

**Kingston and Richmond Child Death Overview Panel
Newsletter – January 2019
What is Self-Harm?**



The phrase 'self-harm' is used to describe a wide range of behaviours. Self-harm is often understood to be a physical response to an emotional pain of some kind, and can be very addictive. Some of the things people do are quite well known, such as cutting, burning or pinching, but there are many, many ways to hurt yourself, including abusing drugs and alcohol or having an eating disorder. Sometimes, it's more important to focus on how someone is feeling rather than what they do to themselves. Quite often, people find that more helpful.

Everyone has accidents from time to time resulting in cuts and bruises - but it's the injuries that are caused on purpose that are considered to be acts of self-harm. Self-harm often happens during times of anger, distress, fear, worry, depression or low self-esteem in order to manage or control negative feelings. Self-harm can also be used as a form of self-punishment for something someone has done, thinks they have done, are told by someone else that they have done, or that they have allowed to be done to themselves.

For more information visit:

- www.selfharm.co.uk
- papyrus-uk.org

INITIAL RESPONSE TO A YOUNG PERSON ON DISCLOSURE OF SELF-HARM

If you are aware that a student, child or young person, has self-harmed this is the recommended approach:

- **Listen** calmly (Assess);
- **Seek** first aid treatment, if necessary (Manage);
- **Contact** parents/carers as soon as possible (Inform);
- **Contact** other professionals for advice (Assess);
- **Work with** the young person and their families to ensure appropriate support is in place to address both the self-harming and the underlying issues (Manage);
- **Monitor** the situation and communicate regularly with parents/carers (Inform);
- **Consider** other children and young people who may be affected (Assess).





Useful links:

The Samaritans offer training to professionals and outreach in public places, including schools. If there is a critical incident in a school, community meeting or workplace they can provide immediate support and advice, this is not only for suicide.

They have a guide for preparing a response plan in **schools**, details of support for **students, parents and carers** as well as **professionals**: www.samaritans.org

Support for children:

<http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/children-young-people/self-harm-187.php>

Support for parents and carers:

<http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/parents-carers/self-harm-186.php>

Practitioners:

<http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/practitioners/self-harm-and-mental-health-192.php>

The LSCB offers the following free training

<http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/training.php>

Youth Mental Health First Aid

