

Wellbeing & Counselling Tips

Self-Harm



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Focus on your feelings

Instead of sharing detailed accounts of your self-harm behaviour focus on the feelings or situations that lead to it. This can help the person you're confiding in better understand where you're coming from.

It also helps to let the person know why you're telling them. Do you want help or advice from them? Do you simply want another person to know so you can let go of the secret?

Understanding triggers

If you're having a hard time pinpointing the feelings that trigger your urge to cut, you may need to work on your emotional awareness.

Emotional awareness means knowing what you are feeling and why. It's the ability to identify and express what you are feeling from moment to moment and to understand the connection between your feelings and your actions.

Feelings are important pieces of information that our bodies give to us, but they do not have to result in actions like cutting or self-harming.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/emotional-intelligence-toolkit.htm>

Professional treatment for cutting and self-harm

The help and support of a trained professional can help you work to overcome the cutting or self-harming habit, so consider talking to a therapist. A therapist can help you develop new coping techniques and strategies to stop self-harming, while also helping you get to the root of why you hurt yourself. We have the wellbeing team here at the university who can support you to explore any mental health issues and coping tools further.

<https://beta.salford.ac.uk/askus/support/wellbeing-and-counselling>

Talk to someone if you feel ready

If you're ready to get help for cutting or self-harm, the first step is to confide in another person. It can be scary to talk about the very thing you have worked so hard to hide, but it can also be a huge relief to finally let go of your secret and share what you're going through.

Find new coping techniques

Self-harm is your way of dealing with unpleasant feelings and difficult situations.

If you feel an even stronger urge to self-harm, try the following harm minimisation tips:

- / Use a red felt tip pen to mark where you might usually cut
- / Hit pillows or cushions, or have a good scream into a pillow or cushion to vent anger and frustration
- / Rub ice across your skin where you might usually cut, or hold an ice-cube in the crook of your arm or leg
- / Put elastic bands on wrists, arms or legs and flick them instead of cutting or hitting
- / Have a cold bath or shower

