

RECOGNISE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS AND REASSURE

Physical symptoms are more commonly found on the wrists, arms, legs, thighs or chest. Some things to look out for are cuts, bruises, burns, or bald patches in hair. Children that self-harm and understand their behaviour may do things to cover the self-harm up, such as wear long sleeves even when in hot weather.

Emotional symptoms of self-harm may be signs of depression, low motivation, teary, withdrawn or isolated, change in appetite/appearance, low self-esteem, and they may blame themselves a lot. It's important to note if you spot any of these emotional signs in a young person, it doesn't directly mean it is because they are self-harming, as young people can experience emotional responses for lots of different reasons.

However, if you notice any of these emotional and physical signs and symptoms together, then it is important to follow this up.

ASK **OPEN QUESTIONS (TRY TO SPOT THE BIG THOUGHT)**

Children will self-harm in lots of different ways, for lots of different reasons. That's why it is important for us to understand and deal with the problems and feelings behind the self-harm. The only way we can truly understand this is by communicating with the young person and listening to him; it's important we don't make our own assumptions about why he is self-harming. Work with him to find the reason behind the situation, try and see the child behind the self-harm and look at the situation holistically.

ACCESS SUPPORT, SERVICES AND SELF-CARE

If a child is in imminent danger due to self-harming, then call 999. However, if the self-harm is being used as a coping strategy, and she has no suicidal intent, then she can be referred to their local GP or CAMHS. Some young people find it useful to keep a mood diary of how they are feeling, where they are or what they are doing just before they get the urge to self-harm, this might help them to recognise what things are triggering them to feel a particular way. You could also use the bottling feelings activity on page 61.

Childline also offers a self-harm messaging board, a positive community of non-judgemental people who are there to try and support others who may self-harm into their recovery.