

PSYCHOEDUCATION

Self-Harm

What is self-harm?

Self-harm is when someone intentionally hurts themselves as a way to deal with overwhelming emotions or difficult situations. Self-harm can take many different forms, including: cutting, biting, hitting or burning yourself; using drugs or alcohol to cope; not eating, or over-eating; spending all your time on addictive behaviours like gaming, social media or gambling or getting into situations on purpose where you risk getting hurt.



Why do I self-harm?

If you are self-harming, this may be because there is something which is causing you to feel worried, sad or angry. You might be dealing with intense thoughts and feelings and hurting yourself may feel like the only way to release those feelings. You may even feel numb and want to hurt yourself so that you can feel something. This may be related to your home-life, school or problems with your friendships including bullying. Self-harming can be very dangerous and you could cause damage to your body.

How can I stop self-harming?

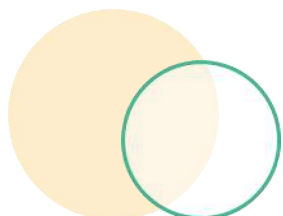
It might seem hard to talk about self-harming, but it's important to reach out for help. You can talk to a family member, a teacher, or a youth worker you trust. Sharing what you're going through can make you feel better and help you find other ways to cope. Keeping a diary of your feelings and what happens before you feel like self-harming can also help you understand what triggers those feelings and find new ways to deal with them.



Things you can do to help in the moment:

There are things you can do in the moment to help you not self-harm. When you feel the urge to self-harm growing, you could try:

- ◆ Going on a walk or doing gentle exercise
- ◆ Distracting yourself by focusing on your breathing
 - ◆ Speaking to a friend
 - ◆ Playing music
 - ◆ Holding an ice cube
- ◆ Writing down what's on your mind
 - ◆ Hitting a pillow
- ◆ Tearing up pieces of paper
- ◆ Making a self-soothing box



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Ways to keep yourself safe in the long term:

- Speak to a trusted adult
- Speak to a professional (a GP or CAMHS)
- Keeping a journal
- Make small changes to your lifestyle
- Consider how you use the internet and social media
- Creating a safety plan for when things feel out of control



How do I help a friend or family member who is self-harming?

It can be difficult if you know someone you care about is self-harming. It's hard to see a loved one hurting themselves in that way, and you might not know how to help. Simply being there and letting them know they're not alone can be very helpful, but it's also important to understand that you may not be able to help them on your own.



What are the physical signs I should look for?

If a friend or family member is self-harming by cutting or wounding themselves, you might notice some physical signs, like: keeping their body fully covered all the time, even when it is hot, like wearing long sleeves to conceal scars (this is only a sign of self-harm if they do not normally wear long sleeves or clothes that cover the whole body); having cuts, bruises or burn marks on their body that are unexplained; unexplained scarring on their skin.

How do I approach the conversation of self-harm?

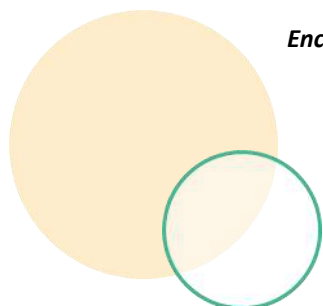
Keeping calm—try to approach the conversation with kindness and an open mind.

Ask them how they're feeling without any judgement—there's a stigma around self-harm which could be making them feel ashamed. Ask simple questions for example: what are you feeling?

Tell them their positive qualities—focus on the positives with them and tell them what you love about them.

Being patient—it is normal to have ups and down on their journey so reassuring them that recovering may take time.

Encourage them to seek professional help—speaking with GPs can provide some correct support. Look into other services with them which they can turn to.



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Self –Help Websites & Apps:

Calm harm—[Home - Calm Harm App \(stem4.org.uk\)](#)



Samaritans—[Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen](#)

SAMARITANS

Child Line—[Childline | Childline](#)



Kooth—[Home - Kooth](#)



Youngminds—[Self-Harm & Mental Health | Guide For Parents | YoungMinds](#)

YOUNGMINDS

Smiling Mind—[Smiling Mind App — Smiling Mind](#)



Harmless—[Home - Harmless](#)



Self Injury Support—[Self Injury Support](#)



Charities/Local Support:



Getting Help/MHSTs—link to self referral

Single Point of Contact (SPOC) CAMHS—number



A Way Out – [Home: Stockton-on-Tees Charity - A Way Out](#)

Happy Cactus Coaching—[Home | Happy](#)



[\(happycactuscoaching.co.uk\)](http://happycactuscoaching.co.uk)

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