

## Worried about someone?

This leaflet is designed for friends and family supporting someone who self harms or feels suicidal. You may feel helpless, unsure or confused about self harm or suicide. This leaflet aims to give some general information and advice.

## What is self harm?

Self harm is the term used to describe when someone hurts themselves as a way of coping with their emotions. This may include cutting, burning, bruising, taking overdoses, and hair pulling. This is not an exhaustive list, and many of us take part in self harmful behaviour at times of stress (for example increased drinking or smoking).

People may feel calmer and more in control after self harming, it may act as a release from a build up of difficult feelings, or may act as a way of expressing anger through self-punishment. Sometimes people find it easier to care for physical pain than emotional pain so having a physical injury helps them care for themselves and outwardly express how they are feeling.

## How is it different to suicide?

Self harm is a coping strategy – it is way of surviving and managing emotional pain and stress, which may include managing suicidal feelings. Sometimes people who self harm may also feel suicidal and attempt to take their own lives, however the two are very different and it is important not to make assumptions – be open to talking about the difference with the person you are supporting.

## What is suicide?

Suicide is a decision that someone makes to end their life when they feel overwhelmed by their circumstances. They may feel that what they are facing is too much to cope with and that they have no other option.

With the right help at the right time, people can overcome their difficulties. Suicide is final and there is no going back.

Suicide leaves behind devastation and affects not only friends and family but wider communities.

## Why do people feel suicidal?

Suicidal thoughts can come into someone's head for a number of reasons, and often it can be a mixture of different things. This may be because they have had a difficult time, or because they are feeling down. People describe feeling a range of emotions that might include:

- Depressed
- Anxious
- Hopeless
- Confused
- Useless

Sometimes people may be unsure what has caused suicidal thoughts and feelings; this can feel frightening and difficult to understand.

Often you may hear that your friend/family member can't see a way forwards or feels hopeless about the future and believes that no-one cares about them. It may be hard to hear that they feel this way or understand it, but it is important to accept that they do and that feeling this way is having a profound effect on them.

**Although the suicidal feelings may be very strong, we believe it is possible to get through them with support. Many people feel suicidal at some time in their life and are able to recover and move forward.**

## What can I do to help?

- Be alert to signs that someone is struggling to cope. They may seem withdrawn and low, may not be taking care of themselves, and may talk about not seeing a point in living or feeling useless.
- If your friend/family member has recently been bereaved by suicide they may be more vulnerable to suicide themselves. Be open to asking how they are and offering a listening ear.
- Encourage the person you are concerned about to get some help – no matter how big or small they think the problems are, it is okay to ask for help. There are contact details on the back of this leaflet.
- It can feel overwhelming and frightening supporting someone who is self harming or feeling suicidal. Be sure to take good care of yourself and get support if you need it.
- Many people who self harm or feel suicidal feel ashamed and isolated. Being open to talking about difficult feelings, without judging or putting them down is a really important part of supporting.
- Remain hopeful and positive at all time.

## Information and Support

### The Tomorrow Project

[www.tomorrowproject.org.uk](http://www.tomorrowproject.org.uk)

**07594 008 356** (text or enquiries, not available 24 hours)

### SMART Helpline (Nottingham)

Confidential helpline service

**0800 561 0072**

### YoungMinds Parents Helpline

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

**0808 802 55 44** (9.30am -4pm weekdays)

### CALM

[www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)

**0800 58 58 58** (5pm to midnight, for men of all ages)

### ChildLine

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**0800 1111** (24 hours, up to 19 years old)

### HopeLine

[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

**0800 068 41 41** (10am-5pm, 5pm-7pm weekdays, 2-5pm weekends, up to 35 years old)

### Samaritans

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**08457 90 90 90** (24 hours)



## SUPPORTING SOMEONE WHO SELF HARMS OR FEELS SUICIDAL.

**Email:** [tomorrow@harmless.org.uk](mailto:tomorrow@harmless.org.uk)

**Visit:** [www.tomorrowproject.org.uk](http://www.tomorrowproject.org.uk)

**Call:** 07594 008 356

No matter how big or small you think your problems are, don't be afraid to ask for help.

 Harmless  @HarmlessUK

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TOMORROW  
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