

Lets speak out!

Here is your chance to tell the story of your experiences of self harm. Please give as much detail as possible – your story will be used to produce a book to show people that don't self harm, what it is like, and also to let people who do self harm, know that they are not alone and recovery is possible. We want to get together a range of people's experiences of life, and emotions and self harm. We recognise that self harm is a symptom of other difficulties and experiences in people's lives and we want to hear about your life. We have written a number of questions to help guide your personal account. You can use the questions as prompts to explore your experience of self harm or you can write about specific or one-off experiences and use other means, such as poetry, to express yourself. Please feel free to add information that we haven't covered in these questions. Be creative! We would also like to hear from people who have left self harm behind, about how life is different for them. Personal stories can look at the experiences that led to distress, or those that led them from distress.

If you do use the questions to help you explore your story please answer these questions in full sentences in your story.

For example:

My name is Joe Bloggs, I'm 23 years old, I live in Little Village, Anytown. I have self harmed since I was 13.

Please feel free to add information that we haven't covered in these questions.

NOT

Joe Bloggs, 23, Anytown, 13.

As space will be an issue we may have to cut bits out in order to fit it into the book, but we would contact you first and consult you about any edits.

Please write it as if you are writing a story – because you are: you're writing your story. We cannot guarantee that we will use every story in our work, but please send it to us (by email or post) for your work to be considered you must include your full name, address and an email address if you have one– this is so that we can forward you the relevant copyright permission form prior to publication.

We will only use the name you specify for use in the book (and you can change this, use a nickname etc if you so wish); name and address details will be used for reference only and be kept confidential.

We really look forward to hearing from you. Hopefully together we can really make a difference to how people understand self harm, and reduce the isolation faced by so many people who self harm that feel alone.

Everybody who's story gets published will receive a free copy of the book.

Lets speak out!

- What is the name that you would like us to use in the book?
- How old are you? (Please be honest about this)
- Where are you from, be as specific as you can (for example Clifton, Nottingham)?
- What age did you start self harming?
- What age did you stop (if applicable)?
- Do/did you self harm regularly, how regularly (i.e. weekly, daily etc)?
- How did/do you self harm?
- Does/Did anyone know about your self harm?
- How did they find out? What was their reaction?
- Why did you tell this person/people? (If you did)
- How did you feel when they found out? (If they did)
- What was the cause of your self harm I the first place?
- Tell us about the first time you harmed yourself – please don't go into graphic detail as it won't be included, we want to know about your feelings.
- Do/did you have any support? What, from who?
- If you don't, what support would you like?
- What feelings or events make you self harm?
- Do you recognise before hand that you are going to self harm? If so can you describe how this feels?
- Why do you self harm? What feelings drive your self harm? (this may be very different from original cause)
- What helps? (i.e. distractions, support etc)
- If you have ever needed medical treatment for your self harm, what was your experiences of treatment by health professionals?
- Have you had good treatment – if so – what did the people do that helped and made a difference?
- Have you had bad treatment – if so – what did the people do that was unhelpful? How did that make you feel, and what was the long term impact?
- If you have ever needed to see mental health professionals, what are your experiences of them? (This might be a Community Mental Health worker, Community Psychiatric Nurse, or a psychiatrist)
- Have you ever access any other support for your difficulties, such as helpline, counselling, support groups? Please tell us about your experience of this.
- Do you think you will recover?
- What will help you recover?
- Or have you already recovered?
- What changed, and what is life like now?
- What enabled recovery?
- Was there a definite turning point?
- Has Harmless helped you? How?
- Anything else you want to say?