

Self-Harm Avoidance



What is Self Harm?

You hurt or harm yourself – on purpose. This can be for any reason, in any situation, and in a number of ways, such as:

- Taking too many tablets – an overdose
- Cutting yourself
- Burning yourself
- Banging your head or throw yourself against something hard
- Punching yourself
- Sticking things in your body
- Swallowing things that shouldn't be swallowed.

When someone self-harms, they are usually feeling very emotional and distressed. Many describe their self-harm as a way to release overwhelming emotions. Some people plan it in advance, others act on the spur of the moment. Though some people self-harm only once or twice, others do it regularly – and it can become hard to stop.

Many people who self-harm may also have alcohol or drug use problems, though this is not always the case.

What makes people self harm ?

Many people who harm themselves are struggling with intolerable distress or unbearable situations – and they will often have struggled like this for some time before they self-harm.

Common Problems Include:

- Feeling depressed.
- Feeling bad about yourself.
- Physical or sexual abuse .
- Relationship problems with partners, friends, and family.
- Being unemployed, or having difficulties at work.

You are more likely to harm yourself if you feel:

- That people don't understand you or listen to you properly.
- Hopeless.
- Isolated, alone.
- That you have no power or control over your life.

You are most likely to harm yourself badly if you:

- Use a dangerous or violent method.
- Self-harm regularly.
- Have existing mental health problems

If you think you may harm yourself, don't suffer in silence –tell someone about how you feel.

Asking for help

A lot of people who self-harm don't ask for help. You might be aware that you have some serious problems, but don't feel that you can tell anyone – so you don't talk about it. It can sometimes feel as though self-harm is not a major problem – just a way to cope with life.

What help is available?

Talking with a professional like your GP or a mental health professional. There are several one-to-one talking treatments can help, such as:

- Problem solving therapy
- Cognitive behavioural therapy
- Psychodynamic psychotherapy
- Talking with a non-professional

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How can I help myself?

When you want to harm yourself

Remember that the feelings of self-harm will go away after a while. If you can cope with your distress without self-harming for a time, it may get easier over the next few hours.

You can:

- Talk to someone – if you are on your own perhaps you could phone a friend or use a helpline. Some helplines are listed at the end of this leaflet.
- If you are in an environment that is making you feel worse, try to find a way to distance yourself from it.
- Distract yourself by going out, listening to music, or by doing something that interests you.
- Relax and focus your mind on pleasant and positive thoughts.
- Find another way to express your feelings such as squeezing ice cubes (which you can make with red juice to mimic blood if the sight of blood is important), or just drawing red lines on your skin.
- Give yourself some 'harmless pain' - eat a hot chilli, or have a cold shower.
- Be kind to yourself – allow yourself to do something that you enjoy.
- Write a diary or a letter, to explain what is happening to you – no one else needs to see it.

What if I want to stop harming ?

If you can say YES to half (or more) of the questions below, or more, then it might be time to try stopping

- Is there someone who knows about my self-harm who I can contact if I get desperate?
- Have I found at least two alternative safe ways to reduce the feelings that lead me to self-harm?
- Am I able to tell myself, and to believe, that I want to stop hurting myself?
- Can I say to myself that I WILL tolerate feelings of frustration, desperation, and fear?
- Is there a professional who can also give me support and help in a crisis?

Other Helplines

Samaritans



116 123



www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-having-difficult-time/if-you-want-self-harm/

Support Line



01708 765200



<https://www.supportline.org.uk/problems/self-injury-and-self-harm/>

Support from us:

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