



Are you, or is someone you care about, self-harming?



This is a booklet explaining what to do if you, or someone you care about, is self-harming

About this booklet



The aim of this booklet is to provide support to people who are self-harming, their parents, carers, friends and colleagues.

Therefore, some of the things may cause feelings of distress.



There are some pictures in this document which you may find not very nice to look at.

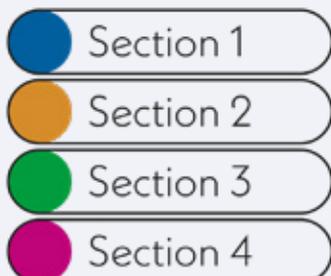
For example, pictures of wounds and injuries.



Blue word
glossary

Blue words:

When a word or phrase is difficult, it is in **blue writing**. The word is then explained.



Section 1

Section 2

Section 3

Section 4

This booklet is quite long. We have split it up into different sections to make it easier to read.

You may want to read it in sections.

What's in the booklet



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1. What is self-harm?



Self-harm is often an attempt to manage difficult thoughts and feelings.



People who self-harm, hurt or injure themselves.



People sometimes self-harm as a response to emotional pain.

1. What is self-harm?



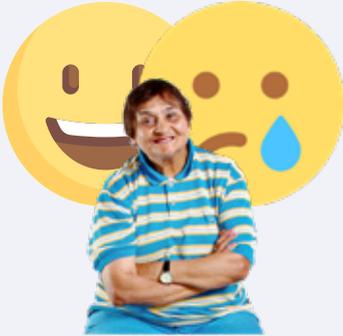
You may find this video helps to explain self-harm -

www.suffolkmind.org.uk/additional-help/understanding-self-harm/

The cycle of self-harm



1. What is self-harm?



After harming yourself, you may feel better able to cope with life again, but this feeling doesn't last long.



Although self-harm can seem like a way of coping, it is important you are able to find healthier ways of coping.



Self-harm is often misunderstood.

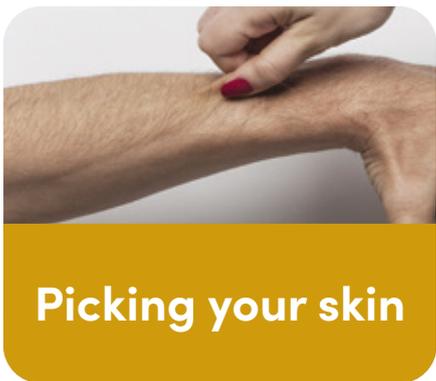
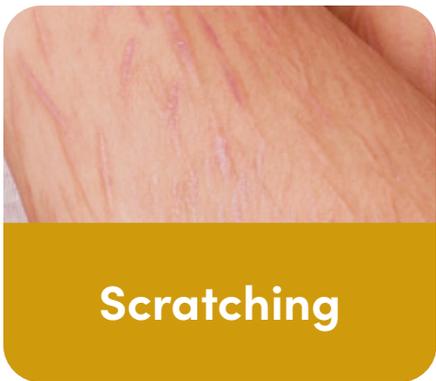
People who self-harm keep their emotional pain hidden as they are scared of being unfairly judged by others.



It is important not to try and hide your emotional pain and to talk to people you trust about it.



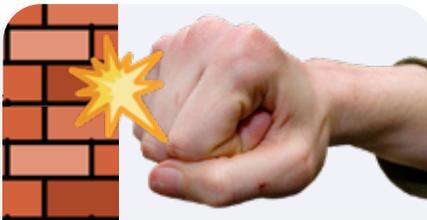
2. Common forms of self-harm



2. Common forms of self-harm



Self-harm can be hitting yourself or objects, such as -



Punching walls



Banging your head



Punching yourself



Self-harm can be **ligaturing**.

Ligaturing is when parts of the body are tied tightly and blood flow is stopped or blocked.



Self-harm can be drinking too much alcohol or taking a lot of drugs.

2. Common forms of self-harm



Self-harm can be swallowing **substances** or objects.

Substances can include include bleach, or other harmful liquids.



Self-harm can be putting yourself in dangerous or unsafe situations, or acting recklessly.

Examples are -



Stepping out in front of cars



Getting into fights



Having unprotected sex



Self-harm can be taking dangerous risks with your health.

For example, not taking insulin correctly if you are a diabetic.

Getting help when you are injured



If you have a serious injury, get help immediately by calling 999 or going to A&E.



If you have an open wound or injury you may need some medical advice from your GP surgery or local NHS walk-in centre so that it does not get worse.



3. What might I be feeling if I am at risk of self-harm?



Hopelessness



Guilt



Demotivated
Lack of interest in things



Failure



Anger



Low self-esteem
Unhappy with yourself

3. What might I be feeling if I am at risk of self-harm?



Mood swings



Loneliness



Isolation



Depression



Tearfulness
Crying a lot



These feelings can be very strong and noticing them early may help you to keep yourself safe.

4. How might I behave if I am at risk of self-harm?



Using drugs and/
or alcohol



Taking risks



Loss of interest
in things



Change in eating
habits



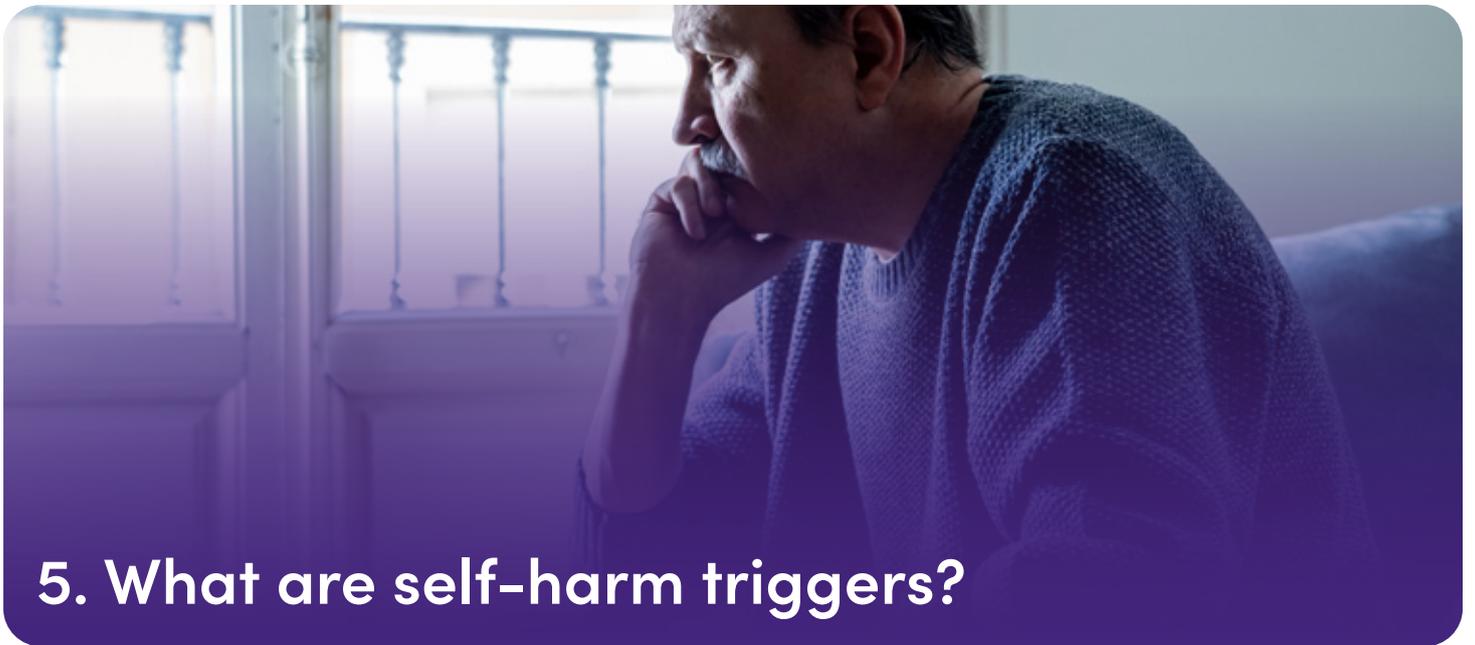
Withdrawing
from people and
activities



Change in
sleeping habits



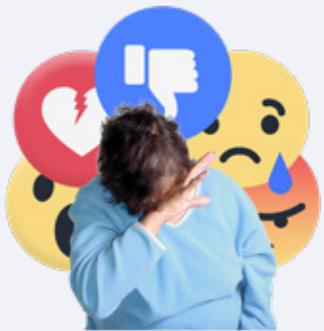
Talking or thinking about
self-harm or Suicide



5. What are self-harm triggers?



It can help to recognise **triggers**.



Triggers are situations in your daily life that can create feelings of being overwhelmed and distressed.



Understanding what your triggers are will help you to plan to manage them and get help when you need to.

Some examples of triggers are on the next 2 pages.

5. What are self-harm triggers?



Being reminded of traumatic or distressing memories



Time of year



Your past history



Social media



Work stress



Relationships with family or friends



Feeling that you are being judged



Bullying

5. What are self-harm triggers?



Comments from others which you find hurtful



For example about weight, appearance, or lifestyle



Not being listened to or heard



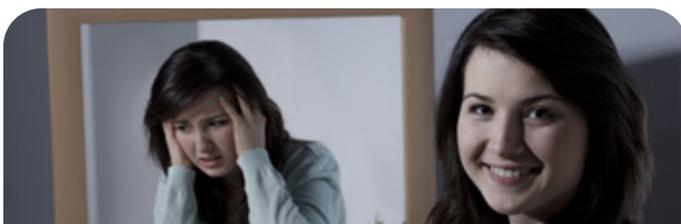
Changes to your body



Money and debt



Physical illness and pain



Mental illness



School pressure/ exams

5. What are self-harm triggers?



When you are more at risk of self-harming, consider using a safety plan.



There is one included in this booklet which may help in staying safe.



It is important to complete the safety plan when you are feeling calm.

6. Talking can help



There are no rules about who you should talk to about self-harming, or how to talk about it.



You could speak to a friend, family member, or another person you trust and who you feel comfortable with.



Remember to give yourself time and space to have this conversation.

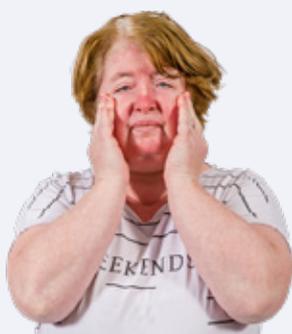
6. Talking can help



It is up to you how much you tell somebody.



If you struggle to find the words, then perhaps writing it down or sending a text message would help.



After this experience you may feel emotionally drained which is completely understandable.



7. Where can I get help?



There are many organisations who are ready to help and support you.



You can get help if you are someone who has self-harmed before or has never self harmed.



There is also support for those who are caring for others who self-harm.

7. Where can I get help?

Samaritans

The Samaritans logo, consisting of the word "SAMARITANS" in white capital letters on a green rectangular background.

If you sometimes think about self-harm, or you've already hurt yourself, Samaritans are there to listen.



When you call Samaritans they will not pressure you to do anything and they will not judge you on what you tell them.



1 in 10 calls to Samaritans is about self-harm and many people call Samaritans because they want to avoid harming themselves in that moment.



Call Samaritans on 116 123

Or for more information about self-harm visit: www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-having-difficult-time/if-you-want-self-harm/

7. Where can I get help?

SHOUT



Talking to someone at SHOUT about self-harm can help relieve difficult feelings and reduce the urge to hurt yourself.



Text 85258 to start an **anonymous**, free conversation with a trained volunteer who will listen to and support you.

They are available 24/7.



Anonymous means you will not be identified by name.



See the list of organisations at the end of the booklet for more support.



8. My safety plan



If you are self-harming and don't feel able to stop right now, it is important to keep yourself safe.



A safety plan is like an 'emotional wellbeing first-aid kit'.

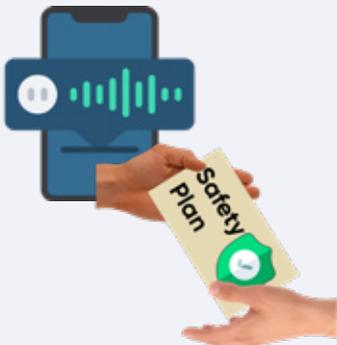


It includes different things that will help reduce the risk of self harming.

8. My safety plan



Please fill out the following information, which you can look at whenever you feel at risk from self-harm.



You may want to record yourself talking about your safety plan.

You may want to give a copy of your safety plan to someone they trust.



When I need help, I will talk to this person because I trust them: (Write in the box a person such as a parent or close friend)



I will get professional help from:

(Write in the box a name of a professional such as a doctor)

8. My safety plan



My triggers for self-harming are:

(Write in the box. For example being bullied. More examples on page 16 and 17)



Personal message of hope to myself:

(Write in the box good things to make myself feel better)



8. My safety plan



Please fill this in when you are feeling calm. (Tick the boxes you like or tick other and write your own idea)

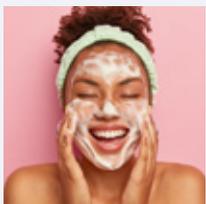
Things I need to help me stay calm:



Puzzles



**Bubbles/
balloons**



Face wash



**Toothbrush/
hair brush**



**Sour sweets/
chewing gum**



Diary



**Hot drink/
cold water**



Pet



Book



**Football/sports
equipment**

8. My safety plan



Pillow



**Stress toy,
fidget toy**



Other:

Things I can do to help me stay calm:



Walk



Ask for help



Exercise



**Phone or
message
someone**



**Breathing
exercises**



Play a game



Stretch



Listen to music

8. My safety plan



Watch tv



**Plan on how I
can help others**



**Play a musical
instrument**



**Go to a public
place /go to
a safe place**



Other:



Information

9. Helpful information and support services



We have found some helpful information and support services.

Mind



Mind Explains self-harm, including possible causes and how you can access treatment and support.

They have tips for helping yourself, and guidance for friends and family.

For more information please visit:
www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/self-harm/about-self-harm
or call 0300 123 3393

National Self Harm Network Forums



The aims of this forum are to:



- Support people who self-harm to reduce emotional distress and improve their quality of life



- Support and provide information for family and carers of people who self-harm



- Raise awareness of the needs of people who self-harm, dispel myths and combat discrimination



- Empower and enable people that self-harm to find other ways to cope with feelings



For more information please visit:
www.nshn.co.uk

Harmless



Harmless works with anyone, of any age, who self-harm or are at risk of self-harm.

What matters to us is the struggle that someone is experiencing and how we can help them to feel better and be safer.

**For more information please visit:
www.harmless.org.uk**

LifeSIGNS



LifeSIGNS is a self-harm guidance and support network who provide information about self-injury.

Whilst we never tell anyone to 'stop', we do support people as and when they choose to make changes in their lives.

**For more information please visit:
www.lifesigns.org.uk**

SUFFOLK

10. Helpful Suffolk Resources



We have found some resources which you may find helpful if you live in Suffolk.

The Source



If you think your friend might be self-harming, there are ways you can support them.



If you're using self-harm as a way to deal with your feelings, it's important that you talk to someone and seek help. The Source provides a list of services that can help.



For more information please visit:
www.thesource.me.uk/health/self-harm

10. Helpful information and support services for Suffolk

Suffolk Info Links



Information and advice about Self-harm in children and young people for parents and carers.

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk>

Wellbeing Suffolk



Wellbeing Suffolk provide support for people with common mental health and emotional issues, such as low mood, depression or stress.



We work with you to help you make the changes to improve your wellbeing and quality of life.



Our services are free and are available to people and for people of all ages.

For more information please visit:

www.wellbeingnands.co.uk

or call 0300 123 1503

First Response helpline: 0808 196 3494





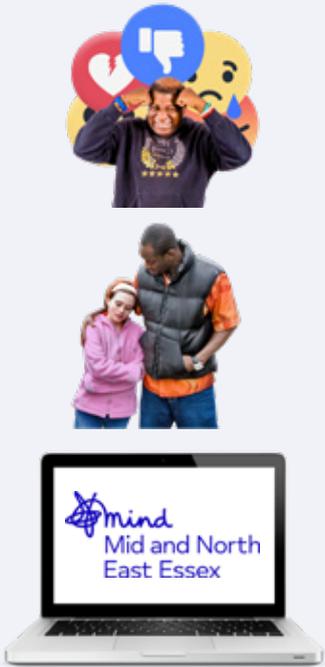
11. Helpful Essex Resources



Two men are shown talking, one holding a document. A circular inset shows a map of Essex.

We have found some resources which you may find helpful if you live in Essex.

Mid Essex Sanctuary



A person is shown with social media icons (thumbs up, thumbs down, smiley face). Below them is a family (a man, a woman, and a child). At the bottom is a laptop displaying the Mind logo (Mid and North East Essex).

The Mid Essex Sanctuary is there to support anyone experiencing a mental health crisis that does not require medical treatment.

This includes self-harm.

For more information please visit:
www.mnessexmind.org/mid-essex-sanctuary
or call 01206 764600

11. Helpful information and support services for Essex

Therapy For You



When you're experiencing mental health difficulties, you want to find help right away.



We're committed to giving you professional support quickly, when and where it's needed.



That's why we're helping people to access mental health support.

For more information please visit:
www.therapyforyou.co.uk



or call 01206 334001

This document was made in co-production with:

Experts by experience: **people with a learning disability** and **autistic people**

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Suffolk County Council

Essex County Council
