

Self- Harm

What is Self-Harm and why do people do it?

Self-harm is when someone chooses to inflict pain on themselves in some way. This can be direct self-harm including: cutting, overdoing, hitting, burning or scalding, picking or scratching skin, pulling hair, ingesting toxic substances.

People self-harm for a number of reasons. Quite often something has happened to make them feel bad about things. They may not feel good about themselves; can't manage their feelings or express themselves very well; they may have poor support from people around them and are having difficulty solving problems.

For many people self-harm is [a way to cope with overwhelming emotional distress](#).

How to help a young person

If your child discloses self-harm you may be worried or upset and feel disbelief, shock, anger and even guilt or denial. These reactions are normal, but try to stay calm and supportive for your child. People who self-harm often keep the problem to themselves for a long time. If your child tells you that they are self-harming [it's a sign that they trust you](#).

You may not be the first person your child discloses to. This does not mean they distrust you. Rather it may be because they don't want to hurt or upset you or they feel ashamed. [It may be easier for them to tell someone else as the first step](#) to getting help.

If your child is self-harming [work closely with their school](#). [Take an active role in deciding the best course of action for your child](#). The school will want to work with you to support both you and your child. The school will know how to access additional support.

[Telling someone who self-harms to simply stop is not helpful](#). Self-harm is a coping strategy which helps the young person deal with their emotional distress. Taking away their chosen form of coping could be dangerous. Developing new coping strategies may take time and may need professional support.

[If you would like more information to help support a young person who is self-harming, please contact Caroline Hunt, Student Welfare Officer who is able to discuss this in more depth with you.](#)

Getting Help – locally

www.cornwallfoundationtrust.nhs.uk Provides mental health services to children and young people in Cornwall.

www.savvykernow.org.uk Friendly advice and a guide to Young People Friendly Services in Cornwall (there is a section for information for parents and carers)

www.kooth.com Free online support for young people that provides access to on-line counselling and forums for young people.

www.youngpeoplecornwall.org Engages, inspires and supports young people in Cornwall

www.mindyourway.co.uk Mental health and wellbeing services/support for young people in Cornwall

www.healthpromcornwall.org/ask-phil Provide trusted advice and guidance, and ongoing support for individuals and families.

National Support Websites

The sites below are safe and provide reliable support and information for young people and their families

www.nshn.co.uk The National Self Harm Network

www.lifesigns.org.uk User led information and support for people who self-harm

www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk Supports girls and women affected by self-harm

www.harmless.org.uk Support and information for people who self-harm

www.youngminds.org.uk The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing. Provides information for parents and young people.

Need Help Now?

Nightlink Cornwall – 0808 8000306 confidential helpline and text service for emotional support (5pm – midnight)

www.childline.org.uk 0800 111

www.samaritans.org 08457 90 90 90