



Rethink
Mental
Illness.

What is self harm?

Self-harm or self-injury is a way some people use for dealing with difficult or painful feelings that they find difficult to talk about. It is a lot more common than people realise – partly because it is often so hidden and is not something people will talk about.

It has been estimated that up to one in ten young people will harm themselves at some point, and it is thought to be more common amongst teenage girls.

It can take many different forms and these include:

- Cutting or burning.
- Deliberate bruising including by a person throwing their body against something.
- Pulling hair or eyelashes or picking at skin.
- Taking an overdose.

Some people self-injure or harm themselves on a regular basis whilst others may do it only occasionally, perhaps in response to a stressful or difficult event. Some people use self-harm or injury to cope with a specific problem and once this has been resolved, stop harming themselves.



For other people, self-harm or injury is the way that they deal with pressure or stress of all kinds.

Feeling in control is often identified as a major factor in why a person may self-harm or injure themselves – and so understanding the stresses and pressures a person is facing, and thinking of ways to reduce these, can be very important in helping someone who is, or feels that they want, to injure themselves.

Knowing where to go for help – thinking who is the person they can trust and can talk to (who might be someone in school) is also key.

Find out more

If you are worried about a friend or brother or sister who self harms, find out more about how you can support them on our website at www.rethink.org/youngpeople

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