



Champs
Public Health
Collaborative



Cheshire and Merseyside



Self-harm support booklet

For parents and carers



**Easy
Read**

Easy Read



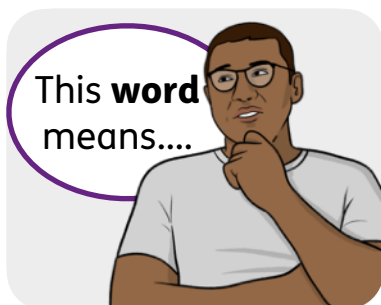
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



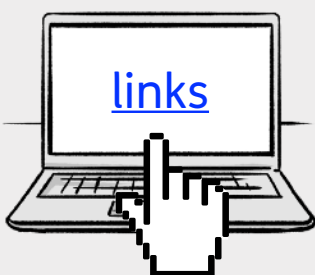
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



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 parent or carer who is worried their child is hurting themselves on purpose.

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

This booklet includes:



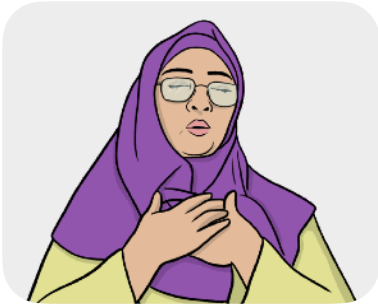
- Information about self-harm.



- Ways you can help your child manage and lower self-harming.



Your child also has a support booklet. You should go through this booklet with them.



We know it is hard to support a child who is self-harming, so take a deep breath.



They have reached out for help and this is a good start.

What is self-harm?



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



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

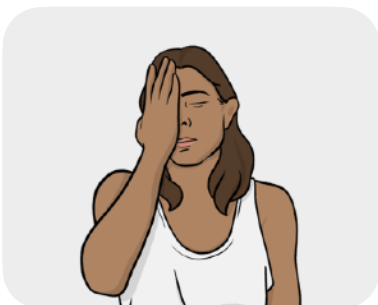
Medication is medicines, like tablets.

Why do people 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.

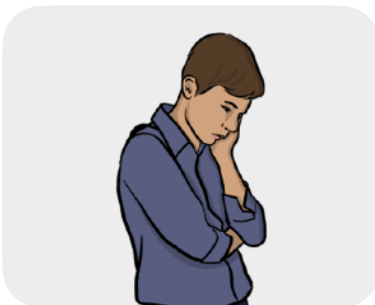


Some people say that self-harm can be a way of feeling in control of themselves.

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



- Problems at school, like bullying.



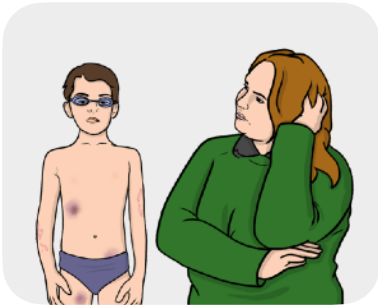
- Having a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety.



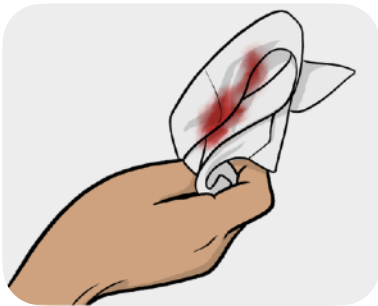
- Problems at home, like having parents who argue all the time.

How do I know if my child is self-harming?

If you are worried that your child may be self-harming, here are some signs to look out for:



- Cuts, burns or bruises on your child's skin that they cannot explain if you ask about them.



- Blood on your child's clothing or on tissues in the bin.



- You find hidden lighters or sharp objects.



- Your child does not want to talk to or spend time with friends and family.

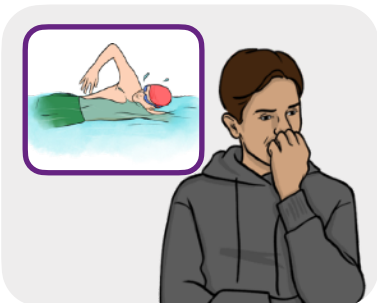
If you are worried that your child may be self-harming, here are some other signs to look out for:



- Your child seems sad or is in a bad mood all the time.



- Your child says it is their fault when problems happen or says that they are useless and fail all the time.



- Your child keeps their skin covered all the time.

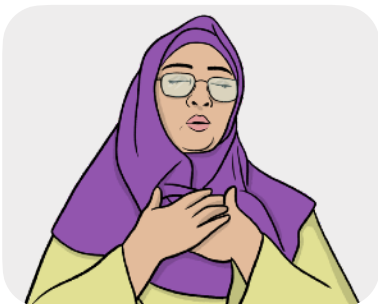
What do I say if my child tells me they are self-harming?



Knowing that your child is self-harming may make you feel lots of different emotions.



This includes anger, sadness and embarrassment.



But it is important to try and stay calm and understand your child.



Try to remember that self-harm is just a way for them to deal with hard feelings right now.

With your support, they can find other ways to deal with their hard feelings.

Make sure you tell your child:



- It was brave of them to speak to you about this and you are happy that they have reached out.



- That there is help and support for them.

What if I find out my child is self-harming?



You may have found out that your child is self-harming yourself.



Or maybe someone else told you, like a teacher.



If you find out your child is self-harming, you will need to talk to them about it.



Explain to your child that you are worried about them.



Make sure you tell them you love them and you will support them with anything.



If they do not want to talk, give them some space and tell them you are here when they are ready.

Should I be worried about suicide?



Suicide is when someone 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.

An **overdose** is when someone takes too much medication.

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.



If you are worried that your child is thinking about suicide, ask them about it.

This will not make them feel worse.



Talking about suicide lowers the chances of it happening.



For more information on how to help your child if they are thinking about suicide, you can visit:

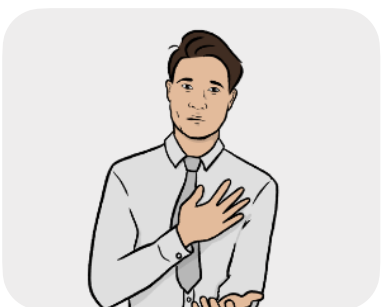
www.papyrus-uk.org

How can I help my child manage self-harming?

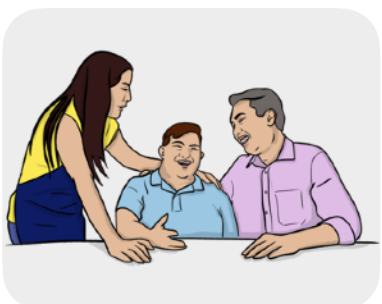
You can help your child by:



- Listening to them and showing them you care.



- Not judging them.



- Reminding them of what they are good at.



- Reminding them that you love them.

You can also help your child by:



- Helping them keep a diary about when they self-harm and why.

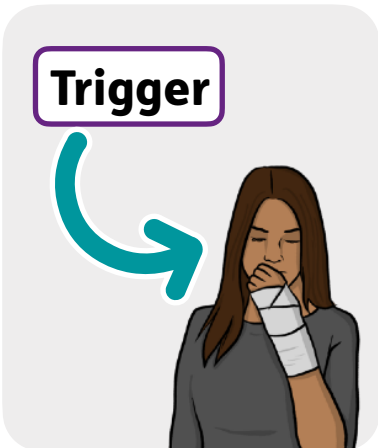
There is a diary included in their support booklet.



- Finding what support and services they can get and helping them to go to appointments.



- Making sure you have a first aid kit in your home and helping them to treat their self-harm injuries.



- Watching out for any **triggers**.

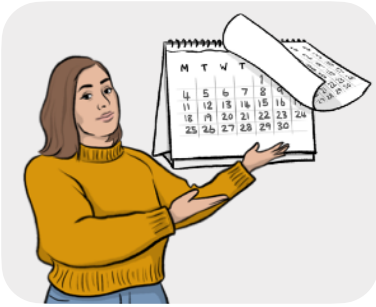
Triggers are what make you want to self-harm.

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

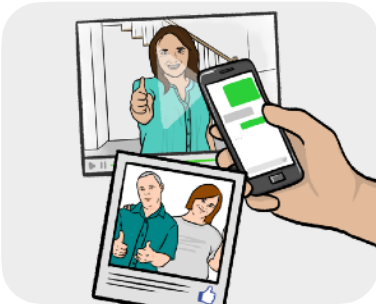


- Not treating them any differently in other areas of their life.

You can also help your child by:



- Understanding that they may not be able to stop self-harming straight away. It will take time.



- Try to make sure your child is being safe on **social media**.

Social media is websites like Instagram, X and TikTok.

What are urges?

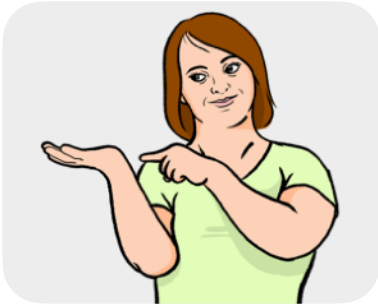


An **urge** is like a strong want to do something.

Your child feels urges to self-harm when they are dealing with hard feelings.



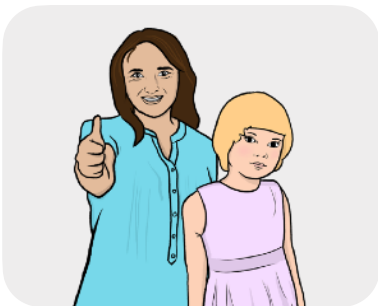
Their urges are strongest for the first 15 minutes.



An important part of managing self-harm is **distraction**.



Distracting and **distraction** are when you help your child focus on other things, instead of self-harming.



You can help them find distractions that work for them.



You can also find distractions to suggest to them here:
www.suicide-prevention-cm.co.uk

How can I help my child's self-harm injuries?



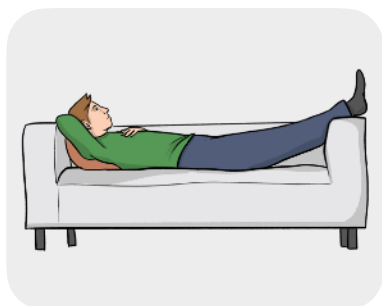
If your child has self-harmed and has an injury, here is what you should do:

Treating a cut

If your child has cut their skin, please follow these steps:



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



2. If your child feels dizzy or like they may faint, lie them down with their legs raised.



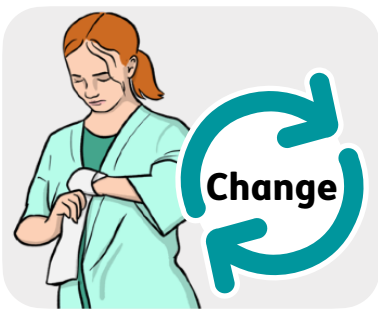
3. Gently clean the cut with cold tap water and soap.



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.

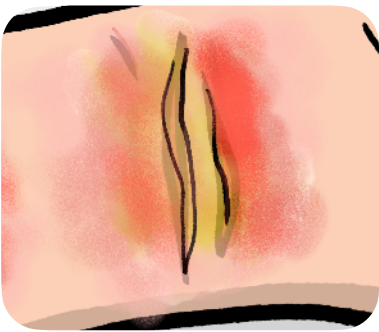
You should take your child to the hospital if:



- The cut is very deep.



- The cut keeps bleeding through the plaster or bandage.



- The cut becomes infected.

Treating a burn

If your child has burnt their 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 cling film or a bandage.



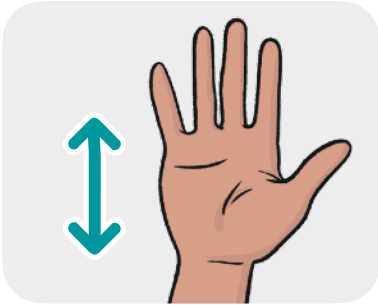
3. If there is a blister, do not burst it. Just cover it with a thick plaster or bandage.



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.

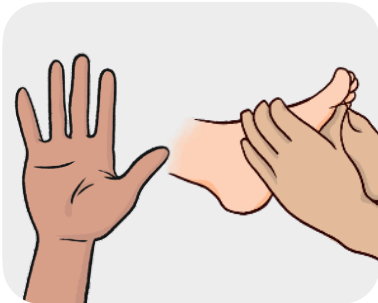
You should take your child to the hospital if:



- The blister 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 the face, hands, feet or privates.



- The burn becomes infected.

When to call 999

You should call 999 if your child:



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

- Faints or goes into shock.

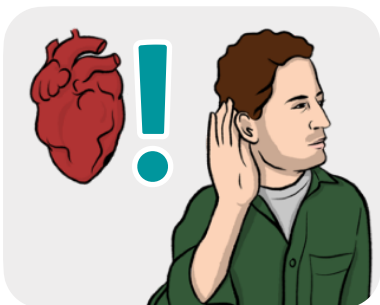
Signs of someone going into shock include:



- Going very pale.

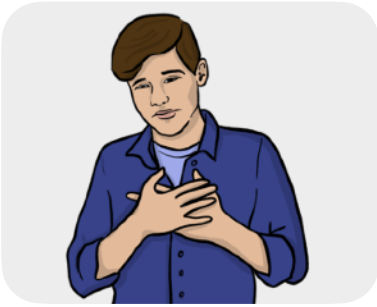


- Breathing quickly.



- A weak heartbeat.

You should also call **999** if your child:



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



- Has taken an overdose.

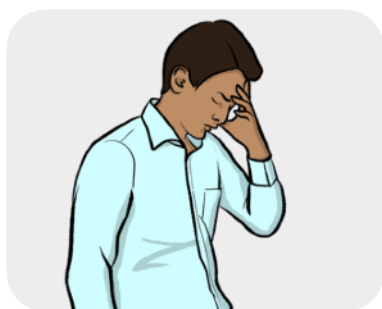


- Has an infected cut or burn and feels hot, confused or sleepy.



- Has tried to take their own life.

Looking after yourself



Supporting a child who self-harms can be upsetting, worrying and stressful.



So it is important to look after your own needs too.

Try to:



- Find time to relax and do the things that you enjoy.



- Sleep well, eat healthily and exercise.

You should also try to:



- Understand your own feelings.



- Talk to someone you trust.



- Use support groups and **helplines**.

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

Where can I get help?



If your child continues to self-harm, or their self-harm starts to become very dangerous, you should get help.

Your local GP surgery



Your local GP surgery may help you contact the right services.



If your child goes to the hospital because of self-harm injuries, a mental health professional will talk to them.



If you are not sure if this has happened, please ask a member of staff.

Emergency help



An **emergency** is when you feel your child's life is in danger.



In an emergency call **999**.



For urgent mental health advice, contact **NHS 111**.

Helplines

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



- You can talk to someone from **Hopeline UK** about suicide.

You can contact them by calling:
0800 068 4141



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

You can contact them by calling:
116 123



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

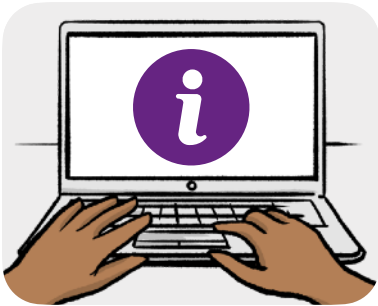
You can contact them by texting
SHOUT to: 85258



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

You can contact them by calling:
0800 1111

Websites



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

Here are some useful websites:

- www.camhs-resources.co.uk/
- www.themix.org.uk
- www.sane.org.uk
- www.youngminds.org.uk
- www.annafreud.org/resources/children-and-young-peoples-wellbeing/
- www.selfharm.co.uk
- www.minded.org.uk
- www.harmless.org.uk
- www.stem4.org.uk/
- www.kooth.com

Apps



Some apps on your phone can also give you information and advice.

Here are some good apps:

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

Making a safe plan

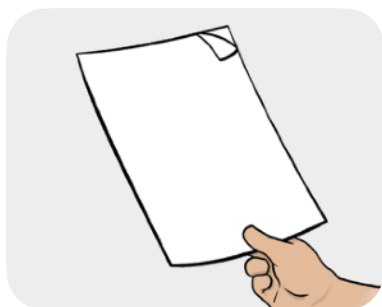


To help you manage self-harming, your child can make a **safe plan**.

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



We have made a blank safe plan for them to fill in. It is at the end of their support booklet.



Your child can tear their safe plan out of the booklet and keep it with them to fill in over time.



You can help them fill in their safe plan.



We have included a copy of the safe plan your child has in this booklet.

We have also added some space at the end for any notes you may want to make.

My safe plan

My triggers:

What I feel when I get urges:

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?

Space for your notes:

Space for your notes: