

SELF HARM

Self-harm is often linked to anxiety and depression, and can affect people of any age. Some people who self-harm may be at a high risk of suicide. However a lot of people who self-harm don't want to end their lives. Self-harm is a coping mechanism for the distress that they're feeling and, as they have a way to cope, they don't feel the need to end their life.

Why do people self-harm?

People do not self-harm to be 'attention seeking', 'manipulative' or 'cool'. They self-harm for a number of reasons:

- some people may believe that they deserve to be punished more than they can punish themselves mentally
- people may feel that the rest of their life is out of control and self-harm is the only thing they have control over
- people who are unable to express their feelings may feel many emotions but can't release them and find that self-harming reduces the amount of turmoil they feel
- self-harm may be a way to communicate that something is wrong

Self-harm can also be a cry for help- it can be very isolating and the person may not know who to turn to.

For more information on self-harm, visit the NHS website:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/self-harm

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

If you think that someone you know is self-harming, you should look out for any of these signs:

- unexplained cuts, bruises or cigarette burns
- keeping themselves fully covered at all times even in hot weather
- signs of depression
- self-loathing/expressing a wish to punish themselves
- signs of low self esteem
- becoming very withdrawn and not speaking to others

People often try and keep their self-harm a secret because of shame or fear, so it is very important if you notice someone self-harming to approach the subject with care and understanding. Although it may be hard not to, telling someone to just "stop" is not necessarily helpful, and making sure the person is safe while they harm takes priority.

How can self-harm be treated?

If you are self-harming you should see your GP for help. They will be able to treat any physical injury and recommend any further assessment or help, such as referring you to a Self-Harm Intervention Programme (SHIP). Treatment for self-harm usually involves talking therapies, and how they are affecting you.

You can also come to the **Student Wellbeing Service Drop-In** (via the Student Guidance Centre information desk) Mon-Fri, term time, 12.30pm-1.30pm, or you can email studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk to book an appointment with a Wellbeing Advisor.



Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.



There are five simple actions to help maintain and improve your emotional wellbeing in everyday life. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your ‘five a day’ for emotional wellbeing.



Connect

Connect with the people around you, with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you everyday.



Be active

Go for a walk or run, step outside, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice

Be curious, catch sight of the beautiful, remark on the unusual, notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are on a bus or taxi, eating lunch or talking to friends, be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.



Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or interest or sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



Give to others

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time, or consider joining a community group. Look out, as well as in, seeing yourself, and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

The 5 ways to wellbeing were developed by the New Economics Foundation

www.mindingyourhead.info

Would you like to share your story on the back of this leaflet? If so please email studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk