



national
**self harm
awareness day**
2024

Friday 1st March 2024
#SelfHarmAwarenessDay

PARTNERS' PACK



Self Harm Doesn't Discriminate. Neither Do We.

WHAT IS SELF HARM?

Self harm is anything that someone does intentionally to cause physical harm or injury to themselves. Behaviours can range from cutting to burning, hair pulling, self hitting, scratching, overdosing, or swallowing something dangerous. This is not an exhaustive list.

WHY DO PEOPLE SELF HARM?

Self harm is a coping mechanism that people use to help manage their emotions in times of distress. Typical causes of emotional distress include bullying, work or school pressures, family arguments, relationship problems, money worries, low self-esteem, stress, anxiety or depression, confusion over sexual or gender identity, grief after bereavement or loss, experiences of abuse, being in contact with the criminal justice system, eating disorders, or substance misuse problems. There is no 'one reason' why people self harm.

WHO SELF HARMS?

It is difficult to know the true scale of self harm because it is often a behaviour that is hidden. From what we know, self harm is most common in young people (particularly young women), but it can and does impact people from all walks of life. It can affect people of any age, gender, or ethnicity.

WHAT SELF HARM IS AND ISN'T

Self harm is not attention seeking, attempted suicide, a 'cry for help', just a fad or trend, or done because people enjoy the pain. It is a behaviour that people use as a way of

managing emotional distress in the absence of having another effective coping strategy that works for them. It is something that, with the right help and support, people can recover through as and when they are ready.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF HARM AND SUICIDE?

The relationship between self harm and suicide is extremely complicated and individual. Most people who self harm will not go on to attempt to take their own life. We do know, however, that self harm is a unique risk factor for suicide, so providing help and support is crucial.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT SELF HARM?

Recovery through self harm is possible. The first step is usually speaking to someone who can provide support, such as a friend or a relative. Alternatively, a GP or another professional might refer you to a counsellor, psychologist, therapist, psychiatrist or mental health team. Organisations like Harmless and The Samaritans can also help.

It can be hard to reach out for support, but speaking to someone about your difficulties does not mean you are 'crazy' or 'mentally ill'. It just means you perhaps need a bit of help to get by at the moment and figure out how to cope differently with your emotions and experiences (over time). Remember that you don't have to be alone. There is help and support available, and you deserve it. With the right help and support, you can find a path to understanding and recovery.

WHO ARE HARMLESS?

Harmless is a not-for-profit organisation focussed on promoting recovery for those who are affected by self harm, suicide crisis, trauma or a bereavement by suicide. Harmless also advocates for greater awareness and public compassion for the diverse range of people who require our services. Through our Academy, we provide specialist self harm and suicide prevention training to equip professionals across the country with life-saving skills. Each year on Self Harm Awareness Day, Harmless also hosts [From Harm To Hope, its annual National Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Conference](#).

WHAT IS NATIONAL SELF HARM AWARENESS DAY?

Each year around the world, 1st March is Self Harm Awareness Day (sometimes also known as Self Injury Awareness Day). In the UK, it is an opportunity for everyone across the country to speak with one voice to raise awareness around what is often a very misunderstood topic. Partners and individuals from outside of the sector are also encouraged to get involved to help spread the message as widely as possible, particularly across social media where we encourage use of the hashtag **#SelfHarmAwarenessDay**.



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

We are always looking for new partners to join Self Harm Awareness Day. You don't need to be involved in mental health or the wider healthcare sector – in fact, we encourage partnerships with as diverse a range of organisations and individuals as possible. Harmless can provide you with a media pack in advance of the day and work with you to help coordinate your effort. The pack includes posters, graphics, factsheets and suggested social media posts. We are always grateful for support, regardless of the size or profile of your organisation. Printing off a poster to put up at your workplace or sharing your support on social media all help to get the message out to a wider audience.

WHAT NEXT?

[Please click here to download the media pack](#). If you have any questions or require further support, please email nick.thompson@harmless.org.uk



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