



TALK TO US

OFF  
THE **RECORD**



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*The hurt makes things  
seem a lot better*

# SELF HARM

WHAT IS SELF HARM?

ARE YOU SELF HARMING?

CAUSES

MANAGING DIFFICULT FEELINGS

## WHAT IS SELF HARM?

Self-harm or self-injury is when someone hurts themselves intentionally as a means of expressing, releasing or coping with intense feelings.

Self-harming can take on many forms, not just cutting but also scratching, bruising, burning, scalding, inserting objects into the body, pulling hair out (trichotillomania) or taking an overdose. By self-harming it can feel like these feelings are more manageable for a while, but the release or the escape is only short term.

*The lines around my wrist help me remember that I exist*

## ARE YOU SELF HARMING?

If you are self-harming then you might have hurt yourself a few times, or you might be self-harming on a regular basis. You might find you have done the following:

- Self-inflicted cuts, scratches, bruises or other wounds
- Wearing long sleeves or long pants, even in hot weather to hide wounds
- Claiming to have frequent accidents or mishaps
- Spending a great deal of time alone
- Carving words or symbols on the skin

If you think that someone close to you might be self-harming, the physical signs might be harder to identify. People who self harm are likely to hide marks – self harming is a very private act and people are usually reluctant to talk about it or be questioned about it, even if you are coming from a place of care or concern.

## CAUSES

*I need to hide these scars*

The reason people self-harm are often complex, very personal and often feel deeply private. However, some things make people more likely to self-harm:

- Physical illness
- Struggling to cope with feelings
- Experiences dating back to childhood
- Bereavement
- Family problems
- Other life-changing events

## WE CAN HELP YOU MANAGE DIFFICULT FEELINGS

There are many reasons why people may self-harm. It may be a matter of pushing emotional pain into a physical outlet. It may be a way of expressing hidden feelings. In order to address the cause for self-harming it is important to identify where the distress and painful feelings are coming from, perhaps you started self-harming because there has been something going on in your life that you're struggling to cope with. Regardless of the cause, if you or someone close to you is self-harming, it is important to know that sometimes self-harming is a survival technique, a way of releasing or controlling emotions that may otherwise leave someone feeling worse. When the self-harming and emotional distress persists, it is important to try and get help. It can be hard to give up self-harming behaviours and people who self-harm might need support whilst trying to find other means of coping and that's exactly how we can help you. Give us a call and we can help you find other ways to cope with difficult feelings.