

## Self Harming

Self-harming often appears when you are feeling:

### Myths about self-harm

#### Self-harm is just attention seeking

FALSE - self-harm is usually kept secret and hidden.

#### Only teenage girls self-harm

FALSE - It is becoming more common for older people and males to self-harm.

#### If you self-harm you want to end your life

FALSE - many people who self-harm do not want to end their life; self-harm is a way of coping with the emotional pain they are feeling.

- Alone or isolated
- Angry
- You're not good enough
- Like you can't control things
- Numb or zombie like
- Like you want to escape

It is a way of dealing with very difficult feelings, painful memories or overwhelming situations and experiences.

After self-harming you may feel a short-term sense of release, but the cause of your distress is unlikely to have gone away. Self-harm can also bring up very difficult emotions and could make you feel worse. It is frequently a very solitary activity leaving one feeling very lonely.

When something bad happens or you're feeling emotions that make you want to self-harm, it's good to find other ways to cope.

Things that could help:

- listening to music
- talking to friends or family
- writing down or drawing how you feel
- exercise

At VLN we will do all we can to help you, so please talk to the Safeguarding officer or any member of staff you feel comfortable with and tell them what is going on. Do not feel worried that we'll judge you, we won't. We will work with you in total confidence; we'll take things one day at a time and help you to build a support structure which enables you to move forward. We will also help put you in touch with professionals with expertise and assist with practical advice.

If you are self-harming, it is important that you know how to look after your injuries and that you have access to the first aid equipment you need. Information on first aid for self-injury and self-harm can be found here-

<http://www.lifesigns.org.uk/first-aid-for-self-injury-and-self-harm/>

## Supporting someone who is Self-Harming

Finding out that someone you care about is self-harming can leave you feeling worried, confused and a bit helpless. But many young people who self-harm get help by talking to someone. There are things you can do to help:

- remember that it may have been really difficult for them to have told you about self-harming, so try not to judge them
- listen to how they feel—sometimes just being there for your friend may be what they need
- encourage them to get support with how they're feeling
- let an adult you trust know the situation
- let your safeguarding officer know the situation
- look after yourself and make sure that you get the support you'll need as well

