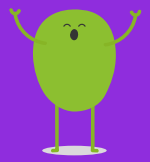
“What I’m trying to say really is don’t stop trying, even if things are bad right now: please find someone who you trust and talk to them about it.”

“I used to wish that I didn’t have my scars or mental health problems, but now I’ve learnt to live with them, they are a part of me and make me who I am. I’m not ashamed of any of it.”

“Things will get better, I promise, and there are people there for you in the light and in the darkest of times. So talk to people and get help.”



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USEFUL CONTACTS

SHOUT

Free, confidential, anonymous text support service.

Text ‘SHOUT’ to 85258 (24/7)

Website: www.giveusashout.org

The Mix

Information and support for under 25s.

Helpline: 0808 808 4994 (Every day, 4pm – 11pm)

Website: www.themix.org.uk

National Self Harm Network (NSHN)

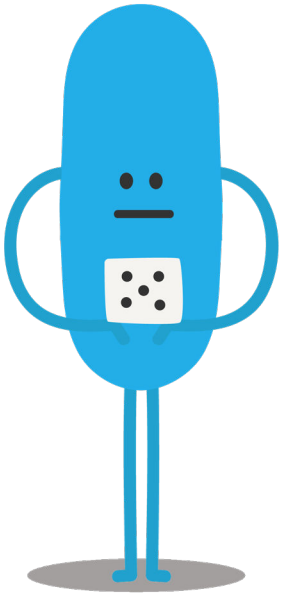
Support forum.

Website: www.nshn.co.uk

stem4
51 St George’s Road
Wimbledon, London SW19 4EA
e: info@stem4.org.uk
@stem4org
stem4.org.uk

stem4
supporting teenage mental health
Registered Charity No. 1144506

SELF-HARM



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SELF-HARM

Key facts:

Self-harm can:

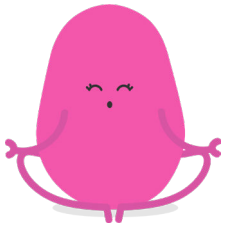
- be used to communicate feelings such as distress, confusion, or anger;
- occur with a mental illness such as depression;
- become habitual in an unhealthy way.

Why deal with self-harm?

Most people self-harm as a way of coping with problems. However, this generally doesn't work because the solution is short-term and the problems don't go away. Self-harm as a behaviour also brings up difficult emotions, such as feeling ashamed or different, which could make you feel worse. It can become a habit that's hard to break and carries a risk of wound infection and can lead to permanent scars. It is very important to know how to look after your injuries and to have access to first aid, including emergency contact numbers.

What can I try to do?

- Discuss your self-harm with a trusted adult or friend and set up a meeting with a professional who can help.
- Try and keep a diary of triggers to your self-harm so that you can begin to understand the patterns.
- Decide on an alternative way you could try and cope when faced with these triggers (e.g., listen to a specific playlist).
- Reduce easy access to what you use to self-harm.
- Have the name of a 'go-to' person in the first instance, as well as the names of a few people you could contact as your safety net. Carry this list of contact numbers with you.
- Keep cuts and wounds sterile. If in any doubt about safety, please tell someone, see your school nurse / first aider or your GP, or go to your nearest A&E department.
- You can sometimes experience shock after self-harm. If your breathing is shallow or speeding up, or if you feel dizzy, weak, or cold, ask someone to look after you.
- Visit your GP by phoning your local practice and booking an appointment (check if you can book it with their mental health lead). Go ready to discuss your concerns and the problems you are experiencing. Write things down if you think you will find it hard to speak. If you have a lot to discuss, book a double appointment.



Calm Harm

Try the stem4 Calm Harm app. This is not a substitute for treatment but it can help to break the pattern whilst you wait for treatment or alongside treatment.

Calm Harm is the first clinician-developed app to help manage self-harm.

Calm Harm follows the principles of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT).

It is FREE to download from the Apple Store and Google Play.

Available on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

> "It's great! I honestly didn't think this would work, but after trying it, my urge to self-harm started to decrease. And in all seriousness, the app isn't the only thing that helped me. When I saw how many downloads there were on this app, I immediately didn't feel as alone. This app has helped me so much and I'm glad I got it."

Asking for help

stem4 has an Asking for help booklet available on our Resources page www.stem4.org.uk/resources