

Self-harm alternatives

Identify your self-harm triggers

Self harm is most often a way of dealing with emotional pain. What feelings make you want to cut or hurt yourself?
E.g. Sadness, Anger, Shame, Guilt

Do you hurt yourself to express pain and emotion?

- Paint, draw or scribble on a big piece of paper with red ink or paint
- Express your feelings in a journal
- Compose a poem or song to say what you feel
- Write down any negative feelings and then rip up the paper
- Listen to music that expresses what your feeling

Do you hurt yourself to release tension or vent anger?

- Exercise vigorously – run, dance, jump rope, hit a punch bag
- Punch a cushion or mattress, or scream into your pillow
- Squeeze a stress ball or squish play doh
- Rip something up (sheets of paper, a magazine)
- Make some noise (play an instrument, bang on pots and pans)

Do you hurt yourself to calm and soothe yourself?

- Take a bath or hot shower
- Pet or cuddle with a dog or cat
- Wrap up in a warm blanket
- Massage your neck, hands and feet
- Listen to calming music

Do you hurt yourself because you feel disconnected and numb?

- Call a friend
- Take a cold shower
- Hold an ice cube in the crook of your arm or leg
- Chew something with a strong taste, like chilli peppers, peppermint or a grapefruit peel
- Ping an elastic band on your wrist
- Go online to a self-help website, chat room or message board