



THE BLUE TREE CLINIC

SELF HARM



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At The Blue Tree Clinic we find it extremely important to not only inform individuals who themselves are struggling with self harm, but also family, friends and other loved ones who support those who self harm.

It may be that you find some areas of this leaflet more helpful than others so take a little look at our contents page and see which areas take your interest.

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Self Harm: A definition



- Self harm is the deliberate act carried out to harm oneself in some way. Self harm can be carried out in various ways such as scratching, using a material such as a knife or sharp object, poisoning, biting, head banging, hair pulling, and plucking hair – such as eye brows or eye lashes, as well as burning skin. It is important to note that self harm does not necessarily mean injuring yourself physically it can also be done via neglect.
- Neglect could include issues around eating (overeating or restricting) which could develop into a disorder, limiting sleep, drug usage, excessively smoking, and drinking vast amounts of alcohol.
- It may be that these are subconscious acts but never the less acts of harming one self. It is therefore sometimes difficult to be able to identify when an individual is self-harming which is why it is often difficult for family members or friends to be able to spot issues around self harm, and also why it can often be a shock to loved ones when self harm is disclosed. Self harm can lead to a very isolated and lonely place for an individual and the self-harm can often become an object of shame and embarrassment as well as fear.
- It can be difficult to understand why people self-harm and the reasons behind why the self-harm began.

Why do people self harm?



- The purpose of why people self-harm is different for every individual. Self-harm can have various triggers such as; bereavement, stress, anxiety, depression, overwhelming situation. These triggers can cause one off episodes of self-harm but on the other hand could cause repetitive self-harm.
- So why do people self-harm? Once again, everyone has their own reasons. Some state that self-harm gives them a sense of control whereas others state that they want to feel pain, as often, people can feel numb in various aspects of their life so want to feel something. Individuals also state that they use self-harm as a coping mechanism to deal with difficult situations which they feel they are unable to deal with. Some self-harm can be due to a mental health issue such as obsessive compulsive disorder where an individual worries about the negative consequences which could occur if an act of self harm is not carried out.
- Many individuals state that they feel they have no other option and want to find a way to reduce the emotional feelings they are experiencing. Some state that they use self harm as a means of punishment to themselves. It can be a way of an individual coping with a situation which has happened or that they are currently involved with.
- As a side note it is also important to note that the media can often portray self harm as a fashionable thing to do and many teenagers and young adults like to experiment due to peer pressure and media influences which can in turn lead to a longer term self harm issue.
- It is important to remember that some people cannot identify why they self harm and find it difficult to identify a point in which the self harm began.

The prevalence... What are the current statistics?



A question many people ask is how many people self harm? So we have got some facts and figures to give you an idea of the prevalence.

- One in 12 teenagers self harm
- Females are more likely to self harm than males
- Individuals are starting to self harm from a younger age, some as young as 8
- It is thought that around 13% of adolescents may try to hurt themselves at some point between the ages of 11 and 16
- People with impulsive personalities are more likely to self harm
- Within Europe, the UK has the highest self harm rate than any other country
- Within the UK over 400 out of 100,000 people self harm
- Many people who self harm may be suffering from a mental health issue such as Bipolar, Depression, Eating Disorders, Anxiety and OCD
- A huge percentage of self-harmers have never told anyone about their self harm. Therefore statistics do not represent individuals who have not told someone about their self harm.

Our tips and advice around self harm (helping yourself)

- Talk to someone – whether it is a friend, a family member or a doctor. There are many professionals out there trained to help you. At The Blue Tree Clinic all our clinicians; psychiatrists, and therapists are trained to help individuals struggling with self harm.
- You are not alone! There are many individuals suffering with negative thoughts and self-harming. So it is okay to find times tough but make sure you keep yourself safe.
- Make sure you are aware of services that can help you! Your GP, A&E department and Walk in centres are always available. As well as this there are many other services which can help you of which we are one. Here at The Blue Tree Clinic we want to help you in every way possible.
- Try to keep a diary of when you self harm. This will allow for a pattern to be developed which may allow you to begin to identify what causes you to self harm, or whether there are certain times or days where you feel a bigger urge.
- Find distractions! You could try holding ice or drawing a red line on your arm with a pen or punch a pillow.
- Try to resist the urge, this could be by delaying the self harm by 10 minutes, an hour or a day. This control can give you a confidence boost that you can conquer your self harm. If this is something you struggle with the therapists at The Blue Tree Clinic have excellent techniques and methods which have been found to help individuals stop self-harming.
- Create a story board of what has happened to cause you to self-harm this time. Write down the situation that the thought come into your mind to self-harm. Write down the thoughts, how you felt, your physical sensations, how you reacted and why you self harmed (the purpose).
- Do things which make you happy. Make sure you put things in your diary which are pleasurable and give you a distraction.
- Practise relaxation techniques – some deep breathes or relaxing music could help change your mind frame.
- Come and see us here at The Blue Tree Clinic. Within our team we have clinicians who have been trained to work with self harm. We can help you by teaching you tools and techniques on how to manage your self harm. We have different coping strategies which we can recommend to you as well different activities and programmes that we can help you with.
- We can help you face your worries and look at the cause of the self harm and help you to understand your self harm better. We can educate you, teach you but more importantly we can support you.

Our tips and advice around self harm (helping others)

- **Be supportive – be a listening ear**
- **Do not be judgemental – it can be difficult to accept that someone you care about is harming themselves, but try to remain calm and patient because you may be the guidance and support they have been craving.**
- **Do not keep asking why – many people who self harm find it very difficult to talk about why they self harm or what the cause is so don't demand an answer, wait to be told, and understand that you may never find out.**
- **Make sure the person is keeping themselves safe – Ensuring that the person is not self harming to the extreme where they could cause permanent damage or accidental death.**
- **Make sure the person is looking after their injuries- this can be by ensuring they have plasters or bandages to keep the wound clean and avoid it from getting an infection.**
- **Make sure the person is aware of services out there that can help – such as their GP/ A&E/ and talking services such as The Blue Tree Clinic offers.**
- **Encourage the client to tell their GP – it is important that the clients GP is up to date with the clients safety so that any risk can be managed appropriately and safely.**
- **Be understanding!**

The Blue Tree Clinics top tips on how to move forward...

- Sometimes self harming can cause individuals to feel as though they are stuck in a vicious cycle which is impossible to break. It can becoming an on ending difficulty which can make individuals feel worried, low and angry. So our therapists and clinicians here at The Blue Tree Clinic have come up with some helpful activities you can do to take your mind off self harming and doing something a little bit more pleasurable or necessary.
- Do some breathing exercises
- Listen to some relaxing music
- Write your to do list and break it down into manageable chunks!
- Try do "anew me"- get a haircut, change your hair colour or have a spring clean! These things may give you a new perspective on things.
- Write a letter to yourself. One giving advice to your younger self and one to yourself in ten years time.
- Write down some goals, make them specific and manageable and most importantly achievable. Whether its tidying a room or going for a run
- Do some colouring in
- Do some exercise
- Join a support group
- Do something that makes you happy!
- Empower yourself! Write down some positive quotes or note down things you like about yourself.
- Write down one positive thing about your day and keep it. Write down one negative thing about your day and bin it!
- Eat healthy! Try and make some varied and interesting meals!
- Go to bed earlier and set an alarm in the morning
- Meet up with a friend



A final note from our team at The Blue Tree Clinic

We know life can get tough and things can bring us down but do not give up! We are here to support you! The Blue Tree Clinic team dedicate their lives to helping people with mental health difficulties. We want to help you find ways to enjoy life again and help you break that vicious cycle for yourself. We can be that listening ear, we can give you the break you need from the non stop worries in your head and most importantly we can HELP.

We are a friendly, non judgemental team who love working with people. We are confidential, professional and work around you and your needs. So please do not suffer alone.

So please do not hesitate to contact us.