TEMPLATE ARTICLE FOR INTRANET

**It’s Time to Talk Day 2019, Thursday 7February**

*Dr Richard Graham, Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Lead for Good Thinking explains how the journey from listening to talking can be very personal – and that’s OK*

They say it’s good to talk, and in our age of ‘chat’ and social media we might have dropped the ball on that. But on Time to Talk Day, talking takes on a special meaning. On this day we are all challenged to be more open about mental health issues and find ways of being able to talk about them. When we can’t talk about something, it grows in size, yet is buried in secrecy. And that isn’t just a burden that you carry yourself; if too much is kept private or secret in our communities and workplaces, when someone is struggling they feel more alone and bad, feeling everyone else is okay, even though research tells us again and again they all aren’t okay.

So being open about how you might struggle with stress, anxiety or depression may not only lighten your load, but also help others. But talking can’t be to order, something you have to do; but it might become something that you understand better and learn to do. At [Good Thinking](http://www.good-thinking.uk/) we realise that everyone is at a different stage in a journey, from feeling bad and not sure why, to doing the things that make those feelings better, or at least smaller. Our research told us that when someone is trying to make sense of what they are feeling, they are not ready to talk, but they are ready to listen. And they don’t just want to hear talk of diagnoses, medication or therapy; what helps is listening to or reading about how a mental health problem feels. They may want to understand that better, and so we provide a range of content, and a really comprehensive self-assessment. These might make more sense of those uncomfortable feelings, and perhaps help you see how you can change how you feel. Perhaps, towards the end of that journey, it is time to talk.

But you don’t have to talk about mental health to feel happier. Research on happiness and well-being has shown that connecting with people, by talking with them, really makes a difference to how you feel. [NHS.net’s Moodzone](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/) suggests different ideas to try:

* Switch off the TV and play a game with the children, or just talk.
* Make the effort to phone people sometimes – it's all too easy to get into the habit of only ever texting, messaging or emailing people.
* Speak to someone new today.

Imagine a gym, but for conversation…perhaps it is time to talk.

[Visit Good Thinking](https://www.good-thinking.uk/) to explore tools and resources that can help you on your personal journey.

*Dr Richard Graham is a Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, former Clinical Director of the Adolescent Directorate at the Tavistock Clinic and Clinical Lead for Good Thinking. Over the last decade, his work has centred on the impact of technology on development and health. In 2010 launched the UK's first Technology Addiction Service for young people at Nightingale Hospital in London. In June 2016, he was appointed the Executive Board of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS is the British Government’s principal advisory body for online safety and security for children and young people) and Co-Chairs the Digital Resilience Working Group. He also works with the BBC, as Digital Well-being Consultant to the* [*Own It App Project.*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2018/childrens-app-own-it?ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_press_office&ns_mchannel=social&ns_linkname=corporate) *Learn more about Good Thinking*