

Self-Harm

Self-harm is a behaviour not an illness. It is not attention seeking as it is often secretive and done in private.

Self-harm is a means of communication. To communicate feelings of distress, give relief to emotional pain and tension, regain feelings of control or as a self-punishment.

Self-harm behaviour occurs in various forms such as cutting, burning, hair pulling, risk taking, addictions.

We all engage in self-harming behaviour to some extent – smoking, eating unhealthily, drinking alcohol, risk taking behaviour at what point does it become a problem?

About 1 in 10 young people have self-harmed

It's more common in veterans, young people, women, LGBT community, asylum seekers and those who have been abused

People who self-harm, for 15 years or more are 50 times more likely to die by suicide (MHFA England)

A supportive response demonstrating respect and understanding of the child or young person, along with a non-judgmental stance, are of prime importance. Note also that a child or young person who has a learning disability may find it more difficult to express their thoughts.

If you are concerned about a cadet then you should follow the Safeguarding Referral Process and speak with the unit or force safeguarding lead. A risk assessment should also consider the fact that a young person has previously self-harmed and put in place mitigations for it happening again and guidance for what action should be taken where it to happen again.

For more information please contact the [National Safeguarding Manger](#) who is also a trainer in youth mental health first aid and will be able to provide more guidance and information.

Useful Resources

National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk
Harmless: www.harmless.org.uk
Selfharmuk: www.selfharm.co.uk

Useful Apps

Calm Harm:

Aims to help young people resist the urge to self-harm by using four task categories which reflect the reasons why many people choose to self-harm: distract, comfort, express or release.

Self-Heal:

Help users resist the urge to self-harm. Also uses an image library for distraction and to promote recovery.