

## Summary

People who self-harm may **feel distressed** a lot of the time. They may be stressed and very sensitive to rejection. Self-harm is not determined by a person's race, age, education, or social group. Research has suggested that more women than men harm themselves (men may show their feelings in other ways). It tends to **begin in adolescence** and may decrease or disappear in the thirties, although not always, and can begin later in life. Sometimes people begin to self-harm following **difficult life events** including debt, bereavement, bullying and relationship breakdown.

## What it is?

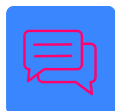
Many people harm themselves in some way, by smoking, drinking, working too hard or exercising too much. For some people this self-harm is more apparent and can be quite severe. Self-harm is sometimes known as self-injury and is where someone harms their body without wanting to die. Many people who harm themselves also have suicidal thoughts. Most feel that there is a difference between suicidal acts and acts of self-harm. They may say "I didn't want to die, I just needed to get rid of terrible feelings". Some people may harm themselves many times each day. It may involve a lot of ritual. Some people may feel addicted to the self-harm behaviour. Others may only harm themselves occasionally when under emotional stress. Some people who harm themselves have been sexually, emotionally or physically abused in their early life. It may be useful to seek help such as a talking therapy if you have experienced abuse.

## Impact & effects



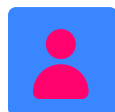
### Feelings

Shame, disgust, anxious, worried, frightened, helpless, detachment, tension



### Thoughts

Wanting to forget, to control feelings, to stop feelings, to relieve tension, to punish yourself, to be seen and show the pain felt inside



### Physical

Pounding in the head, tightness, sweating, feeling faint, shakiness and dizziness

## Techniques

### Breathing

- Find somewhere safe and comfortable
- Breathe calmly and slowly
- Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds
- Hold for 4 seconds
- Then out through your mouth for 6 seconds, blowing out the feelings

### Self-talk

- Remind yourself that you are having a flashback and that this is a normal response to trauma
- Remember it happened in the past and you have already survived it
- Look around, noticing the difference between the then and the now
- It is ok to feel these feelings, but that you are safe now

### Ground yourself in the now

- Look for 5 things you can see
- Touch 4 things, noticing texture
- Hear 3 things around you
- Smell 2 things in the air
- Taste 1 thing in your mouth

### Reframe your thoughts

- Have a hot/cold drink
- Enjoy a warm bath
- Carry an object that reminds you of your present life

