



SELF-HARM

What is Self-Harm?

Self-harm is when we choose to inflict pain on ourselves in some way. It is usually a sign that something is wrong and can act as a 'release' for people when they are suffering emotionally. Self-harming behaviours include:

- self-injuring – cutting, burning, scratching, bruising and pulling hair out
- developing an eating disorder
- drinking or taking drugs excessively
- taking risks with sexual health and choice of sexual partners
- taking overdoses

What causes self-harming?

Self-harm is often found to be a symptom of other underlying issues. There are many reasons why people may choose to adopt self-harming behaviours:

- if we suffer from anxiety
- depression
- feeling unsupported in life
- being bullied
- as tension relief during stressful times or following a traumatic event
- to punish ourselves in some way
- as an expression of hidden emotions
- in severe cases, self-harming could be a suicide attempt

Self-harming can be misinterpreted by many as a 'cry for help' or attention-seeking, and whilst this could be true of some behaviours, often it is a deeply private act for many people, and one which we might feel intense shame and embarrassment about. We may hide self-injury marks from others and hold a deep-seated fear of 'being found out'



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Getting Help

Self-harming has the potential to be very dangerous as some harming and injury behaviours, such as cutting, strangling and taking overdoses can lead to us killing ourselves, even if accidentally. We might actually view self-harming as a survival technique to help us when things get bad and have no desire to end our lives through it, but accidental death can and does occur in these situations. Sometimes harming behaviours can overtake us too, so that we have little control over them in the end – things like eating disorders and excessive drink and drug abuse can put us in genuine physical peril and have huge health implications for our futures. This is one of the reasons why it is so important to get help if we find ourselves in a pattern of self-harming.

Self-harming is only ever really a temporary release from what is at the root of our problems. Key to regaining our control and phasing out these dangerous acts is addressing the underlying problems that were causing us to harm in the first place.

How can Listnheal.me help?

Counselling can be a supportive space for anyone struggling with self-harm. It offers a confidential, non-judgmental environment to explore the emotions and experiences that may be driving these behaviours. Together, we gently uncover what self-harm might be communicating—whether it's a response to overwhelming feelings, a way to cope with distress, or a signal of deeper pain. Through trauma-informed approaches and tools for emotional regulation, counselling can help you find safer ways to manage difficult emotions, build self-understanding, and move toward healing with compassion and care.