



NewLife
counselling



Hello.

We're New Life Counselling,
we're here to help you.

Self-harm

What is Self harm?

Self harming means injuring or harming yourself on purpose.

Some examples of deliberate self harm are:

- Cutting or scratching
- Hitting or burning yourself
- Overdosing on tablets or other substances
- Pulling your hair
- Banging your head or other part of your body
- Swallowing inedible objects.
- Taking too many drugs / drink or other substances

Not everyone who self harms is suicidal, however it is a sign of deep distress and in some cases people might also feel suicidal. Many people who self harm go to great lengths to hide what they are doing, and describe feeling ashamed, guilty and embarrassed. This can make it difficult to ask for help.

Why do people self harm?

The reasons for self harm vary for people but it can be a means of:

- gaining control if you feel helpless and stuck
- releasing strong feelings like sadness, guilt, anger or hurt
- punishing yourself if you feel bad, guilty or ashamed
- feeling alive if you feel numb and detached
- communicating serious distress

What can I do if I feel like self harming?

If you are aware of what triggers you to self-harm, it may be useful to try to delay acting on these thoughts and feelings by finding distractions.

Find out what works for you to distract yourself – talk to someone, go out, sing, dance, listen to music, punch the air, exercise, write, draw, paint, take a cold shower, watch a favourite film, take a walk.

If you have not managed to stop yourself from self harming don't be hard on yourself. It can take a while to learn to change what you do and how you deal with feelings, especially if you have done it for a long time. Make sure you take care of any wounds and seek medical advice if necessary.

Be kind to yourself and focus on the positives. Do things you enjoy – get a massage or have a hot bath – whatever works for you!



It can be difficult to remember anything positive if you feel low. Think of an emergency plan when you feel better:

- What will you do if the urge to self harm overcomes you?
- Who can you contact?
- Think about the things you like about yourself and write them down.
- Carry pictures of people that are important to you.
- Make a playlist of favourite songs on your ipod.
- If you feel really low, reading and looking at this can help you to remember the good things in your life.

How can I get help?

The first step is talking to someone about what is happening. It can help you feel less alone and to see your problems more clearly. You might want to talk to a family member or a close friend.

Professional help is very important. Speak to your doctor and see what they can recommend. They might want to refer you for further help.

A counsellor or therapist can help you to look at the reasons why you self harm, and support you in looking for other ways of dealing with your problems and coping with difficult feelings.



How could counselling help me?

Counselling can provide you with the opportunity to talk on a one to one basis with a professionally trained counsellor about the difficulties in your life.

What can I expect?

- What I talk about will be respected and treated in confidence
- I won't be judged
- I can be myself
- I will be listened to
- My side of the story will be heard
- To learn new ways of dealing with difficult thoughts or feelings

How do I get Counselling?

You can either contact us yourself and we will arrange to meet with you or someone else can contact us on your behalf. This may be your GP, social worker or another person who is concerned about you.

If you are interested in finding out about us you can contact the office or visit

www.newlifecounselling.net

for more information and where you can fill in our online form. We will then be in touch to set up an initial appointment.

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Please Note

The advice given in this leaflet is intended to be helpful to most people. It does not replace the direct advice of a healthcare professional or counsellor. It is only a general guide and cannot deal with all possible situations nor can it be specific to any one individual. If you or someone you know needs help please contact your GP as soon as possible to obtain further help.

“we’re listening”

Contact Details

For further information or to make a referral, please contact:

25 Ardoyne Road Belfast BT14 7HX

Tel: 028 9039 1630

Unit 20 North City Business Centre

2 Duncairn Gardens Belfast BT15 2GG

Tel: 028 9074 6184