



# UNDERSTANDING SELF HARM?



Self-harm is a general term for when someone purposefully causes harm to themselves. This can include causing harm through injury, alcohol and drug misuse, putting themselves at risk in dangerous situations and neglecting their personal and physical needs.

## Why do people self-harm?

- To cope with and express intense feelings – sadness, anxiety, shame, disgust, anger, grief, emptiness
- To relieve emotional tension and pain
- To communicate to others that they need support
- To escape from or forget something
- To punish themselves
- As an alternative to or to prevent suicide

## FORMS OF SELF-HARM

The most recognised form of self-harm is self-injury.

Self-injury is when someone purposefully causes injury to their body, usually without wanting to end their life.

- People may self-injure by:
- Cutting
- Scratching
- Burning
- Bruising
- Biting
- Pinching

## WHAT CAUSES AND KEEPS SELF-HARM GOING

Some people self-harm because they have low self-esteem and have very negative and critical beliefs about themselves.

Self-harm may also be linked to depression, a stressful life event, and past experiences. Self-harm can also become a coping habit that is difficult to break.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR SELF-HARM

It can be really helpful to learn about what triggers you to self-harm.

To do this you could:

Keep a self-harm diary in your diary, keep a record of:

- When you self-harmed
- What was happening just before you self-harmed
- Specific thoughts you had
- How you felt before, during and after self-harming

## COPING STRATEGIES

Coping strategies can help you when you are trying to stop or reduce your self-harm.

- Strategies include:
- Using self-harm alternatives
- Self-care and distraction activities
- Grounding Techniques
- Guided Meditation
- Sharing how you feel with someone.
- Make a self-care box with a few items you can turn to for comfort.