

SELF-HARM

The term “self-harm” is used to describe what people do when they deliberately hurt or injure themselves, often as a way of coping with difficult or painful feelings. Self-harm can take many forms, including cutting, burning or punching the body or picking skin or sores. These actions may provide temporary relief, but they don’t do anything to solve the problem that’s causing the feelings.

There are many reasons why people self-harm. In some instances, it can be as a result of an anxiety disorder or depression. Self-harming can also occur in a number of other circumstances. In any situation, self-harm is a serious matter and people who self-harm should seek help and support from someone they trust.

GETTING HELP

If you are experiencing depression or anxiety and/or you are deliberately harming yourself, it’s important that you seek help. It may take time, but it is possible to get help and you don’t have to try to deal with it on your own.

Speaking to someone about your self-harm may be hard. If there’s a family member you feel comfortable telling, it’s likely that this person will already be worried

about you and will be relieved at having the opportunity to listen and help. They can also support you to find your way to treatment.

If you don’t get a positive response, try to remember that it’s not because you’ve done something wrong, but because the person you’ve told may not understand much about deliberate self-harm and may not know how to respond.

You could also talk to a General Practitioner (GP). You may need the help and support of a psychologist or psychiatrist, especially if you also have depression or anxiety. Like any relationship, building trust with a counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist may take time and it helps if you can find someone you feel comfortable with. This may mean seeing several people before finding the one that you click with.

If talking about it with someone face-to-face is too overwhelming, a first step might be to talk to Lifeline (13 11 14) or Kids Help Line (1800 55 1800) – both of which are anonymous 24-hour telephone counselling lines.

If you, or someone you know, are self-harming, it’s important to take care of the injuries caused and if necessary, seek medical help through a GP or hospital emergency department.

Remember, if you or a friend need urgent assistance, consult a doctor, the emergency department of your local hospital or a mental health professional (like a psychologist or counsellor).

For more information about self-harm, please visit www.reachout.com



The best place to start is to talk to people you trust about what is happening to you and to discuss with them some ways of seeking help.

Visit: www.youthbeyondblue.com

Info line: **1300 22 4636** Email: infoline@beyondblue.org.au

beyondblue: the national depression initiative

