| 1 | Review title |
|----|--|
| 2 | Self-management, self-care, and self-help in adolescents with emotional problems: a scoping review |
| 3 | protocol |
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| 4 | Abstract |
| 5 | Objective: The objective of this scoping review is to draw on existing literature to illuminate the ways |
| 6 | in which the concepts of self-management, self-care, and self-help are defined in the context of |
| 7 | adolescents with emotional problems. The aim is to describe and categorize the definitions of these |
| 8 | concepts as well as the strategies or techniques which have been proposed to facilitate self- |
| 9 | management, self-care, and self-help for this group, as this may have important implications for policy |
| 10 | and intervention development. |
| 11 | Introduction: There is evidence that emotional problems are rising amongst adolescents, while timely |
| 12 | access to specialist mental health treatment is limited to adolescents with greater severity of mental |
| 13 | health difficulties. Concurrently, self-management, self-care, and self-help strategies may be used by |
| 14 | adolescents. Owing to the overlap in existing definitions and lack of clarity around these concepts in a |
| 15 | youth mental health context, a scoping review of the literature is warranted. |
| 16 | Inclusion criteria: Studies involving adolescents aged 10-19 with symptoms of emotional problems |
| 17 | which reference self-management, self-care, or self-help will be included. |
| 18 | Methods: Medline, Embase, PsycINFO, Web of Science, CINAHL, Google Scholar, and Mednar will |
| 19 | be searched for English-language texts from the year 2000 onward. A map or typology of definitions |
| 20 | will be presented alongside a narrative summary of the results. |
| 21 | |
| 22 | |
| 23 | Keywords: emotional problems; self-care; self-help; self-management; adolescents |
| 24 | Abstract word count: 208 |
| 25 | Total manuscript word count: 2710 |
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| 20 | |

Introduction

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28 Epidemiological studies suggest that the onset of adolescence is associated with increased depressive symptoms,1 and NHS digital data indicates that emotional problems are on the rise 29 30 amongst adolescents in the United Kingdom (UK).2 These problems can range from mild and sub-31 clinical to severe and meriting a specialist diagnosis, and they include "panic disorder, generalized 32 anxiety disorder (GAD), separation anxiety, social phobia, specific phobias, OCD and depression".3 33 As waiting lists to access UK specialist youth mental health services are lengthy and timely access is 34 becoming more challenging, ⁴ particularly for adolescents with less severe symptoms, ⁵ self-initiated 35 strategies are increasingly being acknowledged as having the potential to decrease reliance on 36 already overstretched services.⁶ This runs alongside the promotion and investigation of shared 37 decision making, patient empowerment, and choice in order to better meet the mental health needs of adolescents and their families in the places they ordinarily go, suggesting that formal specialist mental 38 39 health treatment should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. ^{7,8} This shift is evident given that the 40 constructs of self-management, self-care, and self-help are appearing more frequently in published research, good practice guidance, UK policy, and reports. However, in the existing literature, 41 42 considerable overlap exists between these concepts in a youth mental health context, with no 43 universally accepted definition in existence which encompasses these related concepts. 44 Self-management, self-care, and self-help strategies could be employed by adolescents to manage 45 the existing symptoms of a mental health difficulty, to prevent the onset of a mental health difficulty, or 46 while waiting for an appointment for specialist treatment. As some strategies can be delivered online, 47 they have increased in popularity alongside other digital health interventions and e-health more generally, which was first defined in 2001.12 There is evidence that adolescents actively consume 48 49 health-related information online, including user-generated content such as online message boards.¹³ 50 There is also some evidence that a number of strategies which are not online, such as going out or 51 being outside, are being promoted to adolescents.9 These strategies merit further investigation, as 52 there is a gap in understanding regarding what is being suggested to adolescents and what is actually 53 being used or done by them.6 54 This confusion may be exacerbated by disagreement around which strategies or techniques actually 55 make up self-management, self-care, and self-help. For example, one study argued that while self-56 care should be considered a preventative strategy, self-management should be employed to address 57 the impact of a current difficulty or disease.¹⁴ However, other studies acknowledge crossover between 58 self-management and self-care strategies in mental health by creating overarching ways of describing 59 these related techniques, such as 'strategies not accompanied by a professional'.9 A key task of this 60 scoping review will be to create a map or typology of the definitions of these concepts to further 61 illuminate their similarities and differences.¹⁵ 62 In terms of Medical Subject Headings (MeSH), self-care has been defined as, "caring for self when ill or positive actions and adopting behaviors to prevent illness."16 Self-management has been defined 63

as an "individual's ability to manage the symptoms, treatment, physical and psychosocial

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65 consequences and lifestyle changes inherent in living with a chronic condition."¹⁶ The MeSH term 66 "self-help groups" is defined as "organizations which provide an environment encouraging social 67 interactions through group activities or individual relationships". 16 None of these definitions specifically 68 refer to adolescents, and despite clear overlap between each of these definitions, to-date they have 69 not been adequately clarified in a youth mental health context. In a review of the efficacy of strategies not accompanied by a professional in adolescents' mental 70 71 health, self-initiated strategies have been described as non-professionally mediated interventions.9 72 This is any kind of activity, intervention, or action a young person could engage in with the aim of 73 improving their mental health without the need to involve a mental health professional.9 However, self-74 initiated strategies introduced to a young person by a professional (e.g., breathing techniques) could 75 also be considered to contain elements of self-management, self-care, or self-help and merit further 76 investigation in this review. For example, self or community approaches, ⁹ unguided self-help 77 interventions, ¹⁷ and coping or emotion regulation strategies ¹⁸ all appear to contain elements of self-78 help, self-care, and/or self-management. All of these concepts reference the 'self' and indicate a 79 measure of agency which merits further exploration, specifically from the viewpoint of adolescents 80 and their initiation of these strategies or techniques. 81 The aim of this scoping review is to draw on the literature to illuminate the ways in which the concepts 82 of self-management, self-care, and self-help are defined in the context of adolescents with emotional problems. The authors aim to describe and categorize the definitions of these concepts as well as the 83 84 strategies or techniques which have been proposed to facilitate self-management, self-care, or self-85 help for this group. A diverse range of studies will be included, covering both descriptive and 86 experimental studies (e.g., qualitative and quantitative studies, clinical trials, population studies, and 87 cohort studies). The concepts of 'coping mechanisms', 'coping strategies', and 'emotion regulation 88 strategies' will also be added to this search in order to ensure that it covers adequate breadth of 89 techniques which could be considered to contain elements of self-management, self-care, or self-90 help. A key task will be to explore and compare the existing definitions of self-management, self-care, 91 and self-help in the context of adolescents with emotional problems (e.g., anxiety, depression), with 92 the aim of further clarifying or creating a comprehensive definition of these terms in the context of 93 youth mental health based on the existing literature. These definitions will be explored narratively in 94 terms of the strategies and techniques which have been proposed to facilitate each concept. As very 95 little research has been done previously to draw together this literature, this review has important 96 implications for policy and intervention development for adolescents' management of their mental 97 health on their own. An initial search using Google Scholar and the PsycINFO database (using the Ovid platform) was 98 99 conducted using related keywords to determine 1) if there are studies that have been published 100 related to the review questions, and 2) that there are no existing scoping or systematic reviews which already address the review questions. While there were some studies identified which related to these 101 102 concepts (e.g., 9, 18), it was established that there are currently no systematic or scoping reviews

- which focus broadly on self-management, self-care, and self-help for adolescents with emotional problems.
- 105 **Keywords**
- Adolescents; self-management, self-care, or self-help; and emotional problems.
- 107 Review question(s)
- The objective of this scoping review is to locate and describe the existing published and grey literature defining the concepts of self-management, self-care, and self-help as well as strategies or techniques related to these concepts for adolescents with emotional problems, as to our knowledge this has not
- 111 been done previously and has important policy and intervention development implications.
- 112 Specifically, the review questions are:
 - 1. How are the concepts of self-management, self-care, and self-help defined in the context of adolescents with emotional problems?
 - 2. What strategies or techniques have been proposed to facilitate self-management, self-care, and self-help in adolescents with emotional problems?

Inclusion criteria

118 Participants

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- Participants will include adolescents aged 10-19 with emotional problems (also referred to as
- 120 'emotional disorders'), including those with subclinical or self-reported symptoms (e.g., low mood) and
- those with a formal diagnosis (e.g., depression). The World Health Organization explains, "in addition
- to depression or anxiety, adolescents with emotional disorders can also experience excessive
- irritability, frustration or anger. Symptoms can overlap across more than one emotional disorder with
- 124 rapid and unexpected changes in mood and emotional outbursts." ¹⁹ Emotional problems have been
- associated with the onset of adolescence, which has been defined as the age range between 10 to 19
- 126 years.²⁰ Studies with younger or older participants will still be included if the age range overlaps with
- 127 10-19 years of age and 50% of the sample falls within this bracket. As stated above, emotional
- 128 problems may include clinical or sub-clinical symptoms of "panic disorder, generalized anxiety
- disorder (GAD), separation anxiety, social phobia, specific phobias, OCD and depression,"3 and for
- the purposes of this scoping review, these problems will not require a formal diagnosis and can be
- based on self-report or self-evaluation measures, which may include symptom-based descriptions of
- 132 emotional problems (e.g., the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire 'Emotional Difficulties' sub-
- 133 scale²¹).
- 134 Concept
- The concepts of interest are self-management, self-care, and self-help as described in adolescents
- with emotional problems.

It has been noted that there is no universally accepted definition of self-management, ²² and some descriptions of self-management use the term interchangeably with self-care or self-help, despite some papers describing self-management and self-care as discrete concepts. ¹⁴ In a recent scoping review, self and community strategies were described as "non-professionally mediated," and professionals were described as, "any person trained to use a treatment or intervention for the purposes of improving mental health or emotional wellbeing. However, the aforementioned review only focused on anxiety and depression and excluded strategies which involved a professional's input. In order to better understand the essential components of self-management, self-care, and self-help and to develop a typology of related definitions and strategies, this review will aim to further explore this concept as it is described broadly across the existing literature. If overlap exists between definitions, or if terms are used interchangeably, this will be highlighted in the resulting typology table and discussed narratively.

Context

Recent data suggests that anxiety and depression are the most prevalent emotional problems amongst adolescents.² One in six young people aged five to 16 have a probable mental health disorder, and the likelihood of a probable mental health disorder increases with age.²³ The context of the literature to be included in this scoping review therefore includes anywhere where self-management, self-care, or self-help strategies or techniques have been introduced to or can be located or accessed by adolescents as a method for improving the symptoms of emotional problems. Specific contexts could include specialist mental health settings where these strategies are proposed as alternatives or correlates to specialist mental health treatments, in a school or community-based setting, or within the young person's own home as they find information about or access a self-management strategy on a computer, phone, or tablet. A key issue will be determining if the help which may be professionally initiated is guided or unguided, as there some indications that unguided self-help may be less efficacious than guided self-help.¹⁷ Studies will be included regardless of if the strategy discussed is provided by a professional or if it is discovered independently by a young person.

Types of sources

This scoping review will consider all quantitative, qualitative, economic, and mixed methods studies and evaluations, as well as systematic, scoping, and literature reviews, for inclusion. Conference abstracts and presentations will not be included, but attempts will be made to contact authors of relevant conference abstracts or papers for additional literature which may be related to the research questions of this scoping review. Commentaries and opinion pieces will not be included as they are not empirical studies. In order to capture the full range of the literature, grey or unpublished literature (e.g., reports) will also be included and obtained by searching Mednar and Google Scholar. Reference lists from seminal articles will also be searched for any missing literature.

Methods

The proposed scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI)
methodology for scoping reviews.²⁴

Search strategy

An initial search will be conducted using a selection of keywords on PsycINFO, Embase, and Medline using the Ovid platform. The text words in the title and abstract of these publications will be analyzed along with any relevant keywords and index terms. Additional keywords and index terms will be added to this list resulting in a new list, which will be used to undertake a second search through all chosen databases. With the help of a research librarian, the search strategy will be translated from the Ovid platform databases to the bespoke Web of Science platform and CINAHL's EBSCO platform. The first reviewer will review the reference lists of all studies from the second search which meet the inclusion criteria for additional studies.

Studies published in English or with an accessible English translation will be considered for this review. Only studies published from 1st January 2000 onward will be considered for inclusion in this scoping review for two reasons: 1) The NHS Plan, published in 2000, was one of the first major policy documents to reference self-care, ¹¹ and 2) due to changes in technology and understanding of e-health or digital health interventions around the millennium, which may have led to greater proliferation of health-related resources online. ¹²

Information sources

Databases to be searched include PsycINFO, Medline, and Embase (using the Ovid platform); Web of Science (using their bespoke platform); and CINAHL (using the EBSCO platform). Google Scholar and Mednar will be used to search for unpublished studies and grey literature. Websites targeting mental health for adolescents (e.g., https://headspace.org.au/, https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/) will also be searched for relevant literature.

Study selection

Following the search, all identified records will be collated and uploaded into EndNote X9 (Clarivate Analytics, PA, USA) and duplicates removed. To maximize the limited availability and resources of the research team, the titles and abstracts of only the first 20% of the literature identified as result of this search will be independently screened by the first and second reviewer for whether these data meet the inclusion criteria of this scoping review. The interrater reliability between the reviewers will then be calculated using the kappa statistic.²⁵ If the interrater reliability is 0.81 or above, the first reviewer will continue to screen the remaining titles and abstracts, while if the interrater reliability is lower than 0.81, both reviewers will screen the remaining 80% of the articles.²⁵ Reasons for exclusion of full-text papers that do not meet the inclusion criteria will be recorded and reported in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process will be resolved through discussion, or with a third reviewer. The results of the search will be reported in full

in the final scoping review and presented in a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram.²⁶

Data extraction

Data will be extracted from the papers identified by the title and abstract screening by two reviewers using a draft data extraction grid which has been modified from a JBI data extraction tool (see Appendix II).²⁷ To check that this tool is adequate, the first reviewer and the second reviewer will pilot the grid by extracting data and charting results from the first five included papers to check that the same data is extracted by each reviewer. If there is good agreement between the two reviewers, both reviewers will then move on to extract data and chart results from up to 25 of the remaining full-text papers, with the first reviewer extracting data and charting results from any remaining papers due to the research team's resource constraints. The data extracted will include background information, a description of the study (including the design, methodology, phenomena of interest, setting, geographical location, and participants), and results of each study relating specifically to the review questions. The draft data extraction tool may be modified and revised as necessary during the process of extracting data from each included paper, and modifications will be detailed in the full scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers will be resolved through discussion, or with a third reviewer. Authors of papers will be contacted to request missing or additional data, where required.

Data presentation

Results will be presented as a map of the different definitions of self-management, self-care, and self-help and may also include a typology of definitions and related strategies or techniques. ¹⁵ This map will be created by thematically analyzing the definitions of self-help, self-management, and self-care across the different studies and tabulating these themes into a typology. ¹⁵ The similarities and differences between the ways in which self-management, self-care, and self-help are defined in the existing literature will be discussed narratively in alignment with the objectives and scope of this review, with examples of strategies relating to each definition given where possible. This typology or map of the results will be refined iteratively by the reviewers throughout the review process, and it will be used to discuss how the results of this scoping review respond to the original review questions.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix I: Search strategy

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PsycINFO (Ovid), Embase (Ovid), and Medline (Ovid) search conducted on June, 2020.

| Search | Query | Records retrieved |
|--------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| #1 | "self car*".ab,kw,ti. | 50461 |
| #2 | "self help*".ab,kw,ti. | 22835 |
| #3 | "self manag*".ab,kw,ti. | 54349 |
| #4 | "adolescen*".ab,kw,ti. | 852878 |
| #5 | "child*".ab,kw,ti. | 3657450 |
| #6 | college.ab,kw,ti. | 436853 |
| #7 | elementary.ab,kw,ti. | 98672 |
| #8 | "emerging adult*".ab,kw,ti. | 9416 |
| #9 | "high school*".ab,kw,ti. | 138782 |
| #10 | junior high.ab,kw,ti. | 11515 |
| #11 | "juvenile*".ab,kw,ti. | 195204 |
| #12 | "kid*".ab,kw,ti. | 1089328 |
| #13 | "middle school*".ab,kw,ti. | 28883 |
| #14 | minor.ab,kw,ti. | 500801 |
| #15 | "paediatric*".ab,kw,ti. | 176555 |
| #16 | "pediatric*".ab,kw,ti. | 744745 |
| #17 | primary school.ab,kw,ti. | 28181 |
| #18 | pupil.ab,kw,ti. | 37239 |
| #19 | secondary school.ab,kw,ti. | 28497 |
| #20 | "student*".ab,kw,ti. | 1094230 |

| #21 | "teen*".ab,kw,ti. | 90000 |
|-----|--|---------|
| #22 | "tween*".ab,kw,ti. | 21471 |
| #23 | "young adult*".ab,kw,ti. | 252410 |
| #24 | young people.ab,kw,ti. | 88534 |
| #25 | young person.ab,kw,ti. | 3981 |
| #26 | "youth*".ab,kw,ti. | 254875 |
| #27 | acute stress.ab,kw,ti. | 19499 |
| #28 | anxiety.ab,kw,ti. | 622332 |
| #29 | anxious.ab,kw,ti. | 58522 |
| #30 | (anxious adj1 generally).ab,kw,ti. | 66 |
| #31 | anxious in social situations.ab,kw,ti. | 9 |
| #32 | (avoid* adj1 specific).ab,kw,ti. | 509 |
| #33 | "avoid* going out".ab,kw,ti. | 36 |
| #34 | "depress*".ab,kw,ti. | 1313939 |
| #35 | emotional difficulty.ab,kw,ti. | 243 |
| #36 | emotional disorder.ab,kw,ti. | 1853 |
| #37 | emotional health.ab,kw,ti. | 7141 |
| #38 | "emotional illness*".ab,kw,ti. | 538 |
| #39 | "emotional issue*".ab,kw,ti. | 1920 |
| #40 | GAD.ab,kw,ti. | 26196 |
| #41 | generalised anxiety.ab,kw,ti. | 2586 |
| #42 | generalized anxiety.ab,kw,ti. | 24333 |
| #43 | internalising.ab,kw,ti. | 1949 |
| #44 | internalizing.ab,kw,ti. | 31248 |

| #45 | low mood.ab,kw,ti. | 2623 |
|-----|--|---------|
| #46 | "major depress*".ab,kw,ti. | 148956 |
| #47 | mood disorder.ab,kw,ti. | 18247 |
| #48 | obsessive compulsive disorder.ab,kw,ti. | 43371 |
| #49 | OCD.ab,kw,ti. | 32715 |
| #50 | "panic disorder*".ab,kw,ti. | 31762 |
| #51 | "panic*".ab,kw,ti. | 59026 |
| #52 | post traumatic stress.ab,kw,ti. | 39350 |
| #53 | posttraumatic stress.ab,kw,ti. | 71332 |
| #54 | PTSD.ab,kw,ti. | 84238 |
| #55 | separation anxiety.ab,kw,ti. | 6045 |
| #56 | social phobia.ab,kw,ti. | 14303 |
| #57 | "social* anxi*".ab,kw,ti. | 22723 |
| #58 | stressor.ab,kw,ti. | 42749 |
| #59 | "trauma*".ab,kw,ti. | 884146 |
| #60 | trauma disorder.ab,kw,ti. | 432 |
| #61 | worried.ab,kw,ti. | 11146 |
| #62 | worry.ab,kw,ti. | 30554 |
| #63 | 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 | 7586789 |
| #64 | specific phobia.ab,kw,ti. | 2953 |
| #65 | 27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 or 62 or 64 | 2664089 |

| #66 | "coping strateg*".ab,kw,ti. | 49476 |
|-----|--|--------|
| #67 | "emotion* regulation strateg*".ab,kw,ti. | |
| #68 | "coping mechanism*".ab,kw,ti. | 9115 |
| #69 | 1 or 2 or 3 or 66 or 67 or 68 | 182037 |
| #70 | 63 and 65 and 69 | |
| #71 | Limit to English language and year 2000 to present day | |
| #72 | Remove duplicates | |

305 Appendix II: Data extraction grid

| Background information | | |
|---|-------------------|--|
| Reviewer (1 st or 2 nd) | | |
| Date of data extraction | | |
| Author | | |
| Year | | |
| Journal | | |
| Record number | | |
| | Study description | |
| Study design (e.g., experimental, systematic or scoping review, qualitative, quantitative, etc.) | | |
| Methodology | | |
| Phenomena of interest | | |
| Setting (e.g., school) | | |
| Geographical location/country | | |
| Participants | | |
| Age range (if applicable) Gender identity Specialist characteristics (if applicable, e.g., homeless, LGBTQ+) Ethnicity Emotional problems covered | | |
| Results or details extracted | | |
| Self-care definition and/or related techniques/strategies (if applicable) | | |
| Self-management definition and/or related techniques/strategies (if applicable) | | |

| Self-help definition and/or related strategies/techniques (if applicable) | |
|---|--|
| Overlapping or new definitions and/or related strategies/techniques (if applicable) | |
| Findings from any empirical work conducted in relation to self-management, self-care, or self-help strategies | |
| Authors' conclusions | |
| Reviewer comments | |

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