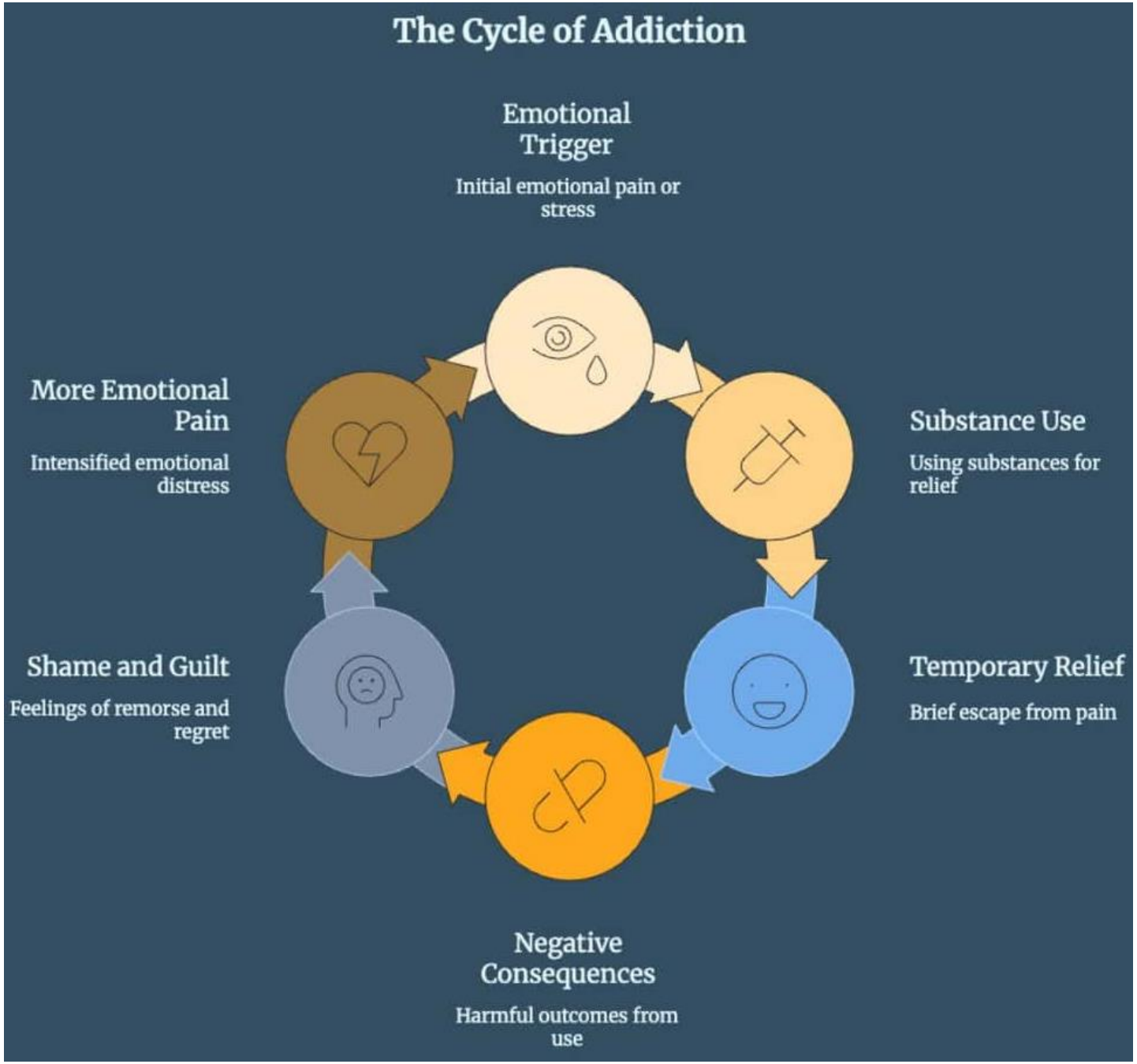
Probably some of both!



Look at the cycle of addiction. In your book, explain:

How could addiction make mental health worse?

How could poor mental health make addiction worse?



Look at the cycle of addiction. In your book, explain:

How could addiction make mental health worse?

How could poor mental health make addiction worse?

Signposting – if you are worried or have questions please talk to someone

- Class teacher
- Form tutor
- Head of year
- Other school staff
- Parent, carer or trusted adult
- Your GP

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE,

childline.org.uk | 0800

YOUNGMI

fighting for young people's mental health

A friend tells you that they have been feeling really really low, and they don't feel like there is any point in being alive. They make you promise not to tell anyone. What should you do?



Need someone to talk to?
Struggling to cope with feelings?
We're here for you.

If you're under 25 and have a registered Birmingham GP, email: askbeam@childrenssociety.org.uk or call: 0207 841 4470, 10am-6pm - 7 days a week for support.

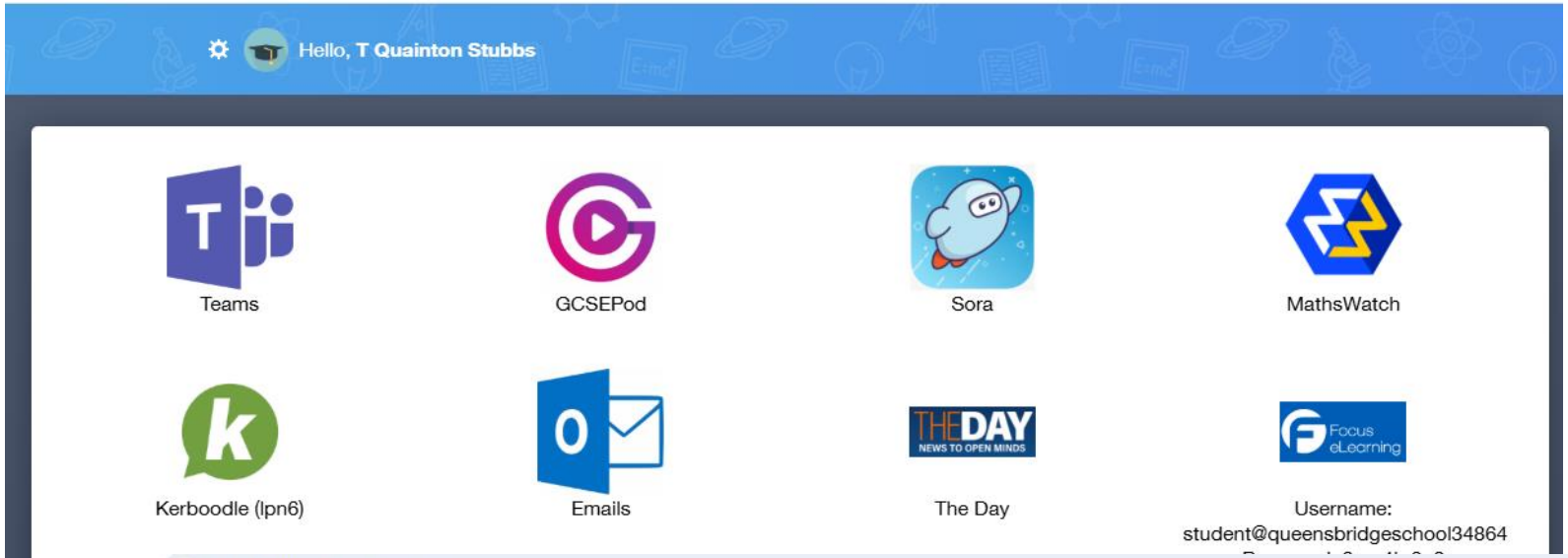
Pause.

The Children's Society

ForwardThinking Birmingham

They say they don't want to talk to any adults, or charities. They cancel your plans for that evening. What should you do?

mind



You can also report worries, bullying etc through SHARP – you can do this with your

