



Edinburgh Self Harm Project

Self Harm Information and Awareness

Torin Forest

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What you can expect from today

- Tackling self harm myths
- Self harm behaviours
- Understanding who self harms and why
- Recovery
- What to aim for and avoid
- Devising strategies



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Self Harm Myths

- Mental Illness
- Suicide attempt
- A teen girl issue
- Attention seeking



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Range of self harm behaviours

- Cutting
- Scratching
- Burning
- Bruising
- Interfering with healing wounds
- Banging head or body parts
- Hair, eyebrow and eyelash pulling
- Driving recklessly
- Aggressively playing sport
- Crossing the road dangerously
- Testing strength in a risky way
- Overdosing on medication
- And many more...
- Visiting dangerous places
- Alcohol misuse
- Punching walls
- Binging, purging, restricting
- Substance misuse
- Smoking
- Self neglect
- Excessive exercise
- Provoking fights



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Who?

- Young women
- Prisoners
- Asylum seekers & refugees
- Veterans
- LGBT+ People
- Abuse Survivors
- People who are homeless
- Care experienced people
- And more..



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Why do people do it?

- Suicide prevention
- Manage painful feelings
- Control
- Communication
- Comfort
- Feeling real and alive
- Release
- Distraction
- Punishment
- To make body unattractive to others
- Anger and disgust at self



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Recovery



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What to aim for...

Listen

Doing the right thing!

Focus on how they are **feeling** and **understand why**

Help work out whether they **want to stop**

Be **patient, supportive and encouraging**

Signpost to professionals/organisations if appropriate

Be **empathetic and non-judgemental**

Discuss **safety** and risks, **harm minimisation**

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What to avoid...

Do not **dismiss** it or **avoid** talking about it

Do not ask for **proof** or to see wounds

Do not **force** the person to talk about it

Do not ask a person to **promise not to self harm**

Do not **remove** or **hide** self harm **objects** if possible

Try not to **show disappointment** if self harm continues

Do not **make assumptions** about mental health or abilities



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Devising strategies



Help find an activity which does a **similar job**

5 minute rule – Let the **urge** subside...

Phone Apps for **copng**... (E.g. Super Better, Calm Harm, Insight Timer)

Help learn to **tolerate** discomfort and **manage** difficult emotions

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Questions



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