

Self- Harm

West Hatch High School

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What is self-harm?

Self-harm is when you hurt yourself on purpose. A lot of people, and maybe you, do it because something else feels wrong. It seems like the only way to let those feelings out.

It is a common thing young people do and affects around one in 12 people with 10% of 15-16 year olds self-harming.

If you self-harm it is usually as a because of another problem. It can happen if you are feeling anxious, depressed, stressed or bullied and feel you don't have any other way of dealing with these issues.

Often self-harming only brings temporary relief. It can be distressing when you think that self-harm is the only way you can cope, but there are other healthy ways you can cope.

Sometimes it feels like no-one understands why you self-harm but lots more people today know about what it is really about.

How can I stop self-harming?

Talk to someone

Talking about how you're feeling with someone you trust can feel like a relief. This person could be a friend, family member, teacher, school counsellor/nurse, or youth worker. Think about who you feel safe with and how you would feel most comfortable communicating, whether it's face to face, over the phone, by text or email.

It's understandable if you're worried no one will understand you, or that people might judge you. But don't worry, there are lots of trained people who do understand and really care. That's because they speak to thousands of young people who are going through this too. Nothing you can say will shock them, and they are here to listen and support you. Please take a look at the list of organisations at the end of this booklet, and don't struggle on your own.

Get professional support

Professional support can make a massive difference. It's ok to ask for help when you need it. We all need help sometimes, it doesn't make you weak - in fact reaching out takes bravery and strength.

Your GP can refer you to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) so you can have an assessment and get the treatment that is right for you. You might be offered counselling or talking therapy, where you can talk with trained mental health professionals about what you are feeling and ways you can cope.

You can also access your school counsellor by referring yourself by emailing him, leaving him a note in his post box (post box is situated outside his room in J4) or knocking on his door and talking to him.

How to Speak To Your GP About Mental Health

Keep a journal

Take a few minutes every day to write down how you are feeling. This can be a helpful way to let out your emotions. It can also help you to recognise what is bothering you and any patterns in what triggers you or causes you to feel bad.

If you don't like writing, try doodling or drawing. Remember this is just a way to express yourself, there's no right or wrong way to do this.

If you want to, you could show your journal to any mental health professionals who are supporting you to help them understand what you are going through.

Small changes that can boost your mood

Consider how your use of social media is affecting your mood. Only follow accounts that make you feel positive and safe.

Make sure you get enough sleep and stay hydrated – this can reduce your stress levels.

Take time out when you need to.

Think of three things you are grateful for each day.

Be as kind to yourself as you would be to your best friend – think about the advice and support you would give someone else if you heard they were struggling.

Practise meditation or mindfulness

Some people find this really helps them to feel calm and grounded, especially when they're going through a distressing time.

Here is a link to a simple guided meditation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUeEnkjKyDs>

Find ways to keep yourself safe

It's really important to keep yourself as safe as possible and reduce your risk of serious self-injury. Even though you want to stop self-harming, you might not feel able to stop straight away. Sometimes it can take time to find new ways to cope, and that's normal. In the meantime, think about other things you can do in the moment when you feel the urge to self-harm building. You could try to:

- go for a walk or do some gentle exercise
- focus on your breathing
- text a friend and let them know you need them to help you take your mind off things
- play music and sing or dance along
- hold an ice cube
- write down your thoughts
- hit a cushion or pillow
- tear up a magazine or newspaper
- make a self-soothe box

It is helpful if you tell your GP exactly what you are doing and what your worries are. This might feel daunting, but if you are honest with your doctor they can help you reduce some of the risks involved with your behaviour, as well as helping you get the support you need.

If you need medical treatment for your injuries, do make sure you get it. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to go to your GP or hospital. They are there to help you get better and it is not their job to judge you.

You can also go to your local hospital A&E or medical centre if you are worried about what you might do to yourself and let them know your concern.

If you are in an emergency or worried for your life call 999.

Where to get help

This is a list of organisations and helpline services that have information to support you.

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger

Provides free, 24/7 text support for young people across the UK experiencing a mental health crisis.

All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors.

Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

Texts can be anonymous, but if the volunteer believes you are at immediate risk of harm, they may share your details with people who can provide support.

Text: YM to 85258

Opening times: 24/7

Samaritans

Whatever you're going through, you can contact the Samaritans for support.

Phone: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Opening times: 24/7

Childline

If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, chat online or email about any problem big or small.

Sign up for a free Childline locker (real name or email address not needed) to use their free 1-2-1 counsellor chat and email support service.

Can provide a BSL interpreter if you are deaf or hearing-impaired.

Hosts online message boards where you can share your experiences, have fun and get support from other young people in similar situations.

Phone: 0800 1111

Opening times: 9am - midnight, 365 days a year

The Mix

Offers support to anyone under 25 about anything that's troubling them.

Email support available via their online contact form.

Free 1-2-1 webchat service available.

Free short-term counselling service available.

Phone: 0808 808 4994

Opening times: 4pm - 11pm, seven days a week

Calm Harm

A free app providing support and strategies to help you resist or manage the urge to self-harm.

Can be downloaded from Google Play or App Store.

MeeToo

A free app for teenagers (11+) providing resources and a fully-moderated community where you can share your problems, get support and help other people too.

Can be downloaded from Google Play or App Store.

(<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/self-harm/>)