

Understanding and Overcoming Self-Harm

**FOR
KIDS**

UNDERSTANDING SELF-HARM

You might have self-harmed before, be thinking about self-harm, or want to support someone else who is self-harming. You might have also heard people talking about self-harm but aren't sure what it means.

Self-harm is a way some individuals cope with emotional pain or difficult feelings. It involves intentionally hurting yourself through actions, like cutting, burning, biting, hidden, or picking. While this may provide very temporary relief, it is not a long-term solution, and won't heal your pain.

Self-harm can be hard to talk about because it can be linked to emotions we don't know how to voice. This mini-guide can help you reach out to a trusted adult.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Ask for Help:** Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, teacher, or counselor. Opening up about your feelings is an important first step.
- **Identify Triggers:** Become aware of situations, thoughts, or feelings that may be triggers for self-harming behaviors. Awareness is the first step toward positive change.
- **Explore Alternatives:** Consider healthier coping mechanisms such as mindfulness, journaling, artwork, and exercise. Physical alternatives like holding ice cubes to the skin or snapping rubber bands can also be effective.
- **Seek Professional Help:** Consult mental health professionals like therapists, school counselors, or social workers who are trained to provide support and guidance.

Remember: You are not alone. There are people who care about you and want to help.

Text "help" to 9-8-8 and anonymously talk to someone who can help you. They're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Reviewed by Dr. K. Schlichting 01/2024
Hopewell Health Solutions
Phone: 860-946-0447

Email: hhs4help@hopewellhealthsolutions.com

How Do I Tell Someone I'm Self-Harming?

Some people may not understand right away. This could be because they don't understand self-harm, or they're surprised, maybe even upset.

Please remember this is not your fault, and there is always someone to support you. This could be a parent, grandparent, guardian, friend, or a professional like a teacher, doctor or social worker.

WHAT CAN I DO?

There are some things you can do to help you feel more comfortable and confident in asking for help.

- **Write down how you feel:** You could do this when you're feeling calm, or just before or after you've self-harmed. That could help your trusted person understand what you're going through.
- **Practice what you want to say:** This can make you feel more confident.
- **Decide in advance who you want to talk to:** You could think about who will be kind and supportive, and make you feel most comfortable.
- **Consider where and how you'd feel most comfortable telling them:** This could be face-to-face, talking over the phone or giving them a letter. A letter is especially good if you are especially anxious about opening up. Another place to consider is while you're a passenger when your trusted person is driving in the car. You can still have a back-and-forth conversation, but not need to make eye contact, which can be stressful.
- **Try to be confident:** Many kids feel like they're a 'burden' to others if they have to ask for help. But this isn't true and can make it feel harder to reach out.



Remember: You are not alone. There are people who care about you and want to help.

Text "help" to 9-8-8 and anonymously talk to someone who can help you. They're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.