

Self Harm - Introduction



Ways people self-harm

- **Ways of self-harming can include:**
- **cutting yourself**
- **poisoning yourself**
- **over-eating or under-eating**
- **biting yourself**
- **picking or scratching at your skin**
- **burning your skin**
- **inserting objects into your body**
- **hitting yourself or walls**
- **overdosing**
- **exercising excessively**
- **pulling your hair**
- **getting into fights where you know you will get hurt**

Young people report they self-harm to:

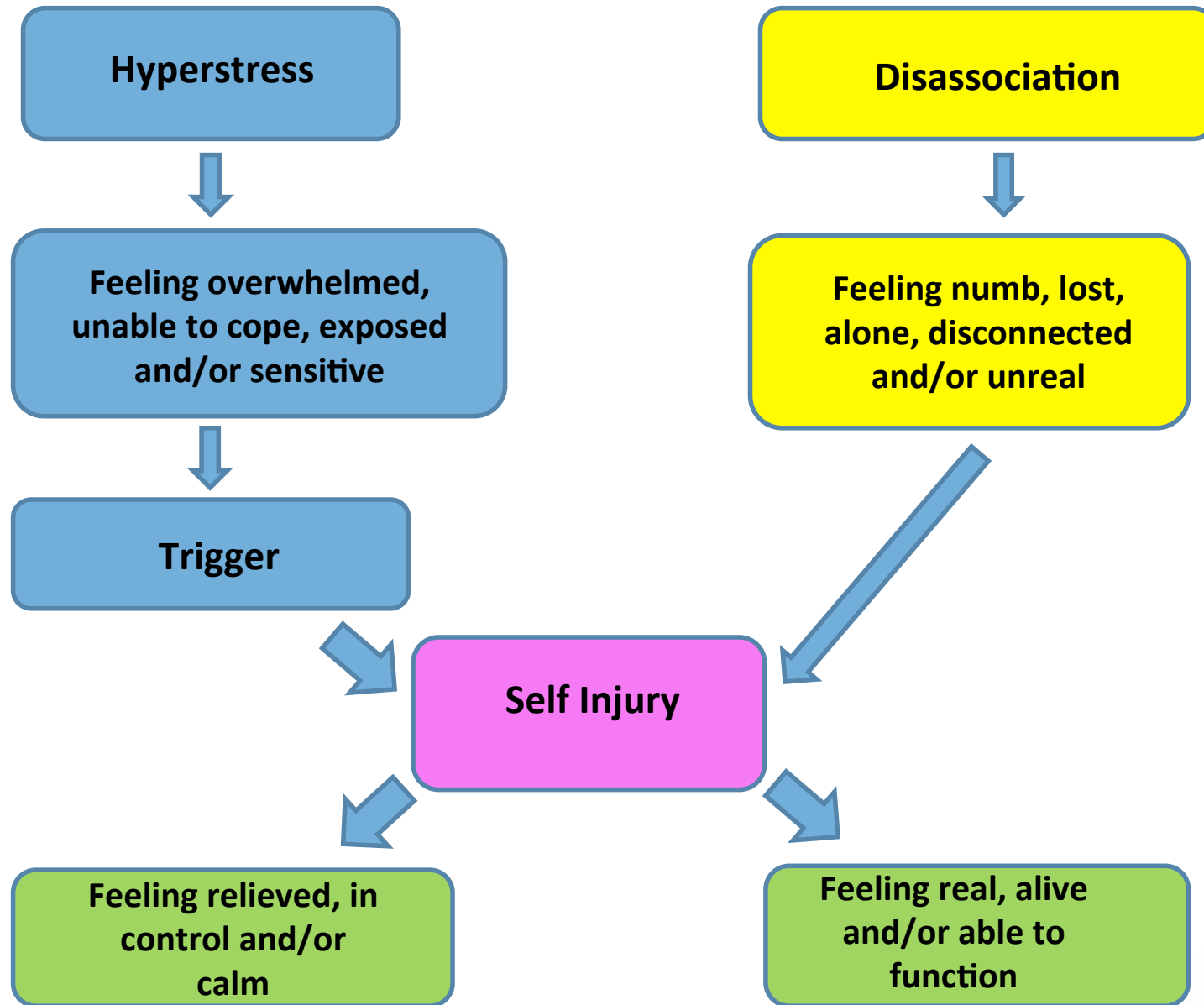
- Comfort themselves
- Feel Alive inside
- Feel warm blood
- Gain control
- Numb themselves
- Relieve emotional distress or overwhelming feelings
- Relieve tension
- See 'red'
- Stop bad thoughts
- Punish themselves
- Replace emotional pain with physical pain

**Life is hard
and this
helps me get
through
each day.
Some people
smoke,
some people
drink, I cut.**





Precursors to Self Injury



Risk Factors for Self Harm Behaviour

Individual Factors	Family Factors	Social Factors
Low Mood Anxiety	Unreasonable expectations	Difficulty in making relationships work/loneliness
An existing psychological or developmental difficulty such as Asperger, or a learning difficulty	Young carers role within the family	Persistent bullying or peer rejection
Difficulty communicating	Domestic violence	Racism
Low self-esteem	Neglect or abuse (physical, sexual or emotional)	Homophobic attitudes or bullying of children who think they may be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual
Poor problem solving skills	Poor parental relationships and arguments	Easy availability of drugs, medication or other methods of self-harm
Hopelessness	Depression, deliberate self-harm, bereavement or suicide in the family	Cyber bullying and social media
Impulsivity	Religious/ethnicity/cultural identity dilemmas or conflict	
Drug or alcohol abuse		
Confusion about sexuality or feeling different/unaccepted		

IDEAS THAT SIMULATE SELF-HARM

THESE ARE IDEAS THAT GIVE SOME OF THE VISUAL OR PHYSICAL SENSATION OF SELF-HARM WITHOUT ACTUALLY CAUSING HARM TO THE BODY.

Write on your skin

Finger paint with red paint

Clench ice cubes in your hands

Draw red lines on your skin where you want to harm

Paint your skin with red nail varnish or paint and pick it off

Ping an elastic band or hair band on your wrist (but not too hard)

Plunge your face into a sink full of freezing cold water for a few seconds

On a photo or drawing of yourself, mark in red where you want to hurt yourself

**When feelings are very
intense... sometimes
distracting ourselves for a
minute to allow BIG
IMPULSIVE feelings to
pass can help**



Statistics

As young people and teenagers often don't talk about their mental health then accurate data is not available. However, it is thought that:

- 13% of young people self harm
- In 2014 there was a 70% increase in 10 – 14 year olds presenting in A &E
- Girls are more likely to self harm than boys
- Boys are more likely to punch or head butt walls – this is still self harm
- 88% of all self harm admissions for under 18's are poisonings



Task - Time to Think!

- Complete the short quiz on your table and discuss your responses
- Using the 6 cards decide how each statement could be received either positively or negatively by the pupil

Quiz – Why do people self injure?

1. People who self injure are attention seeking.

False: People are trying to cope with pain or pressure they are feeling

2. People who self injure use it as a way of releasing pressure and feelings.

True. People say the physical pain releases some of the emotional pressure.

3. It is easy to stop injuring yourself.

False: People often injure themselves because it is the only way they can find to cope.

Only by working through the underlying feelings can the pressure be taken away, and people are able to stop self injuring.

Quiz – Why do people self injure?

4. People who self injure are usually feeling suicidal.

Mostly false: Self-Injury is a way of dealing with pain or strong feelings, not an attempt at suicide. However it is true that people who self injure may be at greater risk of attempting suicide at some stage.

5. People who hurt themselves hide it from others.

Mostly true: They may do as they feel self conscious or don't want others to find out, though not always the case.

6. People who injure themselves are selfish.

False: People who self injure are often trying to cope with a lot of internal emotional pressure.

7. Self-Injury is a cry for help.

Mostly false: Not necessarily. Self-Injury is a person's chosen way of coping, even whilst they are working through problems or difficult emotions. However, if someone is self-injuring, ask if they want to talk about it

The Power of Words

Eughh! That's gross.

- + You've acknowledged the cutting
- You are letting your feelings get in the way and are making them feel worse

Oh no, you should go to a doctor or the school counsellor knows about this stuff.

- + You're letting them know where there is support
- It might sound like you're saying, Talk to someone else - not me!

You're crazy, cutting yourself like that. Just pull yourself together and stop doing it.

- + You've acknowledged the cutting
- Is she really crazy? Is it really that easy just to stop?

The Power of Words

You wanna be careful, those cuts will get infected you know.

- + You've acknowledged the cutting.
- You're avoiding the issue. Better to ask how she's feeling.

If you tell me what's wrong, I swear I won't tell anyone

- + You are encouraging her to talk about what's going on. You let her know she can trust you.
- Some of what she says may be upsetting. You may worry this is serious and want to tell someone.

How are you feeling?

- + You are encouraging her to talk about what's going on
- "I feel fine". She may not be ready to talk, let her know you will be there if she wants to.