

from
Harm
to
Calm

**Understanding and
Responding to Deliberate
Self-harm in Young People**

A Booklet for Parents/Carers/Professionals

A resource booklet is also available for young people.

The feeling stones



The feeling stone sculptures that feature in this book were created by young women who were involved in the Harm to Calm support group.

**“How will you know I’m hurting,
if you cannot see my pain – to wear it on my body
tells what words cannot explain”**

(15 Y.O YOUNG WOMAN AFFECTED BY SELF-HARM)

from Harm to Calm

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This booklet was developed for the those who are helping support a young person who is wanting to reduce or stop self-harming

Introduction



Nillumbik Health is pleased to present this booklet, in response to increased awareness that some young people are deliberately hurting themselves by cutting, scratching, rubbing or burning their skin.

This booklet has been created in collaboration with young people and other professionals who have challenged self-harm. It contains some ideas for people who want to further understand self-harm, and for those considering trying to find alternative methods to find some calm in their lives. Young people have contributed their poems, thoughts, stories, photographs and graphics with the hope that in having

the courage to share their experiences they can provide support, strength and a sense of hope to others who are also seeking to understand their own experiences of self-harm, and to find alternatives for themselves, or for young people that they know.

This booklet contains information, activities and resources that may help you to support someone wanting to reduce or stop self-harming. A list of support resources and contacts is also provided for those who would like more information or help with self-harm or any other issues.

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Self-harm is a paradoxical behaviour in which people deliberately inflict harm upon their bodies.

What is Self-harm?



Self-harm is a paradoxical behaviour in which people deliberately inflict harm upon their bodies. Favazza¹ defined deliberate self-harm as

“the direct, deliberate destruction or alteration of one’s own body tissue without conscious suicidal intent.”

We use the term self-harm to describe a range of behaviours that some people do to deliberately hurt themselves. It commonly involves scratching, cutting, or burning themselves, most often with the use of an implement. Young people who self-harm, usually do so because of some difficulty they have had. This may include bullying, relationship or friendship break-ups, family breakdown, anxiety, physical, sexual or emotional abuse, depression or stress, but can also involve many other difficulties that people face in their everyday lives.

Many people cope with problems in ways that are risky or harmful to themselves. Some people drink or eat too much, smoke or drive too fast, gamble or make themselves ill through overwork and stress. They may do this to numb or distract themselves from problems, thoughts or feelings they cannot bear to face. Self-harm, although more shocking, is very like these

more socially acceptable forms of self-harm. Like drinking or over-exercising, hurting oneself sometimes provides an escape from intolerable emotional pain.

Self-harm may be viewed as a way of coping. Self-harm (particularly cutting) is often misunderstood as a failed attempt to kill oneself. However, self-harm rarely results in suicide. Whilst self-harm appears dangerous and destructive, it actually may be an attempt at self-healing or self-preservation.

Many young people experiment with self-harm and it is much more common than most people think. This is because self-harm is typically a very personal act conducted in private. Young people rarely disclose their behaviour to an adult, seek psychological help or medical attention for self-harm. Consequently, no one really knows how many young people in our community are self-harming. Some young people self-harm just once or twice. For others it can become a habit, a response to any overwhelming situation. Therefore, it is important that the issue is addressed immediately.

Young people who self-harm in this way...

- Are responding to painful experiences, difficult feelings, and other pressures
- are often trying to communicate something, be it psychological or physical trauma, inner turmoil or intolerable emotional pain
- are usually trying to find a solution to a problem and to make themselves feel better
- usually do not wish to die. In fact, self-harm is often described as a way of coping with difficult experiences, not as a way of giving up on life.

The role of self-harm may be different for each person, regardless of similarity of the behaviours. Each episode of self-harm may be experienced differently, attempting to communicate a different message. It is important to explore the role that self-harm plays for each young person, and the context of each episode.

¹ Favazza, A. R. (1996). Bodies under siege: Self-mutilation and body modification in culture and psychiatry (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p225

My father had such high expectations for me and tried to give me every opportunity to improve upon myself. I let him down. I think that I am a major disappointment to him



She had become so numb, using a razor blade to draw the pain that she felt, she released the tension she held by carving into her arms and legs.

She could now see the pain, she could better understand what she could see.

What have I done, you seem to move uneasy....
Maybe getting hurt is a part of my life,
maybe even a part of me.

This is how it goes:
...someone hurts me, I hurt me
...something bad happens, I hurt me
...I feel sad but can't cry, I hurt me
...I am stressed, I hurt me
...I am angry, I hurt me

"I found it easier to take care of something physical, like a wound, than I did to deal with my emotions"

The next few sections may be helpful if you know of a young person considering giving up self-harm

Do You Know Someone Who Wants to Stop Self-Harming?



The next few sections may be helpful if you know of a young person considering giving up self-harm and trying to find alternative ways to cope with painful emotions. They deal with:

- Assessing readiness to change
- Monitoring the self-harm
- Understanding behaviour and cycle
- Having alternatives to consider
- Developing new coping styles.

Are they ready to change?

Deciding to change your way of coping can be stressful. Most people do not self-harm without a considerable amount of underlying stress. Self-harm can become an important part of coping with that stress. You cannot expect to just stop self-harming without developing other coping skills.

To minimise that stress you can help a young person to spend some time considering their decision to give up...

- Why have they decided to give up at this point in time?
- Think about the benefits of giving up
- Think about some of the threats to giving up
- Expect that it won't be smooth sailing. Tell them to expect to slip up at times
- Try to help them to understand themselves – what is their self-harm about?
- Help them to get ready for negative and defeatist thinking that will bring them back down .e.g “I’ll never be able to do it”, “There is no point in trying”
- Encourage them to seek and accept support from others
- Remind them of what they are trying to achieve
- Help them to be kind to themselves – help them to tell their self they are worthwhile and deserve to feel better
- Set small and realistic goals.

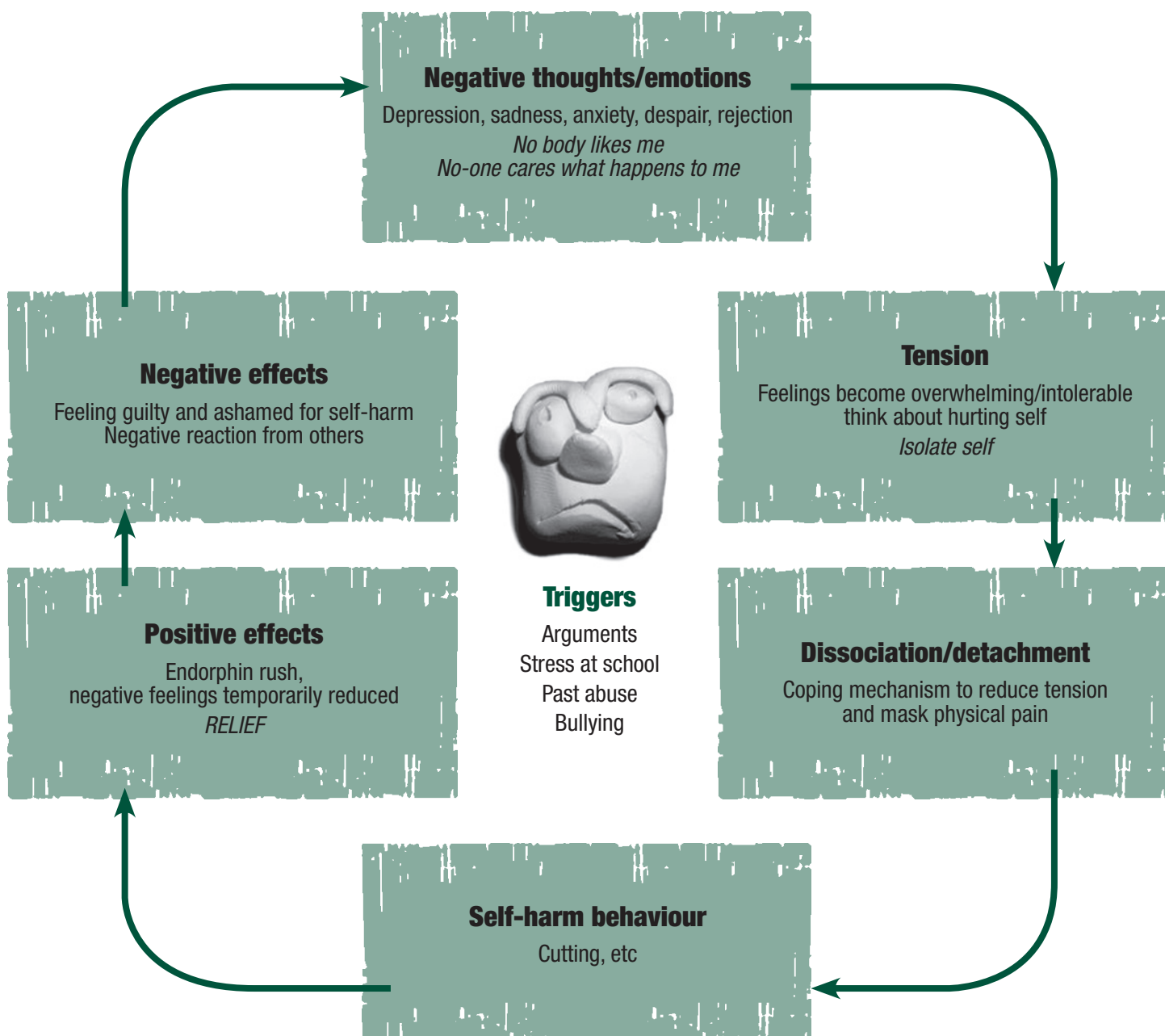
Alderman² (1997) suggests a checklist of things to consider before stopping self-harm.

- ☐ I have a solid emotional support system of friends, family, and/or professionals that I can use if I feel like hurting myself
- ☐ There are at least 2 people in my life that I can call if I want to hurt myself
- ☐ I feel at least somewhat comfortable talking about self-harm with three different people
- ☐ I have a list of at least 10 things I can do instead of hurting myself
- ☐ I have a place to go if I need to leave my house so as not to hurt myself
- ☐ I feel confident that I could get rid of all the things that I might be like to use to hurt myself
- ☐ I have told at least 2 other people that I am going to stop hurting myself
- ☐ I am willing to feel uncomfortable, scared and frustrated
- ☐ I feel confident I can endure thinking about hurting myself without having to actually do it
- ☐ I want to stop hurting myself.

²Alderman, T. (1997). The scarred soul: Understanding and ending self-inflicted violence. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Understanding the Cycle of Self-harm

In order to stop self-harming it is important to understand the nature of self-harm and the role it plays in the young person's life. Many young people describe self-harm as being part of a cycle of thinking, feeling and behaving. Understanding the cycle helps the young person to develop strategies to deal with triggers and negative thoughts and emotions.³



³Alderman, T. (1997). The scarred soul: Understanding and ending self-inflicted violence. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

If you are a friend, parent, sibling, family member or a concerned other, it can be difficult to know how to help the individual in your life who is self-harming.

What Can Family and Friends Do to Help?



You May Feel

Upon learning that someone you care about self-harms, it is typical to experience a range of conflicting emotions and feelings, i.e. shock, concern, panic, denial, anger, frustration, empathy, sadness, guilt, confusion, vulnerability, curiosity, distress, anxiety, pain, powerlessness, protectiveness, sympathy. It is important to remember that the individual who self-harms also experiences this mixed bag of emotions. Try not to take the self-harm personally. It is not aimed at you, and it is not being done to hurt you.

What You May Think

- It's all my fault
- I can fix this
- You're nuts
- This changes our whole relationship
- You're not who I thought you were
- You're doing this to manipulate me

These are some common thoughts that are associated with the knowledge that someone you care about is self-harming. It is important that you are aware of your thoughts as they ultimately affect your feelings and how you relate with the person who is self-harming.

WHAT TO DO

- **Don't panic**
- **Educate yourself about self-harm:** find out information about self-harm, and/or talk to professionals about how you can support someone.
- **Talk about the self-harm:** it will not go away if you pretend it doesn't exist. Not talking about self-harm just reinforces the shame and secrecy associated with it.
- **Be honest about your thoughts and feelings:** many individuals who self-harm have trouble expressing their thoughts and feelings. So, don't bottle yours up. Model the correct ways to express your feelings and emotions. Don't be afraid to laugh if it is appropriate.
- **Deal with the immediate medical concerns:** it is most helpful if wounds are tended to in a calm and practical manner with minimal fuss.
- **Listen and find out what they need:** ask what they need but don't interrogate them. Assist them to find possible solutions to problems. Acknowledge their pain without being intrusive.
- **Never make assumptions:** do not assume that they want to talk about it, or that it is attention seeking or suicidal in its nature. Some people who self-harm have had bad experiences with medical or mental health professionals, so don't assume that's what they need.
- **Be supportive:** this means supporting the individual in what they choose to do. Don't patronise them.
- **Be available – within limits:** some people who self-harm have difficulty with maintaining the boundaries in interpersonal relationships. So, it is important to set clear and consistent guidelines, e.g. if you are a professional, you may not be available after hours, if you are the parent of a friend, perhaps you cannot take crisis calls after 10pm. Be clear about these limits. If you feel uncomfortable about the self-harming behaviours, be clear with the person, and let them know what you can cope with and what you can't.

- **Keeping it real about risk:** be clear with young people that self-harm can at times pose a real risk. Let them know that if you are worried for their safety, then there may be times when you might need to tell someone else.

- **Don't discourage self-harm:** telling someone not to harm themselves is both aversive and condescending, most individuals who self-harm would give it up if they could. It is a coping mechanism that they use to stay alive. Even casual comments encouraging your friend or relative to stop should be avoided because they run the risk of damaging your relationship and form a barrier to effective communication. However, it is also important to give a sense of hope that they can stop if they want to, and if they are able to be supported to deal with some of the underlying issues.

- **Understand the severity of their distress:** the fact that your friend or relative has chosen physical pain over emotional pain indicates that they are experiencing intense inner turmoil.

Young people often tell us that others fail to take their feelings seriously. You have an opportunity to recognise such signs of distress and find some way of talking about it. Provide a safe and open environment in which they can freely discuss their thoughts and feelings.

- **See the person, not the injuries:** self-harm is merely a symptom of deeper underlying issues.

- **Get help with your own reactions:** the behaviours of others can have a profound effect on you, so it is important to take care of yourself emotionally, mentally and physically. Give yourself some time and space to have these feelings, away from the young person effected. It often helps to talk to a professional to get further information about self-harm, talk about your relationship with the person and discuss what thoughts and feelings their self-harm raises for you.

DON'T

- **panic**
- **think you can stop them if they don't want to stop**
- **feel responsible**
- **try to make them feel guilty**
- **punish them**

Photo: Aura-Lea Withers



What Young People Tell Us About How They Would Like People to RESPOND

What if someone says “It’s just attention seeking”?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is not. It is a cry for help ■ It is to seek help ■ It feels hopeless when people don’t pick up the clues ■ I get pissed off when I hear that ■ It is a way of coping, to deal with stuff ■ It happens for a lot of different reasons ■ That is a label and minimizes the problem/s
What happened when your parents found out?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mine freaked out and got angry ■ We argued and I got told I was bad ■ My parents got really really angry ■ I got grounded for AGES ■ My friend cried ■ Mine freaked out and took me to counselling - then they came too and we sorted stuff out ■ My friends got really upset and told the school counsellor. I got really angry at them for lagging, but then I got it they just wanted to help me
What if I was a parent and I found out that my child was self-harming?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don’t interrogate them ■ Don’t expect them to explain themselves or what is happening, they probably don’t know themselves ■ Don’t make it out to be the end of the world ■ Call a counsellor or support agency to find out what you can about it and how best to help, get help for your own reactions too ■ Talk to others about what to do ■ Try and understand ■ Learn what you can ■ Don’t say you are embarrassed. We are not proud to be self-harming so don’t make us feel worse ■ Be concerned but give them space ■ Seek advice / help ■ Don’t freak out or be angry ■ Give the child a choice to talk to a parent ■ Don’t tell the whole family or everyone you know
What NOT to do:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don’t freak out – I was scared heaps already ■ Don’t interrogate and grill for answers – I did not know why I did it at the time myself ■ Don’t say “Don’t do it” because I can’t stop (yet) and being busted is really stressful – it is my only way to cope with stuff ■ Don’t get angry at me – I was angry enough at myself

Frequently Asked Questions



1. What are the warning signs that someone is harming themselves?

Often there are telltale signs (scars on the arms or legs, a pattern of curious abrasions) but equally often the signs are scarce or more subtle. Many individuals who self-harm become masters of the secretive ritual, and their secrecy may be the most obvious red flag. The person begins to seem physically or emotionally absent; s/he may seem distracted, preoccupied or distant. S/he may disappear frequently, retreating to her/his private space to self-harm.

Among more overt warnings, someone who has begun to self-harm repeatedly may start to offer flimsy or repetitive excuses for her/his wounds. S/he may claim s/he was scratched by a cat, suffered an athletic injury, or had a clumsy accident. The carelessness of the accident may seem uncharacteristic for her/him, and when pressed for details, s/he is likely to grow guarded, anxious and vague. S/he may even seem annoyed at the “intrusiveness” of the questions. S/he may start wearing long sleeves and long pants in warm weather. More obvious still is the discovery of a cache of implements: odd objects like bent paper clips, pieces of glass, and razor blades stored in unusual locations.

Whether or not the overt signs are present, the onlooker may notice changes in behaviour that usually accompany self-harm: social withdrawal, sensitivity to rejection, difficulty handling anger. S/he may make disparaging comments about themselves, or show feelings of extreme shame, worthlessness or self-loathing. They may grow overwhelmed by everyday responsibilities and withdraw from school, work or family obligations. Naturally, these behaviours may signal problems other than self-harm.

Another set of signs to look for are behaviours that often accompany self-harm. These include eating disorders, alcohol or drug abuse, kleptomania, and other problems of compulsion.

2. What should I say or do (or avoid saying or doing) if I suspect someone I care about is self-harming? Should I confront them? How?

It is strongly recommended that the situation be addressed immediately. Ignoring it will not make it go away. If you suspect someone is injuring himself or herself, don't be afraid to say, “I've been terribly concerned about you. I see all these scars on your arms, and I suspect you may be hurting yourself. If that's the case, I want you to know that you can talk to me about it. I just want to help.”

You might want to add: “If you can't talk to me, please talk to another adult.”

As a parent of an adolescent, you may want to assure her/him that they won't be punished. Teenagers invariably feel as if they are doing something wrong, or being bad. For the family member or witness, the hardest thing may be to grapple with your own reactions: shock, horror, anger, fear, disgust, guilt. Your first reaction may be to say, “Stop doing that – are you crazy?” Remember that they are operating under an entirely different frame of reference. S/he may not be experiencing the physical pain that you would expect.

3. S/he won't open up about the problem. How can I get her/him to talk to me?

Try to see things from their perspective. You are asking her/him to talk about an emotionally charged subject, a behaviour s/he may not have developed in the first place if s/he had been able to talk about her/his feelings. It may be inconceivable to her/him that a conversation about self-harm could actually occur. Your recognition of this is the first step in adopting a stance of helpful empathy. Abrupt questions (like “Why are you doing this?”) may make her/him clam up. S/he may not know why s/he is self-harming and is likely to act defensively.

Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)



In the beginning, it is most productive to focus on getting the person to acknowledge her/his problem and the need for support and professional help. Don't expect too much in the beginning, and don't take her/his reluctance to talk personally.

4. When s/he finally did talk to me, I didn't know what to say. Help!

Don't expect that you have to fix the problem, that would be far too great a burden. It's fine to acknowledge that you don't have the answers. While your instinct may be to want to offer advice or suggestions, sometimes the most help you can offer is to be available as a listener.

You might tell the person that you understand her/his behaviour and the feelings behind it are difficult, painful and scary. Sometimes this is all s/he needs to feel a little better. Let her/him direct you toward what s/he needs or wants from you, and let her/him know that you will do what you can to help her/him find resources and to support healthy behaviour, growth and change.

5. Should I try to get my loved one to stop the behaviour? Are there any strategies that work?

You cannot control someone else's behaviour, no matter how much you may want to. The most you can do is have an influence of some kind.

The more you get into a power struggle with someone who is self-harming, the more

resentful and resistant they will become. Your actions may backfire, with her/him self-harming more frequently or intensely to express her/his heightened outrage or distress (this is what happens in many hospitals and institutions where patients are given ultimatums, supervised around the clock and deprived of sharps).

6. What do I do if s/he refuses to acknowledge a problem or to get help for it?

If the adolescent refuses to see that s/he needs help, try a low pressure selling job. Suggest that if the behaviour is not really a problem, then this will be confirmed by a consultation with someone who isn't emotionally invested in proving anything. Tell her/him that a third party (someone with expertise) is in the best position to give input.

It may help if you give her/him some choices about where to go for help and who to see (refer to the list of Local Services for Young People and Statewide and 24-Hour Services). It is important that they feel in control about their treatment options.

As parents, rest assured that you are not betraying your child by seeking help for her/him. The concept of betrayal is a distorted one in this context. What you are doing is modelling a healthy parental attitude, showing that you can accept problems and deal with them constructively, even if it means that the right answer is to seek psychological help for your child.

The single most important recommendation is: do whatever you can to make your child/friend/family member aware that they are not the only person affected by their self-harming. The biggest illusion that s/he must surrender is that self-harm hurts her/him alone. Once they begin to grasp the magnitude of the impact on everyone they know and care about, their resistance erodes and their motivation to change is strengthened.

7. Who should I tell (or not tell) about the problem? Does her/his school or place of employment need to know?

For an adolescent, getting help may mean absences from school. The self-harming behaviour may have already caused failing grades or conduct difficulties. Thus, it may be hard to avoid telling the school.

On the plus side, it can be in the student's best interest to adopt a collaborative attitude toward teachers and school staff, and the school system may have ample support resources to offer (e.g. psychologist, school nurse, student welfare coordinator). Some degree of openness about the problem can help dispel the adolescent's belief that self-harm is a shameful act that must be kept hidden.

8. The rest of the family is beginning to suspect something is wrong. What should I tell them?

Talk to the young person who is self-harming about what s/he wants the family to know. There is a delicate balance between her/his need for privacy and others' interest in knowing, which must be considered in light of whether or not the family members can be helpful and supportive. If one of the underlying issues is poor boundary delineations between herself/himself and family members, disclosing the problem may cause more difficulties.

Consider both sets of needs with the young person engaging in self-harm. What would be the reasons for sharing, and what would you be trying to accomplish? What kind of language do you and your child want to use with the people you take into your confidence? Consider the likely reactions of those you intend to tell. Coming to an agreement about what will be said and how it will be said can contribute to your child's sense of privacy and control.

If you do talk to family members, remember that they may need some education. Often it is helpful to start by saying, "My daughter/son is dealing with some serious emotional problems, and one of the ways s/he is coping is by harming herself/himself." Have some references and literature available for family members so they can quickly learn s/he is not a crazy person, that s/he is not necessarily in lethal danger, and that s/he is unlikely to harm anybody else.

9. My sister doesn't want her kids to be around my daughter/son who has been self-harming. What should I do about this?

Don't get defensive, open up the dialogue about her concerns. Your sister may be worried that your daughter/son will do something to hurt the others, that s/he will self-harm in front of her children, or that the condition is contagious.

While all these fears are unlikely to come true, some individuals who self-harm are discovered in the act by family members and have trouble controlling and directing angry feelings. In sum, these are legitimate concerns that you must deal with in an open-minded and non-judgemental way.

Give your child some responsibility for addressing these concerns with relatives. Be realistic and aware that the behaviour scares people. It's true that there is a kind of "secondary harm" that occurs when a young person witnesses the act of self-harm or becomes aware of it in a graphic way. Your child needs to believe s/he can behave appropriately in front of others.

10. How should I support the healing process of someone who is self-harming without falling into the "rescue" trap, or inadvertently prolonging the behaviour? How do I stay healthy while supporting her/him at the same time?

Give over control to the helping professionals. If you find yourself being held hostage by your child, let her/him know and set limits.

The best support you can offer is to encourage her/him to use language, not action. Don't let guilt or an overblown sense of obligation drive your relationship. Be aware of what you are responsible for and let the young person who is self-harming be responsible for their part. For instance, they might say to you, "If you didn't gang up on me, I wouldn't have self-harmed." Not true: a parent/friend/family member who is trying to help doesn't need to accept blame for this distorted view of things.

Avoid rescue behaviours and strategies. You cannot keep the young person safe by being around them all of the time, even if they seem to want you to parent them. Remember that self-harm as a chronic pattern is usually not lethal. While it must be regarded seriously, the young person is not necessarily in imminent danger of death, and s/he is responsible for dealing with issues of self-protection.

It is important for you to remember to take care of yourself. Don't neglect your own needs, for privacy, leisure time, or the fulfilment of personal responsibilities. Be ready to set limits that respect those needs. Being too available without taking care of your own needs and health will not benefit either of you.

Don't be afraid to get your own therapy, counselling or support. It doesn't mean that

you are crazy or disturbed. Sometimes, the advice of an objective listener can help you keep your emotional balance while coping with the young person's difficult struggle.

11. How do I cope with the frustration, fear and anger I feel about my child's self-harming behaviour?

Accept these as natural, normal reactions. Think them through, find a way to communicate them without being judgemental or punishing. Put the feelings to good use by viewing them as signals of issues you need to deal with in your relationship with the young person who is self-harming.

Some frustration and concern can be alleviated by adjusting your expectations of her/him. You can allay your anger by remembering that s/he is in a great deal of internal pain and has never been able to voice it. Your fear may be something you have to live with temporarily, but you should view it as a sign of your commitment and love for the person. Hopefully, you can use the concern in a constructive way, helping her/him realise the impact of their behaviour and trying to instil a similar sense of concern.

Remember that the healthy expression of emotion is the goal for everyone involved with the young person, not just the young person herself/himself.

Taken from Conterio, K., & Lader, W. (1998). *Bodily harm: The breakthrough healing program for self-injurers*. New York: Hyperion.

How and When I Can Help?

This activity was developed for family and friends of those who self-harm but it is also useful to those working with individuals who self-harm (e.g. psychologists, teachers). The purpose of this exercise is to develop clear and consistent ideas about how and when you are willing to help. The more clearly you define the ways in which you are willing to help and support your friend or family member, the more helpful and consistent you will be. You will also find that maintaining clear, consistent, and predictable boundaries in terms of your availability will enable you to avoid feeling overwhelmed or manipulated.

- 1. Working with the person in your life who is self-harming, identify at least 3 ways in which you can offer support (e.g. telephone, personal contact, email).
- 2. On the schedule indicate what type of assistance you are willing to give (e.g. telephone call, personal contact) and when you are willing to provide it. Be sure to include when you are absolutely NOT available. You may want to develop a colour code or a key to help you in the process, e.g. pink or 📞 might mean you're willing to talk on the telephone, black or N/A could mean you're unavailable, and blue or 👤 might mean you are available to spend time with the person face to face.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Mornings							
Afternoons							
Evening							
After Midnight							

This activity was taken from Alderman, T. (1997). *The scarred soul: Understanding and ending self-inflicted violence*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.



Photo: Sarah Barker

How to Talk With a Young Person About Their Self-harm



These questions are intended to act merely as guidelines and should not be taken as a protocol or asked directly off this sheet, which could intimidate or threaten the young person.

Comments or Questions that Communicate Interest

- I am glad you told me about what you do to your body. Are you feeling OK about having told me?
- Thanks for telling me. I am glad I know.
- How are you feeling right now, having told me about this?
- I noticed the scars on your arm. I hope its OK to say that. I am interested in knowing about them if you want to tell me.
- Can you tell me about the times when you hurt yourself?
- I am so glad you told me that. If you want to tell me more, or feel like saying more sometime in the future, I am interested in hearing about it.

Questions that Invite the Young Person to Decide If and to What Extent They Want to Explore Their Self-harm

- Does it feel like it would be helpful to talk more about your cutting?
- Would you like to talk more about this with me? I'm willing to hear, if you want to tell me more.
- Do you think it would be useful to learn more about your self-harm? Sometimes people find it helps them sort things out when they talk about it.
- We can explore some alternatives to your self-harm if you want to. Do you think that would be helpful?
- Do you have a sense of how your self-harm works for you? Would it help to learn more about it?
- Sometimes talking about how you hurt yourself can be useful. What do you think?
- Would it help to have more information about self-harm in general?

Resources



Local Services for Young People and Families

Austin Health Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Phone: (03) 9496 3620

Berry Street Victoria (Northern Services)

Phone: Eaglemont: (03) 9450 4700
Watsonia: (03) 9431 1488

Website: www.berrystreet.org.au

General Practitioner (GP)

Your local doctor is a good place to seek help. If they cannot help you, they can refer you to the appropriate person, agency or organisation.

Youth Support & Advocacy Services (YSAS)

Previously Youth Substance Abuse Service

24 Hour Freecall: 1800 014 446

Website: www.ysas.org.au

Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)

Phone: Counselling: (03) 9496 2240
A/H Crisis Line: (03) 9349 1766
Freecall: 1800 806 292

Website: www.austin.org.au/northerncasa

Nillumbik Health

Phone: (03) 94309100

Website: www.nillumbikhealth.org.au

Services Include:

- RECONNECT: Help for young people who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness to become more involved with their family, work, education, training and the community through mediation, counselling and practical support for the whole family.
- Youth Connections: Help for young people at risk of disengaging from education.
- Counselling: General Counselling Service.

(Not including SYYS as it can only be accessed through services and schools)

Banyule Community Health Service

Phone: Heidelberg: (03) 9450 2000
Greensborough: (03) 9433 5111

Website: www.bchs.org.au

The Reach Foundation

The Dream Factory
152-156 Wellington Street
Collingwood Victoria 3066

Phone: (03) 9412 0900

Fax: (03) 9416 2230

Email: info@reach.org.au

Opening hours

Monday to Friday: 9:00am - 5:00pm

headspace

Website: www.headspace.org.au

headspace Hawthorn

Level 1
360 Burwood Road
Hawthorn Victoria 3122

Phone: (03) 9006 6500

Fax: (03) 9815 0818

Referral Fax: (03) 9815 2377

Opening hours

Mondays: 2:00pm - 6:00pm

Tuesday to Friday: 10:00am - 6:00pm

headspace Collingwood

Level 1
Victoria Park (Social Club Building)
Cnr Lulie & Abbott Streets
Abbotsford Victoria 3067

Phone: (03) 9417 0150

Fax: (03) 9416 3279

Opening hours

Monday to Friday: 9:00am - 5:00pm

Closed on Public Holidays.

headspace Glenroy

2A Hartington Street
Glenroy Victoria 3046

Phone: 1300 880 218

Fax: (03) 9304 1033

Opening hours

Monday: 9:00am - 5:00pm

Tuesday - 9:00am - 8:00pm

Wednesday & Thursday: 9:00am - 7:00pm

Friday: 9:00am - 5:00pm

Saturday: By appointment only

Child Protection Society

Phone: (03) 9450 0900

Website: www.cps.org.au

Royal Children's Hospital

Phone: (03) 9345 5522

Website: www.rch.org.au

National and 24 Hour Services

Youth Beyond Blue

Phone: 1300 224 636

Website: www.youthbeyondblue.org.au

Kids Help Line

Phone: 1800 55 1800

Website: www.kidshelpline.com.au

Mind Australia

Phone: (03) 9455 7900

Website: www.mindaustralia.org.au

Lifeline Australia

Phone: 13 11 14

Website: www.lifeline.org.au

SANE Helpline

Phone: 1800 187 263

Website: www.sane.org

Orygen Youth Health

Phone: (03) 9342 2800

Website: www.oyh.org.au

Anglicare

Phone: 13 26 22

Website: www.anglicare.org.au

Griefline

Phone: (03) 9935 7400

Website: www.griefline.org.au

Parentline

Phone: 13 22 89

Website: www.parentline.com.au

GROW

Phone: 1800 558 268

Website: www.grow.net.au



Self-harm Web Sites

The Internet has a huge array of web sites dedicated specifically to self-harm. As such, the individual should be discerning when viewing material posted on the Internet and it is always wise to remember that information posted on the Internet is not necessarily correct or endorsed by the proper authorities. This is a list of web sites that may prove helpful.



Photo: Aura-Lea Withers

Self-Injury and Related Issues (SIARI) - UK

An informative U.K. self-harm web site compiled by Jan Sutton, author of *Healing the Hurt Within: Understand and Relieve the Suffering Behind Self-destructive Behaviour*. It offers support for individuals who self-harm and those who support them; in the form of message boards, articles, fact sheets, books and an online support group for helpers. It also has an extensive list of links and resources on self-harm and related issues.

www.siari.co.uk

National Self-harm Network (NSHN) - UK

A U.K. focused survivor led organisation committed to supporting those who self-harm and their family and friends. This site has a message board, resources, fact sheets, and documents that may be helpful to those in the U.K., i.e. a poster to print, a self-injury treatment checklist to present to A & E, and an incident report to complete if refused treatment at A & E.

www.nshn.co.uk

HealthyPlace.com - USA

A comprehensive U.S. mental health site offering information and support on psychological disorders and psychiatric medications. It hosts a self-harm community with scheduled self-harm discussion groups and live chat, message boards, conference transcripts, self-injury journals, disorder definitions, medications and personal homepages.

www.healthyplace.com

Samaritans - UK

A web site established by the U.K. and Irish charity organisation, The Samaritans. They provide factsheets about self-harm, links to other self-harm web sites, and a report summary of recent research they commissioned into self-harm, entitled Youth and Self-harm: Perspectives. Other documents of interest are Youth Matters 2000: A Cry For Help and the Youth Pack. The latter is a practical resource for teachers or those working with young people, offering a section on self-harm.

www.samaritans.org

Secret Shame - UK

Deb Martinson's web site containing a wide variety of information for individuals engaging in self-harm and their family and friends. Information includes: what, why, who, causes, diagnoses, therapy, self-help, first aid, living with self-injury, and help for family and friends. It offers quotes from personal stories, references, offline resources and links. This site also has several interactive features, such as live chat (IRC via Java), a web board, a self-assessment questionnaire to assess your immediate need to self-harm and an Internet self-injury questionnaire.

<http://crystal.palace.net/~llama/selfinjury/>

Self-Injury Support - UK

A U.K. web site offering support and information for those self-harming or others wanting to learn more about this phenomenon. It has first aid advice, resources, books, links, a message board, and a support list where individuals who self-harm have posted their email addresses to offer support for other self-harmers.

www.self-harm.co.uk

Young People and Self-harm - UK

A U.K. web site maintained by the National Children's Bureau. Whilst this web site does not supply any general information relating to self-harm, it has established an excellent initiatives database. The Initiatives Database is an international listing of contacts who deal with self-harm in children and adolescents. It includes individuals, groups, organisations and charities running workshops, conducting therapeutic interventions or undertaking research in relation to deliberate self-harm. An online questionnaire is provided for submission to the database.

www.selfharm.org.uk

Mind - UK

A web site maintained by Mind, one of the leading mental health charities in England and Wales. Below is a direct link to their booklet entitled Understanding Self-harm. It contains personal anecdotes and information organised under the following headings:

- What does it really mean to self-harm? Why do people injure themselves?
- Women and self-harm
- Men and self-harm
- Young people
- What's the difference between self-harm and suicide?
- Is there a connection between self-harm and abuse?
- How can I get help?
- What can I do to help myself?
- How can friends and family help?

www.mind.org.uk

NCH - UK

This site is managed by NCH, a prominent children's charity in the UK. There are three documents that can be downloaded free of charge from this site:

- *Self-harm or Self-Injury: Your Questions Answered*: A 2 page leaflet on self-harm (PDF 196k).
- *Look Beyond The Scars Understanding and Responding to Self-harm: A Summary*: A 10 page summary of the report listed below (PDF 317k).
- *Look Beyond The Scars Understanding and Responding to Self-harm*: The full 49 page report (PDF 826k).

www.nch.org.uk



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