

## Coping strategies and distractions

Replacing self-harm with other, safer, coping strategies can be a positive way of dealing with difficult feelings. Different things work for different people, so you may need to try a few approaches to see what works for you. Helpful strategies when you want to self-harm can include:

- Hitting pillows, cushions or bean bags and having a good scream
- Going for a walk or run, or other kinds of exercise
- Snapping an elastic band on your wrist
- Watch your favourite TV show/funny videos online
- Crying is good
- Try to be around people until the urge or feeling passes
- Talking to someone you trust
- Avoid social media that makes you feel worse/bad about yourself
- Looking at supportive websites/message a helpline
- Read a good book
- Holding an ice cube against your skin instead of cutting
- Play video games
- Wrap your usual tool in a whole roll of sticky tape so that it's difficult to access



Twitter: @SavvyKernow  
Facebook: /SavvyKernow  
Website: SavvyKernow.org.uk



*"We are all fighting our own battles and we are all strong enough to win. We just need to believe."*

## Staying safe

is an important message for someone who self-harms, so that the physical risks, such as infection, are reduced as much as possible.

This includes keeping wounds (and any tools used) clean. It is also essential to have access to a first aid kit - including antiseptic wipes and plasters.

## Support in Cornwall

**www.kooth.com** Free online support for young people in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly  
**www.mindyourway.co.uk** Mental health and wellbeing services for young people in Cornwall  
**www.savvykernow.org.uk** Friendly advice and services in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly  
**www.youthkernow.org.uk** A website for young people in Cornwall including an A-Z of services

## National support websites

**www.epicfriends.co.uk** Advice on how to help friends who are struggling to cope emotionally  
**www.thesite.org** Non-judgmental support, information, discussion boards and live chat  
**www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk** Supports girls and women affected by self harm  
**www.youngminds.org.uk** The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing  
**www.childline.org.uk** Advice, info and help online or by telephone 0800 1111  
**www.lifesigns.org.uk** User-led information and support for people who self-harm  
**www.samaritans.org** 08457 90 90 90 Telephone support for anyone who needs to talk

## Apps

**www.docready.org** Docready helps you get ready for the first time you visit a doctor to discuss your mental health  
**www.thesite.org/apps-and-tools/stressheads** Stressheads is an app to help you deal with all kinds of life stress  
**www.headspace.com** meditation app for mindfulness techniques  
**www.inhand.org.uk** a mental wellbeing app designed by young people for young people

## Get help now

**In an emergency, dial 999. You can also call your GP out of hours service or go to A & E**

*"Self-harm doesn't mean I'm weak, it means I'm hurting."*



## Self-Harm

**What to do if you are worried about self-harm. Information for young people.**



*"You are NEVER alone. It may be hard to tell someone but then at least you know that someone is there for you."*

*Quote by a young person to offer support to other young people who are self-harming*

## What is Self-Harm?

Self-harm is where someone does something to deliberately hurt themselves when they find things difficult to cope with. It can include things like:

- Cutting
- Overdosing (self-poisoning)
- Hitting (self and others)
- Burning or scalding
- Picking or scratching skin
- Pulling hair
- Ingesting toxic substances (like bleach)
- Eating disorders

## Who does it?

There is not one type of person who self-harms. It does not depend on sex, age, religion or background. Both sexes self-harm, but their methods may be different, for example males may engage in behaviours such as fighting. **Both adults and young people can self-harm.** LGBTQ young people, those who have been abused or witnessed Domestic Violence, have been in care/adopted, identify as emo, been bullied or experienced parental substance misuse are potentially more at risk of self-harm or other mental health concerns.

## Why do they do it?

People self-harm for a number of reasons. Something might have happened to make them feel bad about things. This could be stress or anxiety, friendship or relationship difficulties, isolation or loneliness, low self-esteem, questioning sexuality or gender. **But often there is no known cause or trigger.**

## Someone has told me they are hurting themselves; what should I do?

### Do

- Offer your friend a kind smile or hug, and ask "what can I do to help?"
- Listen to your friend
- React calmly and be reassuring and supportive
- Let your friend know they aren't alone
- Encourage them to ask for help from an adult, and look up ideas for support and information online together
- Ensure they get medical attention if this is needed
- Make sure you find someone to talk to who can support you

### Don't

- Be judgmental
- Be dismissive of their problems
- Tell them to stop
- Panic
- Feel it is your responsibility to make things better
- Promise to keep this a secret—if you feel your friend is unsafe, tell a trusted adult. This is to keep your friend safe so they can get the help they need

*"Stop. Count to ten. Share your feelings with someone you trust when you are ready."*

## Social media & websites

There are some really good websites that have information and advice about self-harm and coping strategies. But there are some sites and social media that can be dangerous. They can put people who self-harm, or those who are thinking about it, at risk. Only use safe sites, like those recommended in this leaflet. If a site makes you feel uncomfortable in any way, it's best to close it straight away.



*"There's no shame in seeking help - it's better to talk to someone instead of keeping it all inside."*

## Getting help - it's good to talk!

Although people who self-harm often find it difficult to tell others, **many say that they would like to get help and that talking about it would be a good starting point.**

The support of someone who understands and will listen can be very helpful in facing difficult feelings, and the reasons **behind them.**

**At home** you may be able to talk to parents or carers, or another trusted family member.

**Sometimes talking to people at home can be difficult**, but there are plenty of people to talk to who might be the first step towards getting help and support.

- **In school or college** A teacher/tutor, learning mentor, teaching assistant or other trusted adult. Some schools/colleges have counselling or drop-in centres and school nurse drop-in sessions.
- **Outside school** Youth workers, sports coaches, Guides / Scouts leaders and church leaders can all be good people to talk to, to get help.
- **GP** Going to see a GP or practice nurse can be a really useful way of getting advice and support. You can prepare yourself for what to expect at an appointment by going to **www.docready.org**
- **Websites/helplines** If a person who is self-harming is reluctant to tell someone face-to-face, they can get help and advice from a helpline or website. See our list of safe contacts on the back of this leaflet.
- **Go to [www.SavvyKernow.org.uk](http://www.SavvyKernow.org.uk) for a list of Young People Friendly services in Cornwall**