



Self harm Prevention for 9-11 year olds

Healthy Young Minds Newsletter for Parents

What is self harm?

- Self harm is a coping mechanism used by some young people to release feelings of strong emotion or distress.
- It can be very distressing to find out that a child you love and care for is self harming
- We are aware that children as young as 9 years old are choosing to use this as a way of managing feelings so it's important that parents are aware of this
- This is becoming more prevalent partly due to the widespread misuse by young children of social media

What can I do to reduce the likelihood that my child will self harm?

- Be aware that this is something that can affect any family. Your child is not immune.
- Have regular and open communication with your child about their feelings and views on things
- Help your child realise that sadness is a normal part of life, particularly when something traumatic has happened, such as illness, loss or bereavement that even very intense feelings can change or lessen as time goes past
- That there are many ways of managing intense feelings and some are more helpful than others
- Be aware of what social media sites your child accesses and how they work
- BE AWARE THAT OFTEN CHILDREN HAVE MORE THAN ONE ACCOUNT, ONE THEY WILL SHOW THEIR PARENTS AND ONE THEY MAY NOT.
- Help your child develop critical thinking skills
- Discuss topics such as advertising, how people present themselves on social media. Do they think claims are real or true.

Ask them if they if they would do something silly or dangerous if a friend dared them to. Discuss the reasons for their answer in a curious and non

judgemental way. Helping them have confidence in their views and values will help them be able to act in a more confident way when resisting unhealthy media crazes

What other ways may help my child manage difficult feelings?

- Levels of self-harm can increase around exam time, If we can spot it, we can help young people develop helpful strategies to manage the stress
- List things that your child enjoys and help them identify things that help them feel better when they are upset.
- Suggest things they can do to help themselves cope. These can include a wide range of strategies, eg problem solving, distractions, calming and soothing activities, physical exercise, talking to a trusted adult

What can I do to support my child if they self harm?

- ✓ Talk to them about how they are coping during any known times of stress ie exam time, loss or bereavement
- ✓ Don't force your child to talk to you but offer them support
- ✓ Make sure they eat and drink well
- ✓ Remind them that feeling anxious, sad or upset sometimes is a normal part of life and all things change or pass eventually
- ✓ Encourage physical activity, clubs and hobbies and friends
- ✓ Your child may need extra nurturing and cuddles during this difficult time but before rather than after an incident of self harm
- ✓ Help children keep any injury clean and covered without making a lot of the actual injury

NB Self harm in itself is not a mental illness and may not necessarily need a CAMHS referral, unless accompanied by low mood, severe anxiety or the child is expressing suicidal thoughts. In these cases, you can consult with a CAMHS duty officer on 0300 123 6632 to see if a referral is needed

CAMHS would be very grateful for any feedback on this newsletter. Please could you complete the online survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/XN9QSHG>