

Self-Harming Behaviours



Helping professionals, parents and carers:

- Develop an insight relating to triggers, thoughts & emotions
- Become aware of the journey towards self-harm
- Work together to keep children safe and on the road to recovery



Self-Harm

Self-harm is a deliberate act in response to a specific need.

It can involve; scratching, cutting, pinching, bruising, pulling hair or eyebrows, restricting or overeating, head banging and overdose.

It is likely to be a response to; friendship difficulties, poor self-esteem, loss & bereavement, family conflict, classroom difficulties, bullying or social media.

The function of Self-Harm

Emotional moderation, release of feelings, physical vs emotional, as a means of punishing self or others, trying to feel better

Signs of distress



Loss of focus

Learning

Behaviour

Friendships

Sleep & eating patterns

“Every behaviour has a positive intention”

Recognise what's normal for your child and what might be different

The Gatekeepers Response

A 3 stepped approach for a positive & confident response:

- Thank them for coming to you. Positive affirmation!
- If it's a difficult time, choose a more appropriate moment (perhaps when you have had time to gather your thoughts). Take responsibility to arrange this with your child.
- "Is there anything I can do for you right now?" Try to support with one small practical thing.

Talking about Self-Harm

Maintain a calm, non-judgmental approach. Listen, reassure and think about next steps. Who needs to know and who could help, school, GP, counsellor. Think of a plan together - child at the centre.

Remember...

'The worst thing you can say is nothing'

Useful Websites & Resources:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/self-harm/getting-help/>
- <https://www.papyrus-uk.org>
- <https://zerosuicidealliance.com/>
- <https://harmless.org.uk/>
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
- <https://www.selfharm.co.uk/>

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