

## Spotlight on .... Self-harm

### Understanding the self-harm cycle

Self-harm can be a way for a person to distract themselves from emotional pain giving them a sense of relief.

Self-harm can become habit-forming and offer a sense of release to the individual when in difficult situations; it gives them relief because they feel in control of the situation they are in. Because they feel a relief (although temporary), endorphins are released to help block out emotional and physical pain. This is then followed by shame and guilt which causes the cycle to begin again.

What are the different types of self-harm?

When someone says “self-harm” the instinct is to automatically think of cutting or doing harm to the skin, however this is not always the case. There are other forms of self-harm that everyone working with children and young people need to be aware of.

Types of self-harm include:

1. Cutting, scratching or burning the skin
2. Punching or hitting (they may repeatedly hit themselves or bang their head against hard objects)
3. Hair pulling (hair, eyebrows or lashes)
4. Swallowing poisonous substances or objects
5. Self-poisoning with medications, drugs or alcohol

The above types of self-harm are the “obvious” and physical methods that can be detected. However, there can also be less obvious methods of self-harm that can be harder to identify. These are usually risk taking behaviours, and are harder to identify as they don’t cause any physical wounds.

These can include:

1. Over exercising
2. Taking illegal drugs
3. Controlling their eating

### What are some of the myths surrounding self-harm?

Self-harm is a highly stigmatised mental health disorder, and because of this there are a lot of myths around what self-harm means and how this affects the young person involved.

Self-harm is not:

- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Something only girls do
- Something only teenagers do

For more support and guidance check out these websites;

<https://teenmentalhealth.org/parents/> Teen mental health

<https://www.rbmind.co.uk/> Rotherham and Barnsley Mind

<https://www.nottinghamshiremind.org.uk/#> Nottinghamshire Mind

## ***Togetherall***

This online platform offers wrap round support students, by providing;

**Community** - Clinically managed online forums where people help people. Design tool to enable the creative expression of difficult emotions.

**Courses** - Wide range of self-guided group and individual courses covering mental health and lifestyle topics.

**Resources** - Library of useful articles and resources, plus helpful tests and features to track progress.

Your child can register for free by visiting [www.togetherall.com](http://www.togetherall.com) They will need to use their college email address to create their account.

## What are livestreaming and video apps?

Livestreaming is broadcasting to an audience in 'real' time. The audience can leave comments, or give likes and kudos to the person streaming. Some platforms let several people livestream at the same time.

There are livestreaming apps like Twitch and Yubo, but young people can livestream on other social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram. Many young people also post pre-recorded videos on video apps like YouTube and Vimeo, or video chat in groups or one-to-one, using apps like WhatsApp. Video conferencing apps such as Zoom and IMO are also becoming increasingly popular during lockdown.

Young people like to livestream and use video apps for lots of reasons. These include:

- learning or show others how to do something – livestreams of people playing video games are particularly popular
- staying in contact with family and friends
- taking part in viral trends
- being creative
- relaxing – many video apps have 'satisfying content', such as food being prepared.

Potential risks

- Young people can feel pressurised - Because livestreaming and video chat happen in real time, young people may feel under pressure to behave in a certain way so that people will keep watching their channel.
- Strangers - On some livestreaming apps and websites you can talk to people you don't know online.
- Videos can be shared without consent - Video conversations can be recorded and shared across other social networks, without knowledge or consent. Your child may lose control over their video and where it's been shared.
- Nasty comments – through live streaming apps people can make comments in real time, these are not always nice
- Inappropriate content – it is difficult to control the content on a live streaming app, which means you may see something that is of an inappropriate nature

You can support your child by providing a safe environment for them to discuss any concerns relating to e-safety or inappropriate online usage.

**Keep updated** by regularly checking the safeguarding page on the college website, has useful documents are stored there.

[Safeguarding page](#)

### Prevent – ACT early

It can be hard to know what to do if you're worried someone close is expressing extreme views or hatred, which could lead to them harming themselves or others.

Act early by sharing your concerns in confidence. You won't be wasting anybody's time and you won't ruin lives, but you might save them.

<https://actearly.uk/>

### Young people and Gambling

Many people think that a problem with gambling is just a money issue, but there are many different reasons why gambling may become a problem. A preoccupation with gambling can also create problems with jobs, learning and relationships, and can have a ripple effect on health and wellbeing for an individual as well as those they care about. If you are concerned about someone check out <https://www.gamcare.org.uk/> who operate the National gambling helpline 0808 8020 133, providing information, advice and support for anyone affected by gambling harms.

You could also share this self-help book and make a referral to our Wellbeing team for support.

<https://www.gamcare.org.uk/app/uploads/2020/05/GamCare-Self-Help-Workbook-2019.pdf>

### Operation Encompass

I would like to inform you of a project that is being run across Rotherham/South Yorkshire. It is called Operation Encompass, a partnership between South Yorkshire Police, schools & colleges, supported by the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Operation Encompass has been designed to provide early reporting on any domestic abuse incidents, where the police have attended and that might have an impact on a child in an education setting.

A key member of staff in school/college will be informed when a domestic abuse incident has occurred within the previous 24 hours or over the weekend. This will enable school/college to monitor children possibly affected and, where required, support if necessary.

The designated member of the safeguarding staff will use this information in confidence. They will also ensure that the college is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been involved in, affected by, or witnessed a domestic violence incident.

We are keen to offer the best support possible for our students and we believe this will be extremely beneficial for all those involved.