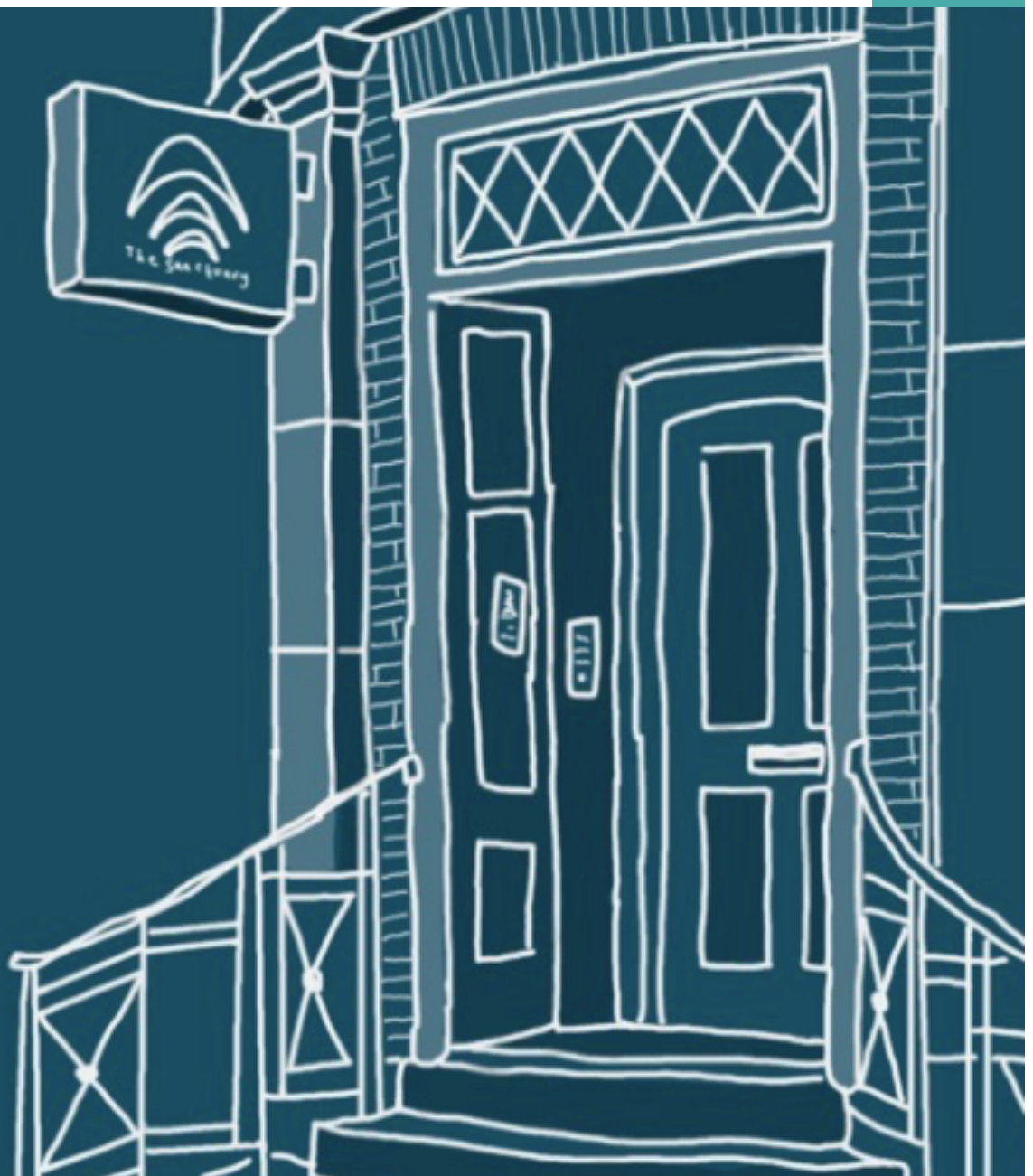


The interplay between self-harm  
and suicidality in young adults over  
time: a multi-method study.





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## Background to the study and what we did

We explored the interplay between self-harm and suicidality using existing data from Harmless on self-harm and suicidality. This existing quantitative data highlighted an individual's self-harm frequency and severity as well as their suicidal thinking and planning at different time points throughout their support at Harmless. We wanted to explore how individuals that have received support from Harmless understand their own experience of self-harm and suicidality. We did this by conducting remote semi-structured interviews (using Zoom) to generate qualitative data. Participants included young adults who had received support for self-harm and/or suicidality at Harmless. This qualitative data was then integrated with the quantitative data to inform the findings of the interplay between self-harm and suicidality. We wanted to explore the interplay between self-harm and suicidality in order to understand further the mechanism behind suicidality. Research exploring this can aid treatment adaptation and suicide prevention strategies.

## Key Findings

We found that the interplay between self-harm and suicidality is complex with important links between self-harm frequency and suicidal thinking. Over time self-harm ceases to be an effective coping strategy and may progress in severity, resulting in suicidality. Self-harm is thought to serve an immediate function for individuals, whereas suicidality provides a longer-term safety net. Focus should be placed on this function and interplay in therapeutic settings. The current study also provided unique implications for conducting remote research.