



Mental Health
Support Team

Buckinghamshire

Self-Harm & Emotion Regulation Parent Workshop

Steph Davey

Education Mental Health Practitioner

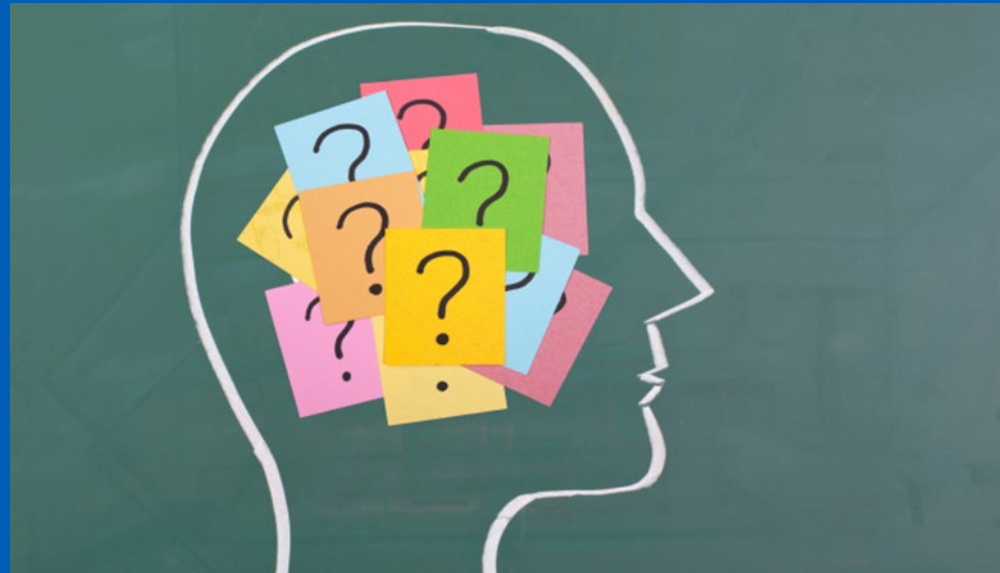


TAKE

CARE OF

YOURSELF

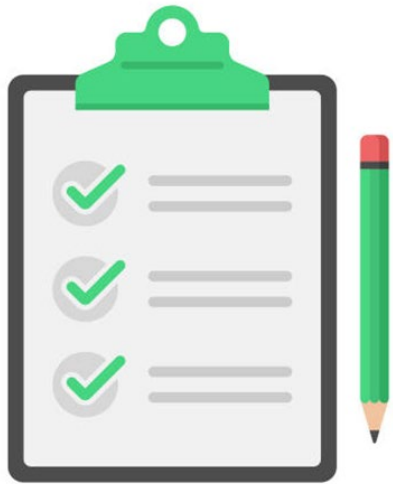
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO
GET OUT OF THIS SESSION?



WHAT WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO GET OUT OF THIS SESSION:

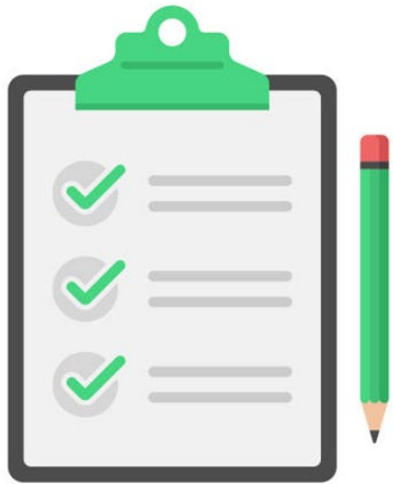
- Think about what self-harm is and why young people may self-harm
- Try to understand what it feels like to be a young person who is self-harming
- Understand what can be helpful and unhelpful when talking to a young person
- Think about alternative ways to cope

OVERVIEW FOR TODAY



1. Understanding self-harm
2. Conversations with young people
3. Offering practical support

OVERVIEW FOR TODAY



1. **Understanding self-harm**
2. Conversations with young people
3. Offering practical support

WHAT COULD SELF-HARM LOOK LIKE?



PREVALENCE



Around $\frac{1}{4}$ of all 11–16-year-olds with a mental health disorder have self-harmed at some point.

This increases to nearly half of young people aged 17-19 with a mental health disorder.

Rates have risen most sharply in young females.

LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE AND SELF-HARM

- LGBTQ+ youth are up to **4x more likely** to self-harm than their heterosexual peers
- Symptoms appear to worsen during adolescence and early adulthood



SELF-HARM CAN BE:

- Direct or indirect
- Transient or longer term
- It is usually conducted at times of anger, distress, fear or worry and is a way of coping with these feelings



INDIVIDUAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SELF-HARM

- Depression/anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Poor problem-solving skills
- Hopelessness
- Impulsivity
- LGBTQ+
- Gender Dysphoria
- Learning Difficulties
- Drug/alcohol abuse



SOCIAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SELF-HARM

- Loneliness
- Difficulties with peer relationships
- Easy availability of drugs/alcohol



COMMON TRIGGERS

- Relationship difficulties
- Adverse life events
- Trauma
- Bullying
- Self-harm in friends/the media
- Pressure (e.g. exams)



WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE SELF-HARM?

Emotional pain
(sadness, grief,
hopelessness,
depression)

Self-hatred
(shame, guilt,
dirtiness)

Anger
(frustration,
powerlessness)

Anxiety
(fear, tension,
panic)

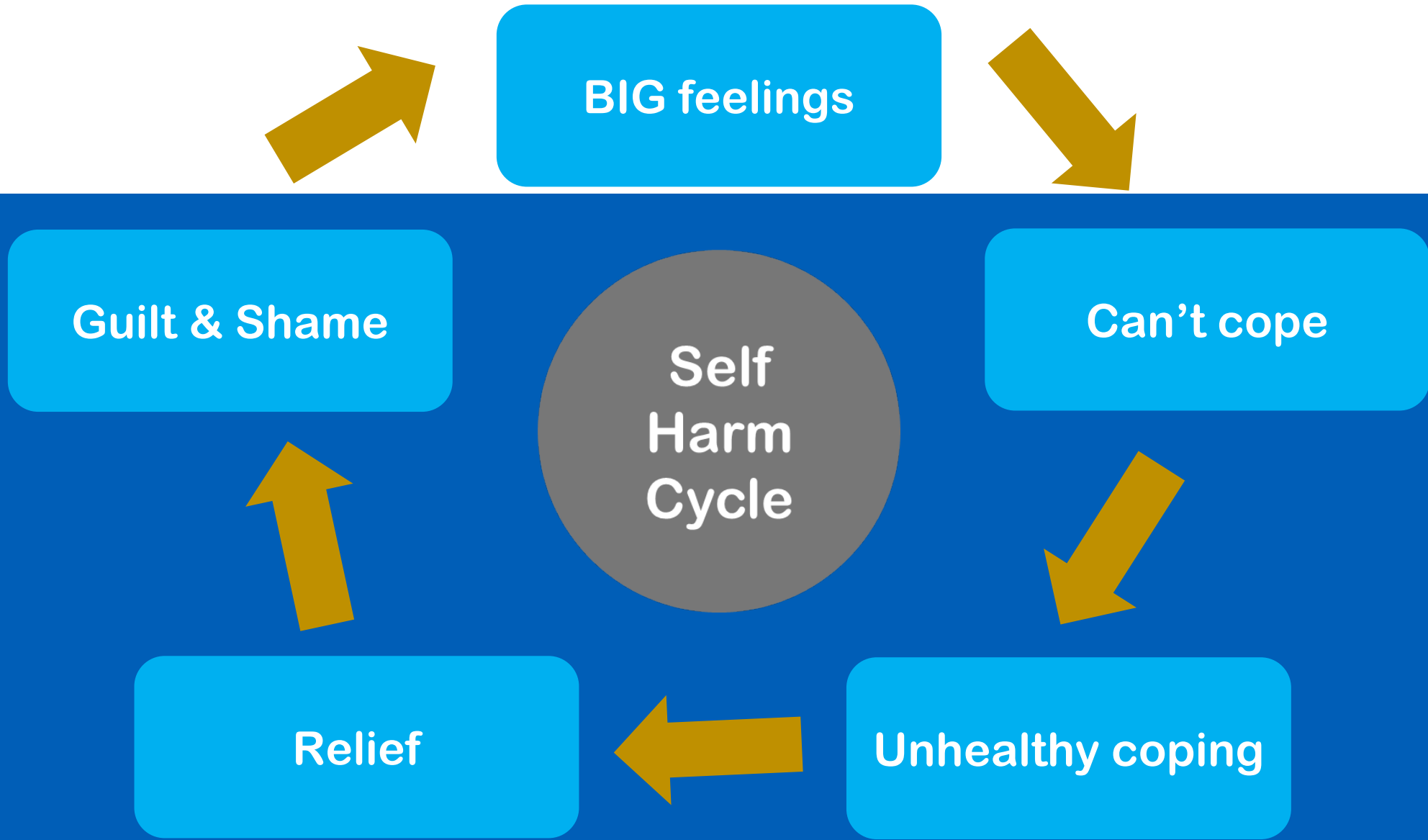
Neediness
(unsupported,
unheard)

Unreality
(numbness, Empty)



REASONS WHY I'VE SELF-HARMED

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmLNnSITd4o>



WHAT WARNING SIGNS CAN WE LOOK OUT FOR?

- Secrecy or disappearing at times of high emotion
- Long or baggy clothing even in warm weather
- Increasing isolation or unwillingness to engage
- Avoiding changing in front of others
- General low mood or irritability
- Negative self-talk – feeling worthless, hopeless, or aimless



SELF-HARM & SUICIDE

- Young people who self-harm are not necessarily suicidal
- However, people who do not intend to kill themselves sometimes do so because they don't realise the seriousness of their injuries
- People who self-harm are more likely to report suicidal ideation than non-self-harmers (83% vs 29%)



SELF-HARM & THE INTERNET

The Bad

Normalisation

Triggering

Competition

Contagion



The Good

Crisis support

Reducing social
isolation

Therapeutic use

Outreach

OVERVIEW FOR TODAY



1. Understanding self-harm
2. **Conversations with young people**
3. Offering practical support

SEEKING HELP

- This is usually really difficult for YP
- Seeking help is often the first step in breaking the cycle and sharing the experience can be a huge relief
- How others react influences whether the YP seeks further help
- YP need to feel comfortable with who they speak to



YOUNG PEOPLE RARELY SEEK HELP...

9% of young people seek help before engaging in a self-harm episode

Around 12% seek help after an episode

So, how can we respond in the most supportive way?

RESPONDING TO SELF-HARM

**Making the YP
the sole focus of
your attention**

**Listening, not
talking**

**Do not guess or
assume**

**Respond calmly,
even if you don't
feel calm**

**Project
acceptance and
support, not
judgement**

**Do not dismiss as
attention seeking**

**Recognise how
difficult it must
have been for YP
to share this**

Next steps?

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER...

- Is there an immediate need for medical care?
- Is the young person a danger to themselves?
- What message do you want to give to the young person?

STARTING A CONVERSATION

1. Pick the right environment

Going for a walk

Getting a coffee

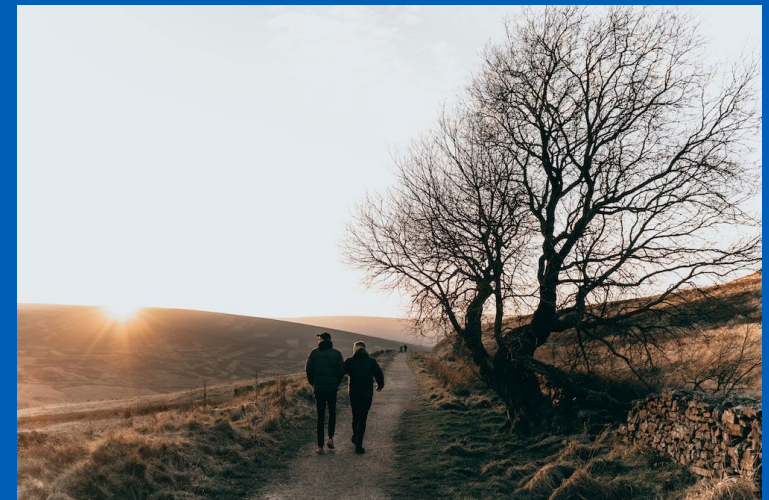
Going for a drive



STARTING A CONVERSATION

2. Pick the **right time**

When everyone is calm



STARTING A CONVERSATION

3. Ask open questions

I've noticed _____. Is there anything you'd like to talk about?



STARTING A CONVERSATION

4. Helpful phrases

Take your time, there is no rush. I know it can be difficult to talk about this

I'm here for you

What can I do to help?



STARTING A CONVERSATION

1. Right environment
2. Right time
3. Open questions
4. Helpful phrases





Showing you're not afraid to talk about the specifics of self-harm can feel very supportive to the YP

IS IT IN THE YOUNG PERSON'S BEST INTEREST TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION?



If Yes

What? How?

With Who?



If No

Why not?

WHAT CAN BE HELPFUL?



Thanking the young person for sharing this information

Showing that you care about them as a person

Discuss confidentiality

Asking how you can help

Staying calm

Giving the young person permission to talk about the self harm

WHAT CAN BE UNHELPFUL



**Telling them
that self-harm
is wrong**

**Agreeing to
unrealistic
plans**

**Focusing only
on the self-
harm**

**Giving
ultimatums or
applying
pressure**

**Giving a
negative
reaction**

**Assuming that
every episode of
self-harm is for
the same reason**

OVERVIEW FOR TODAY



1. Understanding self-harm
2. Conversations with young people
3. Offering practical support

IDENTIFYING A YOUNG PERSON'S TEAM

- What friends and family can the YP talk to
- Identify helplines YP can message or call
- Is there someone at school the YP can go to



THINK WITH THE YOUNG PERSON OF OTHER WAYS THEY MIGHT COPE WITH DIFFICULT EMOTIONS...



Write or draw
about feelings

Talk to a person or
helpline

Go to a quiet place
and scream /
scream silently

Hit a pillow / soft
object

Listen to music

Look after an
animal or sibling

Draw red lines on
the skin

Clench ice cubes

Snap elastic band
on wrist

THERE ISN'T A 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL'

The reason why a young person feels an urge to self-harm can impact what alternative coping strategies might help.



WHY DOES THE YOUNG PERSON WANT TO SELF-HARM?

Maybe they...

- ...Need to vent their feelings
- ...Feel down or alone
- ...Need a distraction
- ...Feel out of control
- ...Need some space to think
- ...Need to feel more in control

ALTERNATIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Pick one or two initially, try them out, and review:

- Was it helpful? Did it work?
- Would you use it again?
- What else could you try?

EMOTION DYSREGULATION

HYPO AROUSAL:



EXTREME DISTRESS:

- slowed breathing
- flat affect
- dissociation

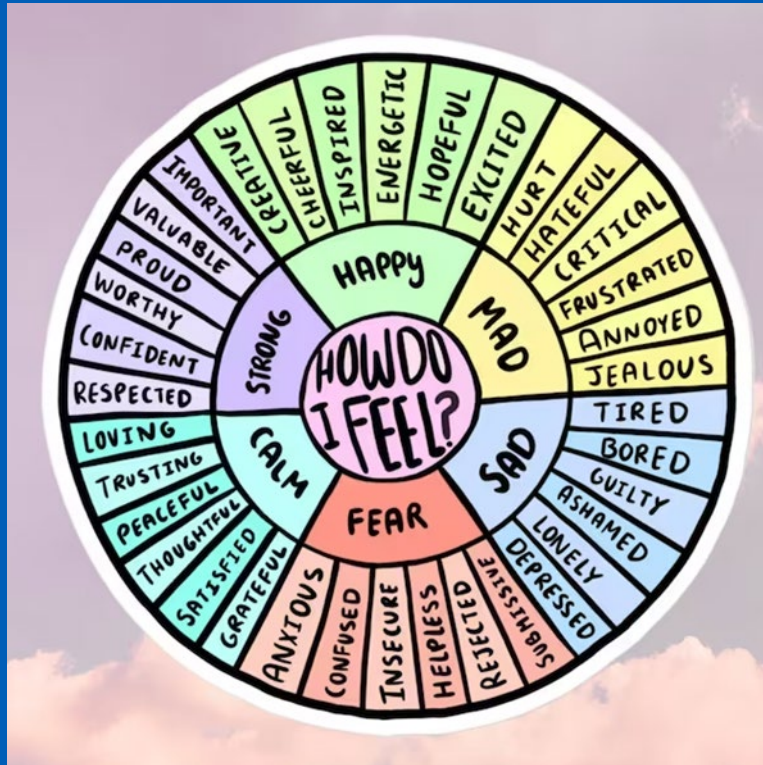
HYPER AROUSAL:



EXTREME DISTRESS:

- hyperventilating
- extreme emotion
- panic attack

HOW CAN WE HELP YOUNG PEOPLE MANAGE EMOTIONS



- Model managing our own emotions
- Build nurturing, emotionally validating relationships
- Encourage sitting with emotions rather than dismissing them
- Name emotions

HAND MODEL OF THE BRAIN



At the base of your brain, represented here by your wrist, is the brain stem. It's responsible for basic things like breathing and keeping your heart pumping.



Your thumb, folded in, sits in the middle, just like the amygdala in the brain. The amygdala is responsible for sensing danger and telling the brain + body.



Your fingers are like your pre-frontal cortex- that's the part of the brain that helps us manage emotions and make complex decisions



When fear, danger, or intense emotion overwhelm our amygdala our prefrontal cortex goes offline and we "flip our lid." That's why sometimes it is so hard to make thoughtful decisions when we are very upset.

When brains are overwhelmed like this, they need a break to reflect and reconnect.

Using some of the alternative coping strategies, can help us 'close the lid' by calming the amygdala.

SELF-SOOTHE BOX



SUMMARY: HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Arrange appropriate medical care
- Listen to the young person and be mindful of your reactions
- Provide access to information
- Tell other people (where appropriate)
- Talk about other coping strategies and offer practical advice

REFERRALS



If you feel your child needs specific mental health support above what is already offered by Student Support Officers, then please use the following emails to contact support within the school:

Great Marlow School

Karen Craig - kcraig@gms.bucks.sch.uk

Sheryl Paul - spaul@gms.bucks.sch.uk

Sir William Borlase's Grammar School

safeguarding@swbgs.com

They can refer you to us (Mental Health Support Team).

CAMHS

**Child and Adolescent
Mental Health Service**

- Referrals for higher level and more persistent mental health needs
- Urgent referrals: Single Point of Access (SPA): 01865 901 951 (8am–6pm, Monday to Friday)
- Less urgent referrals:
BucksCAMHSSPA@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

Young Minds

- For more information and signposting
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/self-harm/>



NSPCC

- Can call them for free support and advice on 0808 800 5000 or can contact them online.
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/self-harm/>



Charlie Waller

- Information and ways to help
- <https://charliewaller.org/mental-health-resources/coping-with-self-harm>



INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Childline

You can confidentially call, chat online, or email about any problem.

Young Minds

You can text YM to 85258 for free, 24/7 support.

Samaritans

Open 24/7. You can call them on 116 123 or email them at jo@samaritans.org



INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

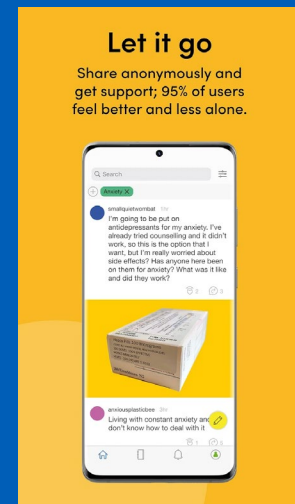
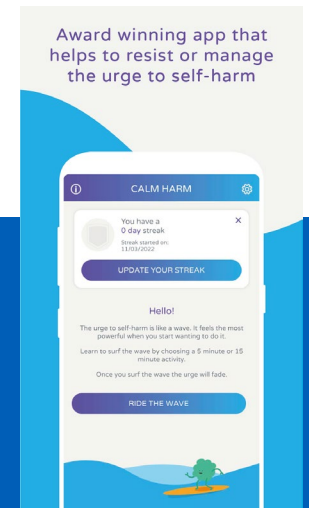
Apps like:

Calm Harm

A free app providing support and strategies to help you resist or manage the urge to self-harm.

Tellmi

A free app for teenagers (11+) providing resources and a fully-moderated community where you can share your problems, get support and help other people too.



MHST - Parent Training/Workshop





Mental Health
Support Team
Buckinghamshire

Thank you for listening