

HELPFUL NOTES FOR PARENTS

The first and most important thing to remember is that you are not alone.

Self harm occurs across ALL social groups and there are no reported differences with regard to ethnicity. It is more common in young women than men.

Self Harm or self injurious behaviour can show itself in many forms including:

- Cutting
- Hitting/punching
- Burning
- Overdosing
- Interfering with wound healing
- Pinching
- Biting
- Jumping
- Banging their head against a wall
- Hair or teeth pulling
- Extreme nail biting
- Self piercing
- Extreme risk taking

As a parent we often feel to blame or responsible for this behaviour in our children. But why?

It is natural for a parent to see their child grow into a healthy adult. Any threats to your child along the way you will have a primal urge to 'fix' for your child so they can grow up the way nature intended. You would automatically get angry and blame the person or situation that is upsetting your child. When the threat occurs actually from your child themselves e.g. THEY are hurting themselves, where do you focus that anger and blame? A lot of the time it goes back onto yourself. It is NOT your fault though.

Why asking or telling a young person to stop might not work.....

Think about a train. You and your son or daughter are both on this train but they are in the driving seat. You are a passenger. They will decide when to end the journey and all you can do is stay with them.

Self harm is a release, a coping strategy, a way to get control over life, a form of communication, an attempt to feel (If you have otherwise been numb to emotions), or a way to avoid. The reason **why** needs to be addressed more than the behaviour.

Young people are motivated by emotions and impulsivity they have no 'stop' button as an adult has.

- An incident (e.g. Argument with someone) will lead to...
- Anxiety in the young person leading to...
- Self harm which gives...
- Momentary relief that changes to... (Young person most able to communicate)
- Guilt

Try not to feed this guilt by asking a child to stop. Remember you know your child best though. There is never a 'one size' fits all category. You will have very different feelings from your child going

through you during the process mentioned above. You will often still be feeling angry and/or upset when your child is feeling that momentary relief.

Helpful websites and contacts (Some are for parents some for the young people)

Your GP

School – Inclusion workers, Pastoral care team, Family support, Student support, Youth workers
(Every school is slightly different)

Samaritans - www.samaritans.org - Helpline 08457 909090

Centre 33 - www.centre33.org.uk - 01223 316 488

Cogwheel Trust - www.cogwheel.org.uk - 01223 464385

Caudwell Children - www.caudwellchildren.com

Mind - www.mind.org.uk - Helpline 0300 1233393

Blue Smile – www.bluesmileproject.org

Young Minds - www.youngminds.org.uk - Helpline 0808 8025544

CALM Campaign Against Living Miserably - www.thecalmzone.net - Helpline 0800 585858

Carers Trust - <http://www.carerstrustcambridgeshire.org/>

Depression Alliance - www.depressionalliance.org

Family Lives: support and advice - www.familylives.org.uk -
Helpline 0808 8002222

Mental Health Foundation - www.mentalhealth.org.uk/contact-us

Rethink Mental Illness - www.rethink.org

Turning Point - www.turning-point.co.uk

Richmond Fellowship - www.richmondfellowship.org.uk

The Dodgems Project www.linktochange.org.uk

www.theymca.org.uk

www.minded.org.uk

www.headmeds.org.uk

<http://www.cpft.nhs.uk/about-us/help-in-a-crisis.htm>

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/> - Helpline 0800 068 4141 – sms – 07786209697 – help in preventing
suicide

<https://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

<http://www.getconnected.org.uk/>

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust – work to help young people look after their mental wellbeing
<http://www.cwmt.org.uk/>