

A little book of

Self-Help





Approx. 25,000 young people are admitted to hospital each year due to self-harm.

Introduction

This booklet is designed to promote more positive coping strategies for young people around self-harm, and to enable family and friends to help support young people who may be self-harming.



What is Self-Harm?

**Harm
to
oneself
in order
to cope**

Cutting and burning

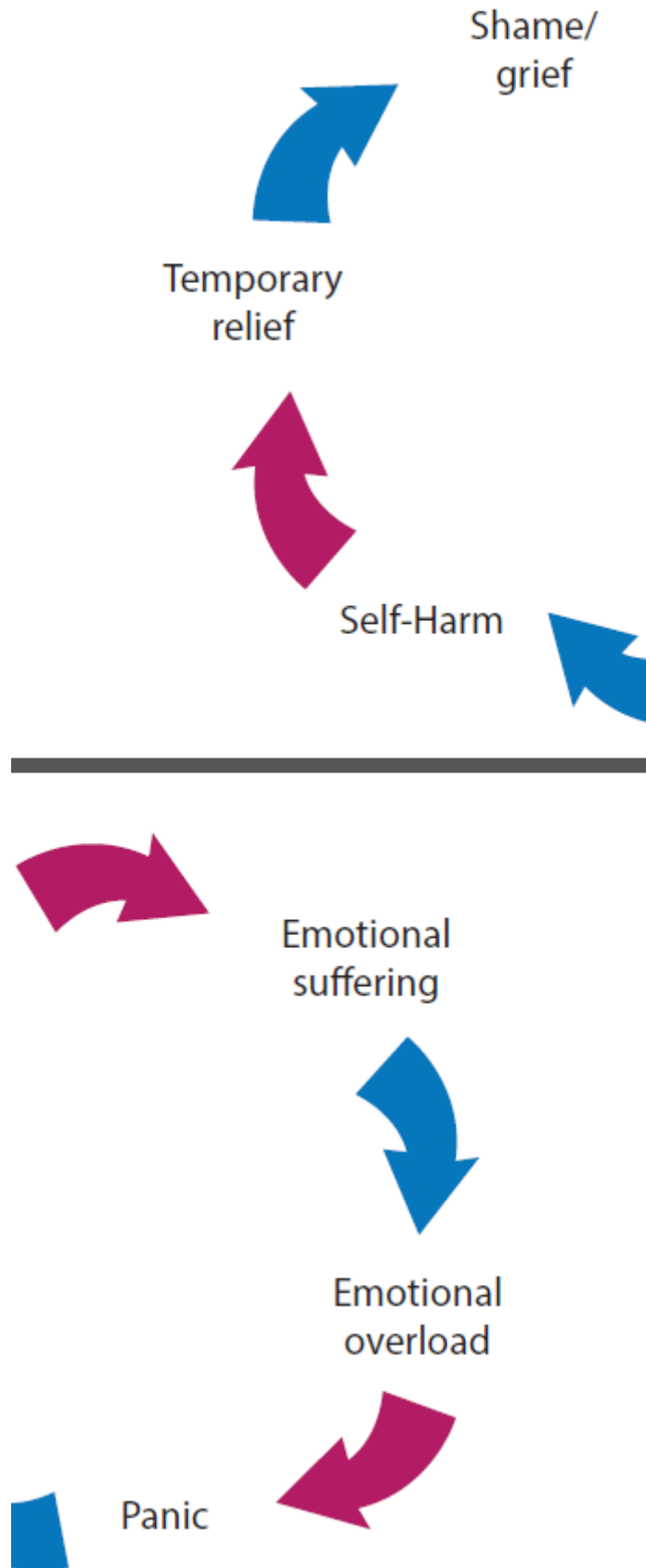
**Overdosing, consuming
poison**

Scratching, banging

**Punching, hitting,
biting**

**Eating disorders, drugs,
alcohol**

Self-Harm Cycle



Alternatives to Self-Harm

Do something for yourself - have a bubble bath, tidy or reorganise your room.



Do something for someone else - make them a cup of tea, keep them company.



Phone or text someone.



Visit friends or family.

Wear an elastic band on your wrist and snap it to distract yourself.



Read a book.

Hug something, your pillow or a cuddly toy.



Watch a favourite film or TV show.

Write a journal.



Play a game.

Write a 'to do' list.

Do a sport or some exercise.



Listen to music.

Bake something.



Follow the 5, 10 or 15 Minute Rule

When you get the urge to self-harm, give yourself 5, 10 or 15 minutes to think about it. You may find the urge disappears.



Tips for the 5, 10 or 15 minutes

During this waiting time keep yourself busy.

Be creative, draw or write about your feelings.

If you get through the urge, congratulate yourself. Phone a friend and tell them.

Talk to someone.

Write a letter to yourself.

Watch TV.



“

I've tried so many distraction techniques - from writing down my thoughts, hitting a pillow, listening to music, writing down pros and cons. But the most helpful to my recovery was the 5 minute rule, where if you feel like you want to self-harm, you wait for 5 minutes before you do it, then see if you can go another 5 minutes, and so on until eventually the feeling that you need to harm yourself is over.

'Ben' - 16-year-old boy

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Stay safe

Do not isolate yourself.

Talk to someone - family, friends, GP, school nurse, school staff or helplines.

Go online and look at the recommended websites listed towards the back of this leaflet.

If you find it difficult to speak about it, tell someone by text or email. Let them know you need help.



Use the FREE app
CALMHARM

Key messages

Asking for help as early as possible is the best thing to do.

Don't worry about not knowing the 'right' words; just express how you feel.

Think about talking to professionals as well as family or friends.

Write down what you want to say and take it with you.

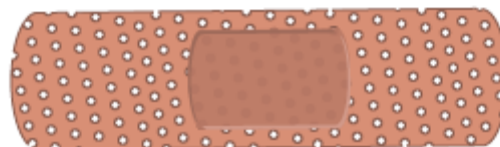
If the first person you speak to doesn't understand, don't give up, try someone else.



First Aid

Wounds and injuries of any type can be dangerous and carry the risk of infection, which can be serious, so they need to be looked after.

If you have a serious injury or feel unwell you should seek help immediately. If you find yourself in this situation, find a trusted adult or friend who can get you the medical attention you need. This doesn't mean you have to discuss your self-harm with them (although it may help); it is about allowing someone to support you medically in a moment of crisis.



I am worried about someone else

Here are some signs that might suggest someone could be self-harming:

- Withdrawal or isolation from everyday life
- Signs of depression such as low mood, tearfulness or a lack of motivation
- Changes in mood or eating/sleeping habits and low self-esteem
- Talking about self-harming or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Being quieter than usual
- Unexplained cuts, bruises or marks
- Covering up all the time, even in hot weather.

It is important to note that these signs don't always mean someone is self-harming. There may be **no** warning signs at all. If you suspect someone is self-harming, ask them openly and honestly.



Do you want to help someone?

- Make time
- Listen
- Be open and honest
- Don't judge
- Offer support
- Remember the person behind the behaviour
- Be supportive
- Be understanding
- Don't lecture
- Stay close
- Make them feel wanted and cared for.



I feel a lot more confident. I've learned to be more open about my feelings and been able to move on. I felt that, without people knowing, I was being held back. I've been able to come out of myself and explain what I do, and make sense of it, not keep having to lie and cover up what I did. I no longer feel ashamed as I know people are supporting me.

'Amy' - 14-year-old girl



You can also get more information on support through the following websites:



www.selfharm.co.uk

SelfharmUK is a project dedicated to supporting young people impacted by self-harm, providing a safe space to talk, ask any questions and to be honest about what's going on in your life. The website will point you in the right direction and provide you with useful advice, tips and information.



www.youngminds.org.uk

YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people.

Other recommended websites

www.lifesigns.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.b-eat.co.uk

www.samaritans.org.uk

www.harmless.org.uk

Some telephone helplines offer specialist advice on self-harm, others operate only as a 'friendly listening ear', something many young people have said they value, particularly when they feel they have no one else that they can turn to.

Helpful phonelines

Trustworthy phonelines you can call include:

