



Brayton Academy

Self-Harm



What is self-harm?

Self-harm is when someone hurts themselves on purpose as a way of trying to manage distressing or overwhelming feelings and experiences. Someone who is self-harming might be dealing with lots of intense thoughts and feelings, and hurting themselves may feel like the only way to cope. Or, they might feel numb and hurt themselves in order to feel something. While it often feels like self-harm brings some relief in the moment, this is only temporary. As feelings build up again, so does the urge to self-harm. As this cycle continues over time, a young person may start to feel ashamed, confused or frightened about the fact that they're self-harming – increasing the load they're carrying on top of what they're already going through. This can become a cycle that's hard to break, and a habit that's hard to stop.

Top tips to avoid self-harm

- Try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member, trained volunteer or health professional. You could contact [Samaritans](#), by calling 116 123 or text 'SHOUT' to 85258 [Shout: the UK's free, confidential and 24/7 mental health text service for crisis support | Shout 85258 \(giveusashout.org\)](#) if you need someone to talk to.
- Try working out if feeling a certain way leads to your self-harm – for example, when you're feeling sad or anxious you could try expressing that emotion in a safer way.
- Try waiting before you consider self-harm – distract yourself by going out for a walk, listening to music, watching your favourite TV show or film, or doing something else harmless that interests you; the need to self-harm may begin to pass over time
- Try [calming breathing exercises](#) or other things you find relaxing to reduce feelings of anxiety
- Write down your feelings – no one else needs to see it
- Make yourself a self-soothe box to use when you are feeling distressed. This is a healthier way to manage your emotions. [How to Make a Self-Soothe Box | Young Person Blog | YoungMinds](#)
- If you struggle with suicidal thoughts, it may help to make a safety plan to use if you need it – the [Staying Safe website](#) has a guide on how to make a safety plan
- Search and download the Calm Harm app. [Home - Calm Harm App \(stem4.org.uk\)](#) This gives you easy, quick and discreet distraction techniques to help you manage and resist the urges to self-harm.