



Champs  
Public Health  
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Cheshire and Merseyside



# Self-harm support booklet

For young people



Easy  
Read

# Easy Read



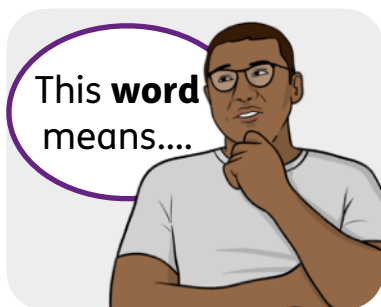
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



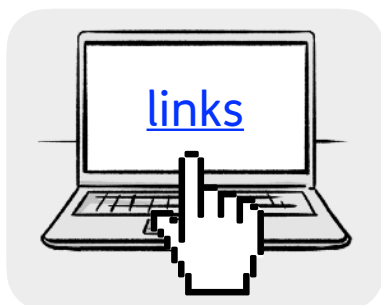
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

# What is in this booklet

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# About this booklet



This support booklet is for any child or young person who hurts themselves on purpose.

This is also known as **self-harm** or sometimes **self-injury**.

This booklet includes:



- Information about self-harm.



- Ways to manage and lower self-harming.



You can use this booklet however you want, but we suggest you go through it with an adult who you trust.



Reading this information is not the same as getting support from a mental health professional.



If you need support right away, skip ahead to page 27 to find out where you can get help.



We know it is hard to stop self-harming, so be kind to yourself.



Just by going through this support booklet you have started to manage your self-harming.

# What is self-harm?



**Self-harm** is when you hurt your body on purpose.



This can include cutting, burning or taking too much **medication**.

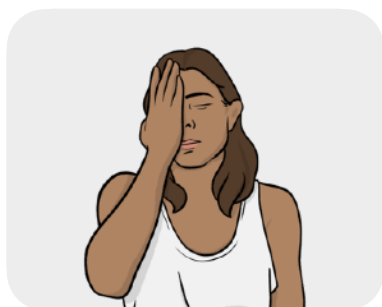
**Medication** is medicines, like tablets.

## Why do I self-harm?

For lots of people self-harming can be a way of:



- Dealing with or letting out very difficult feelings.

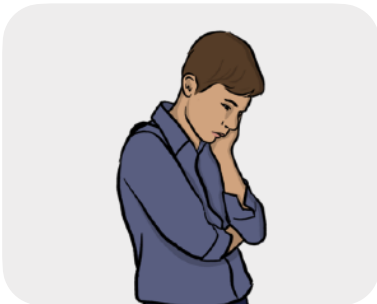


- Getting rid of stress.



Some people say that self-harm can be a way of feeling in control of themselves.

Self-harm can also be a way of dealing with difficult things in life, like:



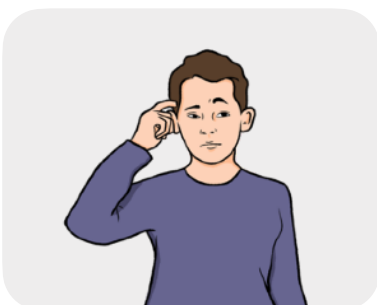
- Having a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety.



- Problems at school, like bullying.

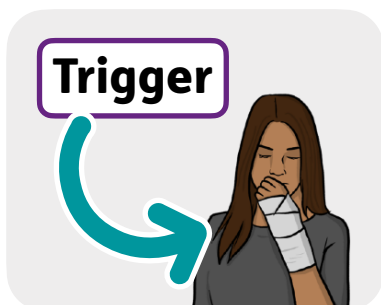


- Problems at home, like having parents who argue all the time.



It is okay if you do not know why you self-harm. You can still get support.

# What are triggers?



**Triggers** are what make you want to self-harm.

They can be lots of different things, including feelings, people and places.



For example, if you self-harm as a way of dealing with problems at home, your trigger may be hearing your parents argue.



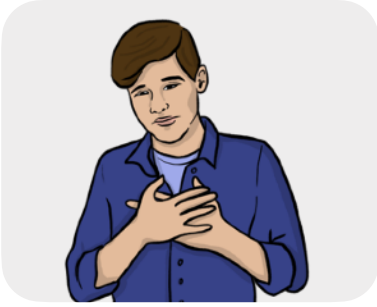
Triggers can lead to **urges** to self-harm.

An **urge** is like a strong want to do something.



Your urges are strongest for the first 15 minutes.

When you feel urges, you may also:



- Feel changes to your body, like your heart beating fast.



- Feel like you are not yourself or not in the room you are in.



- Think about self-harming over and over again.



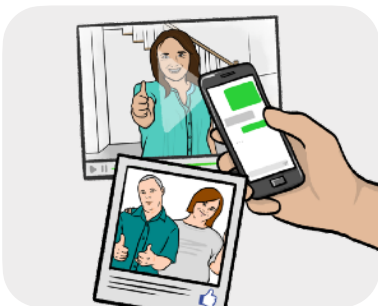
- Make decisions that are unhealthy or unsafe.

# What can I do to manage self-harming?

Here are some things that can help you manage self-harming:



- Focus on something else when you feel bad and want to self-harm. This is called **distracting** yourself.



- Spend less time on **social media**. **Social media** is websites and apps like Instagram, X and TikTok.



- Keep a diary about when you self-harm and why. This can help you to work out what your triggers are.

**My self-harm diary:**  
You can use this diary to keep track of your self-harm over 1 or 2 months.

What was happening before you felt urges to self-harm?

There is a diary in your safe plan at the end of this booklet.

Here are some more things that can help you manage self-harming:



- Think about why you self-harm and how you could manage these feelings differently.



- Talk to someone else about how you are feeling, like your parent or a **helpline**.

A **helpline** is a free service you can contact to get support and advice straight away.

You can find the numbers for some helplines on page 29 and page 30.



- Ask for professional support with your mental health.



- Treat your self-harm injuries correctly if you do self-harm.

# How can I distract myself?



It is good to distract yourself as soon as you feel urges to self-harm.

Here are some ideas for how you can distract yourself:



- Spend time with friends or family.



- Do some tidying, organising or cleaning.



- Write something, like a poem or a list of all the good things in your life.

Here are some more ideas for how you can distract yourself:



- Take care of yourself or do something relaxing, like having a bath.



- Move your body in some way, like running or dancing.



- Watch TV or a film you love.



- Play a game, like a video game or a board game.

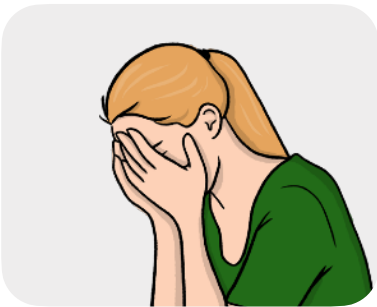


- Do something with your hands, like play with a toy or rip up some paper.

Here are some more ideas for how you can distract yourself:



- Escape into your imagination, like dressing up as a character or planning a dream party.



- Let yourself cry.



- Get cosy, like have a hot bath, cuddle a soft toy or put your softest pyjamas on.



- Cuddle a pet.



- Create something, like painting a picture or playing a musical instrument.

Here are some more ideas for how you can distract yourself:

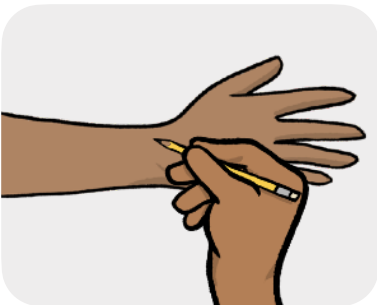


- Squeeze an ice cube in your hand really tight till it melts.

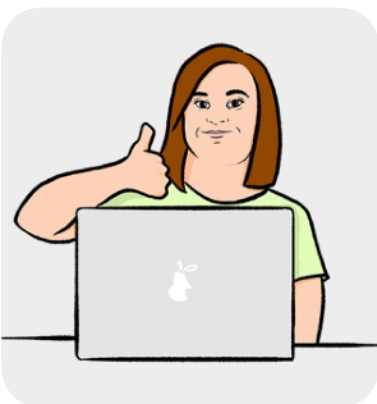


- Try **grounding**.

**Grounding** is when you stop thinking about your feelings by focusing on what is happening around you.



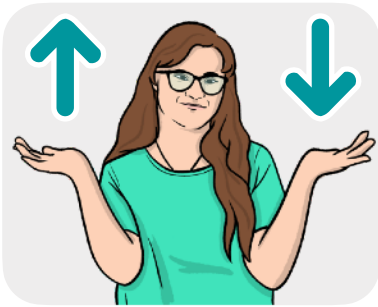
- Draw on the area you want to self-harm with a red pen or lipstick.



You can find more ideas for how to distract yourself on these websites:

- [www.wellbeingandcoping.net/](http://www.wellbeingandcoping.net/)
- [www.themix.org.uk/mental-health/self-harm](http://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health/self-harm)

# What should I do if I have self-harmed?



Managing and stopping self-harming is a bumpy journey. You will have ups and downs.



As you are slowly getting better, there may still be times when you self-harm.



This is normal, so do not worry or be unkind to yourself.



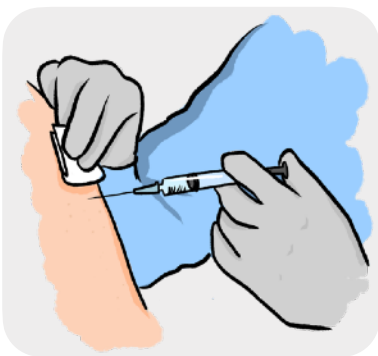
But if you do self-harm, it is important to do it in the safest way possible.

If you are going to self-harm:



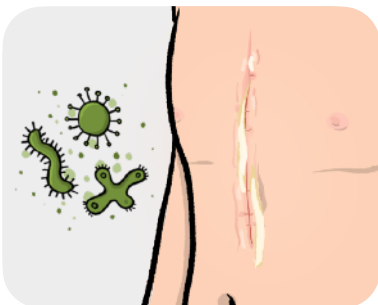
- Try not to self-harm using medication.

This is 1 of the most unsafe ways of self-harming and can accidentally lead to death.



- Check that you have had your **tetanus vaccination**.

A **tetanus vaccination** is a jab that can help stop you from getting a disease called tetanus.



Tetanus comes from getting harmful bacteria in cuts. So people who self-harm are at risk of getting tetanus.



- Try not to self-harm after drinking alcohol or taking illegal drugs.

If you are going to self-harm, make sure you know:



- How to treat your self-harm injuries properly, or



- Get medical help if you need it.

## Treating a cut

If you have cut your skin, please follow these steps:



1. Gently press down on the cut with a clean cloth until the bleeding stops.



2. If you feel dizzy or like you may faint, lie down with your legs raised.



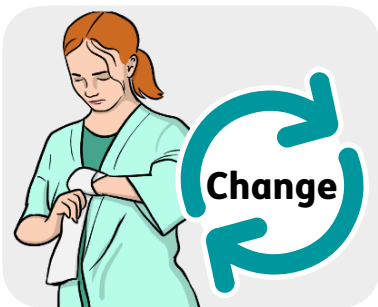
3. Gently clean the cut with cold tap water and soap.



4. Dry the cut with a clean cloth.



5. Once it is dry, cover the cut with a thick plaster or bandage.



6. Keep the cut clean by changing the plaster or bandage if it gets wet or dirty.



7. Make sure to check the cut for infection.

The cut is infected if it looks very red, swollen and has a yellow or white liquid coming out of it.

You should go to the hospital if:



- The cut is very deep.



- The cut keeps bleeding through your plaster or bandage.



- The cut becomes infected.

# Treating a burn

If you have burnt your skin, please follow these steps:



1. Hold the burnt area under cold tap water for 20 minutes.



2. Once the burnt area has cooled down, cover it with a thick plaster or bandage.



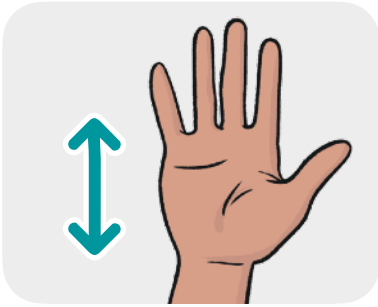
3. If you get a blister, do not burst it. Just cover it with a thick plaster or bandage.



4. Make sure to check the burn for infection.

The burn is infected if it looks very red, swollen and has a yellow or white liquid coming out of it.

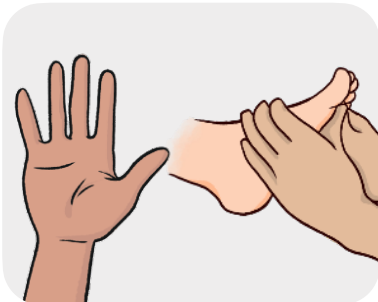
You should go to the hospital if:



- You get a blister that is larger than the palm of a hand.



- The burn is very deep and looks black or white.



- The burn is on a sensitive area, like your face, hands, feet or privates.



- The burn becomes infected.

# When to call 999

999 should be called if:



- Someone has cut their skin very deeply and it is bleeding very heavily.



- Someone faints or goes into shock.  
Signs of someone going into shock include:

- Going very pale.

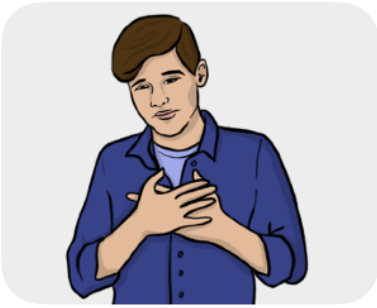


- Breathing quickly.



- A weak heartbeat.

**999** should also be called if:



- Someone is finding it hard to breathe or is feeling pain in the chest.



- Someone has taken too much of a medication.

This is called an **overdose**.



- Someone has an infected cut or burn and feels hot, confused or sleepy.



- Someone has tried to take their own life.

This is called **suicide**. You will find more about suicide in the next part of this booklet.

# What is suicide?



**Suicide** is when someone wants to die or takes their own life.



Most young people who self-harm are not suicidal.



But it is important to understand that sometimes self-harming can accidentally lead to death.

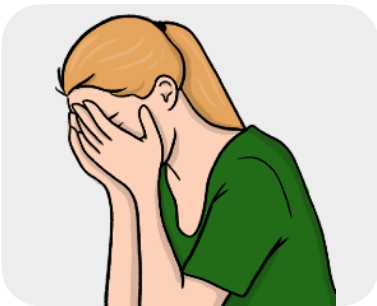


For example, you may overdose or lose too much blood by accident.

Some young people also start thinking about suicide because they:



- Have not tried to manage self-harming, or



- Have not been able to manage their self-harming.



Many people think about suicide and it can feel scary.

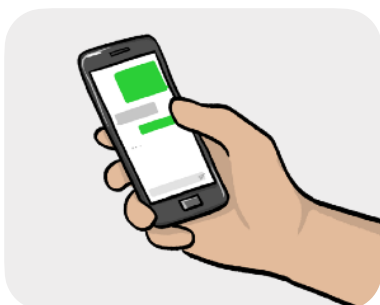


If you are thinking about suicide, please talk to someone.

# Where can I get help?



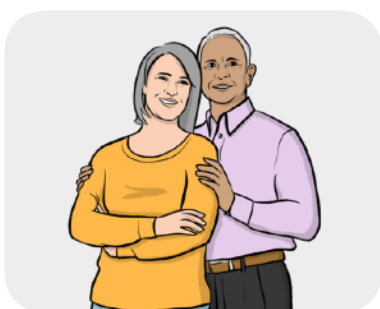
It is important to talk to someone you trust about what you are going through.



When we say talk, this does not have to be talking out loud. You could write down what you think and send it in a text or online chat.



You could talk to someone about mental health, self-harming or suicide.



You could talk to:

- Your parents or other family member.



- A friend.

You could also talk to:



- A teacher or member of staff at a group or activity you are part of.



- A doctor.



- A helpline or charity.



Doctors and teachers will be able to get you the right support you need in your local area.

# Helplines

Here are some helplines that you can contact and how to contact them:



- **NHS 111** can give you urgent advice for your mental health.

You can contact them by calling: 111, then pressing option 2.



- You can talk to someone from the **Samaritans** about any worries you have.

You can contact them by calling: 116 123



- You can talk to someone from **Childline** about mental health and other issues you are dealing with.

You can contact them by calling: 0800 1111



- You can ask **SHOUT** for support with any issues you are dealing with.

You can contact them by texting SHOUT to: 85258



You can talk to someone from **Hopeline UK** about suicidal thoughts.

You can contact them by calling:  
0800 068 4141

## Websites and apps



Some websites and apps can give you information about self-harming and how to manage it.

Here are some useful websites:

- [www.selfharm.co.uk/](http://www.selfharm.co.uk/)
- [www.youngminds.org.uk/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/)
- [www.themix.org.uk/](http://www.themix.org.uk/)
- [www.camhs-resources.co.uk/](http://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/)
- [www.stem4.org.uk/](http://www.stem4.org.uk/)
- [www.kooth.com/](http://www.kooth.com/)



Here are some good apps:

- Red Cross First Aid.
- Calm Harm.
- DistrACT.
- Stay Alive.

# Making a safe plan

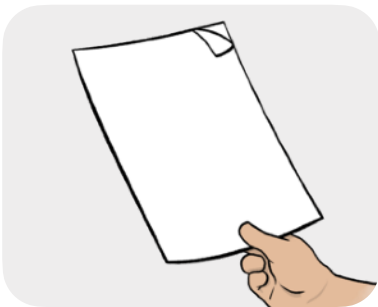


To help you manage self-harming, you can make a **safe plan**.

A **safe plan** is like a record of what has happened so far with your self-harm and how you will try to stop.



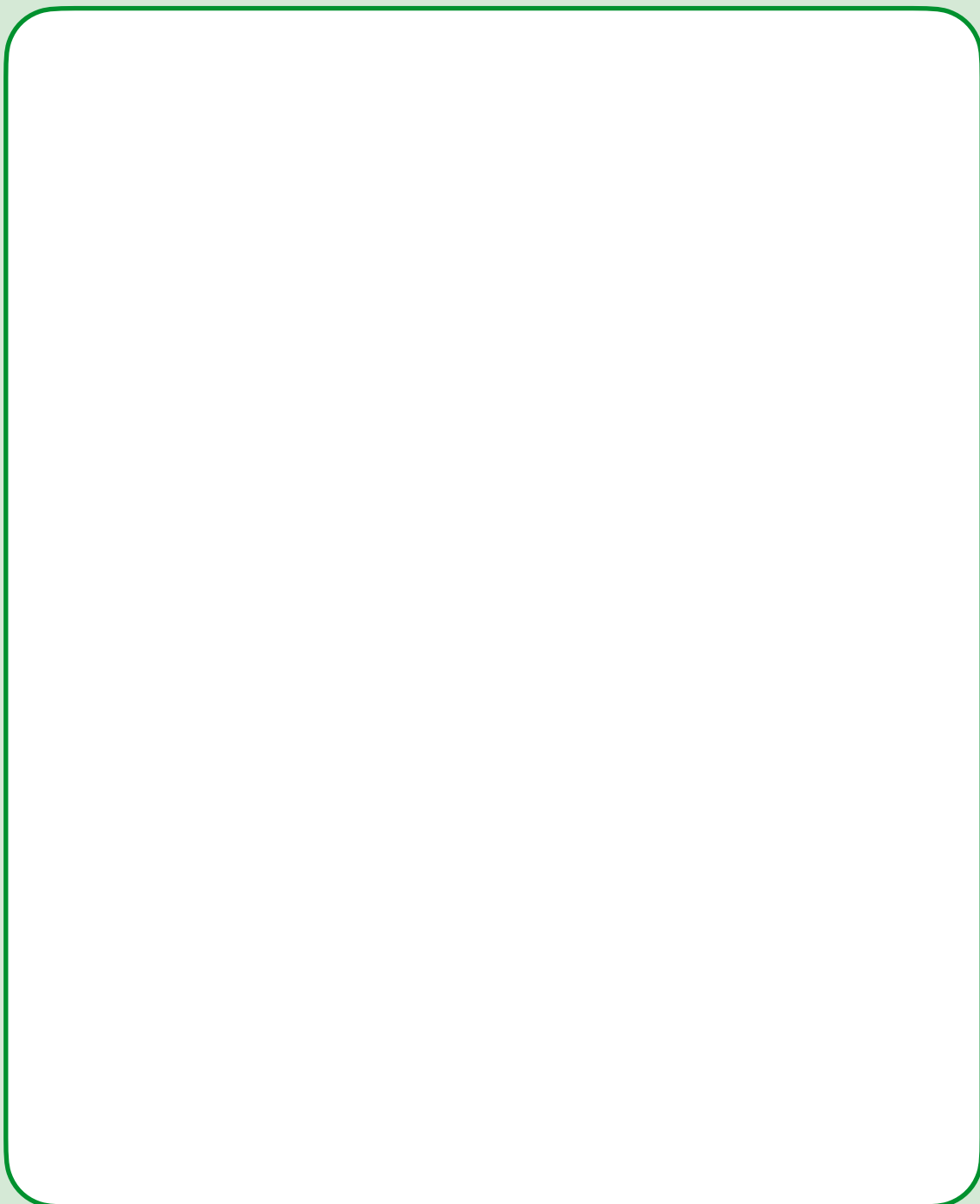
We have made a blank safe plan for you to fill in.



You can tear your safe plan out of this booklet and keep it with you to fill in over time.

# My safe plan

**My triggers:**

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a green border, intended for the user to write down their triggers. The box is positioned below the 'My triggers:' label and occupies most of the page's content area.

**What I feel when I get urges:**

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a thin green border, intended for the user to write their response to the question above.

## **My self-harm diary:**

You can use this diary to keep track of your self-harm over 1 or 2 months.

*What was happening before you felt urges to self-harm?*

*What did you feel when you got urges to self-harm? Were they strong urges?*

*What did you do to try and distract yourself? Did this work?*

*If you self-harmed, how did you do this?  
Was it a serious injury?*

*How did you feel after you had self-harmed?*

## **My hopes:**

*What are your hopes for the future? What do you have to look forward to?*

*Who are the people in your life who support you and who you can talk to?*

## **How I deal with stress:**

*What activities make you feel better when you are stressed?*

*How do you like to distract yourself when you get urges to self-harm?*

**Extra space for notes:**

