

UWE Wellbeing Service

Self-harm

Are you holding onto your feelings? Do you bottle things up? Do you find it difficult to let your feelings out/ talk to others/ express yourself? Do you injure yourself? Would you like to find support? Would you like to support yourself? Or find alternative coping strategies?

Self-harm is intentional injury or damage to your body, it can be a way to release tension or unexpressed feelings, usually because of overwhelming emotional distress.

For some people it can be a form of self-punishment, but it can also temporarily relieve a build-up of tension. The holding onto intense feelings, such as hurt, anger and frustration can lead to feelings of helplessness and then to self-hatred, which can lead to self-harm.

There may be many factors that trigger self-harm, including social factors and difficulties within relationships, social anxiety, or may be due to bullying. It can occur because of a trauma, such as a loss of a significant other – a friend or family member, or because of abuse. There may be mental health factors, such as anxiety or depression.

Often this may be in secret and hidden from others, but, whatever the triggers, talking about difficult feelings can help to find your alternative coping strategies and explore ways to let your feelings out.

Websites

- **Mind** - provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem, with useful information on self-harm <http://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/>
- **Young Minds** - the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. <http://www.youngminds.org.uk/about>
- **NHS** NTW Trust provide information booklets on a range of topics, including self-harm <http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/>

Support services

- **Bristol self-injury support group** – Bristol based community organisation running self help support groups for people who self injure as well as a variety of wellbeing workshops. www.sishbristol.org.uk
- **Self-Injury Support** - a non-judgemental, emotional support & listening service for women affected by self-injury. Includes CASS self-injury helpline Monday to Thursday 7-10pm on 0808 800 8088 and TESS text and email support Sunday to Thursday 7-9pm on 0780 047 2908 www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk
- **Off the Record** – free and confidential mental health support to people aged 11-25 and run support workshops focussing on self-harm www.otrbristol.org.uk/self-harm

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- **Life SIGNS** – information for those experiencing self-harm and those who care about them www.lifesigns.org.uk

UWE library

- Sutton J (2007) **Healing The Hurt Within: Understanding Self-Injury and Self-harm, and Heal the Emotional Wounds** [Available on shelf: 616.8582 SUT, West Wing, Glenside](#)

Further reading

- Quish, L. (2015) **Overcoming self-harm and suicidal thoughts: a practical guide for the adolescent years.**
- Gill, Sophia. (2013) **101 Distractions from Depression, Self-harm (and Other Soul Destroyers)**
- Taylor, L., Simic, M. (2015) **Cutting Down: A CBT Workbook for treating Young People who self-harm**

Apps

- **Calm Harm** – award winning free app which provides tasks that help you resist or manage the urge to self-harm www.stem4.org.uk/calmharm
- **Sam App** – a UWE-created app to help you understand and manage anxiety <http://sam-app.org.uk>
- **Smiling mind** – a unique web and app-based program, designed to help bring balance to young lives <https://smilingmind.com.au>

