

Self-Harm



What is Self-Harm:

Self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body. It is usually a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress (NHS).

Cutting yourself	Burning yourself	Why do people self-harm? Some young people report self-harming as a result of feeling overwhelmed, stressed, numb or disconnected. Others say something in their environment makes them feel vulnerable.
Punching or hitting yourself	Taking an overdose of medication	
Deliberately starving yourself	Misusing alcohol or drugs	
Binge eating	Excessively exercising	

Self-harm Myths:

Myth: “Self-harm is attention seeking” This is not the case. Many people who self-harm don’t talk to anyone about what they are going through and it can be difficult for someone to find the courage to ask for help.

Myth: “More girls than boys self-harm” It isn’t clear if this statement is true. It may be that more boys simply don’t ask for help.

Myth: “People who self-harm are suicidal” This is not the case. For many people self-harm is about trying to cope with difficult feelings and circumstances.

What to do if you feel you need to self-harm:

When you feel the urge to self-harm, distraction techniques can be a useful way to ‘ride the wave’ of emotion and overcome the urge to harm yourself. Here are some useful distractions you could consider as an alternative to self-harm:

Write down the thoughts and feelings that are distressing	Hit a pillow or a cushion to vent your anger and frustration.
Go for a mindful walk, taking notice your surroundings using	Hold an ice cube
Flick an elastic band against your wrist	Listen to your favourite music

Talk to someone that you can trust:

People who care about you can offer the support you need. This could include parents, carers, family, friends, teachers, the school nurse, youth workers or a Doctor/your GP

If you are self-harming, you are not alone – there is lots of information and support available for you.

Helplines and services available:

National Self-Harm Network: Information and online forum www.nshn.co.uk

Samaritans www.samaritans.org Freephone (UK and Republic of Ireland): 116 123 (24 hours)

Childline www.childline.org.uk Freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111

Kooth: Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people www.kooth.com

Shout: Free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis www.giveusashout.org Text 85258

The Mix: Free information and support for under 25s in the UK 0808 808 4994 www.themix.org.uk