



Cumbria, Northumberland,  
Tyne and Wear  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Self-Harm

Easy read information



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**A member of staff or a carer can support you to read this booklet. They will be able to answer any questions that you have.**

## **About this leaflet**

- This leaflet is for anyone who does things to hurt themselves on purpose.
- It is for families and carers of people who hurt themselves on purpose.
- This leaflet will help you understand why people hurt themselves and where you can get help.

## **What is self-harm?**



Some people hurt themselves on purpose by:

- Cutting
- Burning their body
- Swallowing objects
- Taking too many tablets
- Pulling out their hair
- Punching or biting themselves



For some people, hurting themselves helps them deal with bad thoughts and feelings.

## Why do people hurt themselves?



It's different for everyone, but these are some of the reasons why:

- To try and cope with difficult thoughts and feelings.
- To let other people know how you are.
- To get people to listen.
- To punish other people by hurting your own body.



Any kind of self-harm can be very dangerous like taking too many tablets. If you feel like this you should talk to someone straight away.

## Why do people want to stop?



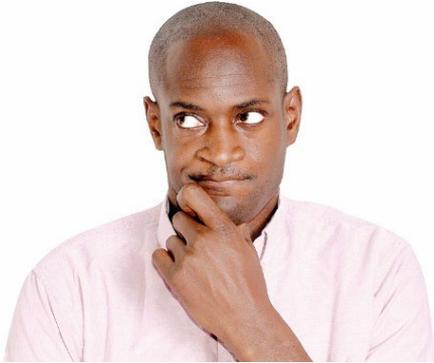
There are lots of reasons to stop hurting yourself:

- It hurts.
- If a cut or burn gets infected, it is really painful.
- Hurting yourself reminds you of what you are trying to get away from.
- People treat you in a different way if you have lots of scars.
- It upsets people you are close to.



It can be useful to write down **your** reasons for wanting to stop.

## What can help?



Talk to your healthcare worker if you want to stop hurting yourself.

Keep a diary about your feelings and why you self-harm.

If you know what happens to make you hurt yourself, you can try to work out how to change things.

Doing something different can help take your mind off hurting yourself.

You could:

- Spend time with family or friends.
- Do some exercise – go for a walk.
- Distract yourself – draw a picture.
- Do something nice for yourself – go shopping.
- Try to relax – listen to some music, watch TV, read a magazine.
- Stay away from things you might use to hurt yourself.
- Talk to someone about how you are feeling.



## What if this doesn't work and you feel like you have to hurt yourself?



Sometimes the feeling that you need to hurt yourself is too strong and nothing you do will make it go away.



You could make a list of the reasons why you want to keep hurting yourself and a list of reasons to stop.

If this happens to you, try these things:



- Try a less painful way of hurting yourself – try nipping yourself instead of cutting.

- Think about the scars that cutting yourself leaves on your skin. Try not to cut deep into your skin.



- Make sure you know how to keep cuts and burns clean.

## Where can I get help?

These organisations can give you help and advice:



**SAMARITANS**

### **Samaritans**

Support for people in a crisis.

Telephone: 116 123

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

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



### **Mind Infoline**

Help, information and support.

Telephone: 0300 123 3393

Email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

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



### **Rethink**

Information and help for anyone who has mental health problems.

Advice Service: 0808 801 0525

Email: [advice@rethink.org](mailto:advice@rethink.org)

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

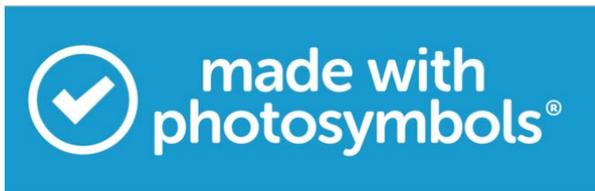


Mental Health  
Foundation

### **The Mental Health Foundation**

Mental health resources and information.

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



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[www.cntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp](http://www.cntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp)

Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the Patient Information Centre. If you would like to tell us what you think about this leaflet please get in touch.

This information can be made available in a range of formats on request (eg Braille, audio, large print, BSL or other languages). Please contact the Patient Information Centre Tel: 0191 246 7288

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