

SELF HARM

Gaining consent to share information



What is Self Harm?

Self-harm is when you hurt yourself as a way of dealing with very difficult feelings, painful memories or overwhelming situations and experiences.

Some people have described self-harm as a way to:

- Express something that is hard to put into words
- Turn invisible thoughts or feelings into something visible
- Change emotional pain into physical pain
- Reduce overwhelming emotional feelings or thoughts
- Have a sense of being in control
- Escape traumatic memories
- Have something in life that they can rely on
- Punish themselves for their feelings and experiences
- Stop feeling numb, and dissociated from yourself and the world around you
- Express suicidal feelings and thoughts without taking their own life

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.

Even though there are always reasons underneath someone hurting themselves, it is important to know that self-harm does carry risks. Once you have started to depend on self-harm, it can take a long time to stop.

Getting help and sharing information

It can be hard to tell someone that you are self-harming or that you are thinking about it.

You may talk to a teacher, nurse, doctor, social worker or youth worker. They may have to talk to other people or organisations, to keep you safe and to get you the right help and support.

Before we share your information, we will ask for your consent. The only time we won't get your permission, is when there is an emergency or very serious concern.

We only share information with the people that need to know. We also only share the information that is needed for that organisation. Your information, which we sometimes call data, will be always kept safe.

There are strict legal requirements in place when it comes to the storage and sharing of personal data and we take our responsibility to keep your data safe and secure, very seriously.

EXAMPLE

If you talk to a youth worker, they may want to speak to a wellbeing support service to see if they can offer you some help. You will be asked for your permission for them to do this. The youth worker may share information about your self-harm and how you are feeling.

They would not share every detail of your life and experiences with them. Only the information that needs to be shared, will be shared.

Will my parents be told?

It depends on the situation with your parents or carer, your age and what you have spoken about. Making sure you are safe and supported is the highest priority.

We will always aim to speak to you before talking to your parent or carer.

The aim of talking to parents or carers is to provide better help and support for you. The person you talk to can give you a clear idea of if they will talk to your parent or carer.

Your consent to share information with services

The people working with you will ask for your consent to share your information. This is so they can plan, access and deliver good care and support for you. You can ask questions about the type of information that will be shared and where it is going.

You, or your parent or carer, may be asked to sign a form to get your permission to share your information.

If you do not agree to share information

If you do not agree to your information being shared, then we will only do so if there is a risk of harm to you or to others.

Can I see the information you have about me?

Yes, you can see the information that we have about you. If you want to do so, talk to one of the people that are working with you.

Why is it important to share information?

Your consent to sharing information will allow services to

- Act quickly on any concerns to make sure that you are safe
- Listen to you, including any worries about what will happen to you and the people you care about
- Share concerns with the other workers or professionals working with you
- Share documents, like an assessment. This is so other workers can understand your needs are and to save you from having to be asked the same questions again and again.
- Share responsibility with others for deciding what help to give you, and who will be providing this
- Make sure that other bad things don't happen in your life
- Keep clear records to ensure the help they are giving you is still the right help. This also means the worker's manager can check they are doing good work with you.



Where you can go to get help

Mindworks Surrey

www.mindworks-surrey.org

If you are worried about yourself, a friend, or your child or young person, please call our 24/7 mental health crisis line free on

0800 915 4644

It's open all day and all night, seven days a week.

You can talk with a trained call handler who will provide advice, support and signposting to a range of community services.

The crisis line is available for children and young people from the age of six. It can be used by those who are already receiving mental health services, and also by those who are not. No formal request for support is needed.

