

DISCOVERY JOURNAL

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This book was written by people who struggle with self-harm. A huge thank you to the young people who guided this project.

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All photos kindly gifted for this journal by Battle Scars service users, volunteers and staff: Kelly Day (front & back cover), San Yates (pg 5, 29, 34, 57), Phillip Evans (pg 6, 69), Debbie Riley (pg 7, 36, 64), Terri Sansom (pg 21), Em Gardiner (pg 24, 31, 35, 41), Helena Bailey (pg 43) and Lisa Pyke (pg 63).

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About Battle Scars

Battle Scars is a charity that supports those who self-harm and those who support those who self-harm (carers, friends and professionals). This support is given in various ways – for example, peer support groups (face-to-face, virtual or online) and workshops. Everyone who is involved with Battle Scars either struggles with self-harm or supports someone who self-harms. So, we get it!!

Often (but not always) some of the adults that Battle Scars support started to self-harm as a child/young person and for various reasons didn't learn how to manage this and thus continued to self-harm into adulthood. Some adults have said they wished they had tackled their self-harm issue earlier in life but didn't know how or where to start. That is why Battle Scars have created this journal - as a starting point. We wish you luck and hope you find it helpful.

Remember you are not on your own, we are right here with you!!



About this journal

This journal is aimed at young people aged 10-17 who self-harm in some way.

Use this journal in the way that helps you the most. You can work through this journal from beginning to end. Alternatively, you can dip in and out focusing on the sections you find helpful. This journal will not solve your problems nor tell you how to stop self-harming. The journal's aim is to support you to think about why you might self-harm, what impact it has on you, what support you have and what support you need to help you when you are struggling. It will also help you explore alternative healthy ways to manage your emotions. This may lead you to reduce how frequently you self-harm or even help you to stop. Hopefully, this journal will help you see that when self-harm feels like the only option, it is not!

Plus, there is plenty of space for you to jot down your own thoughts which you can then look back on to see what progress you have made.



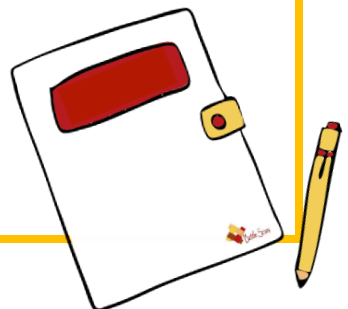
You can also record alternative behaviours to self-harm and document where to get help from, so it is at hand for when you need it.

This is your journal: use it as you wish, take from it what you need and leave what isn't helpful. We designed it as a notebook so it can sit on a shelf without drawing attention.

A good place to start is to ask yourself is "why am I using this journal? What do I want to achieve? What is my goal?" Having a goal will help keep you focused and motivate you to keep going when things get tough, and things will get tough – but remember, so are you!

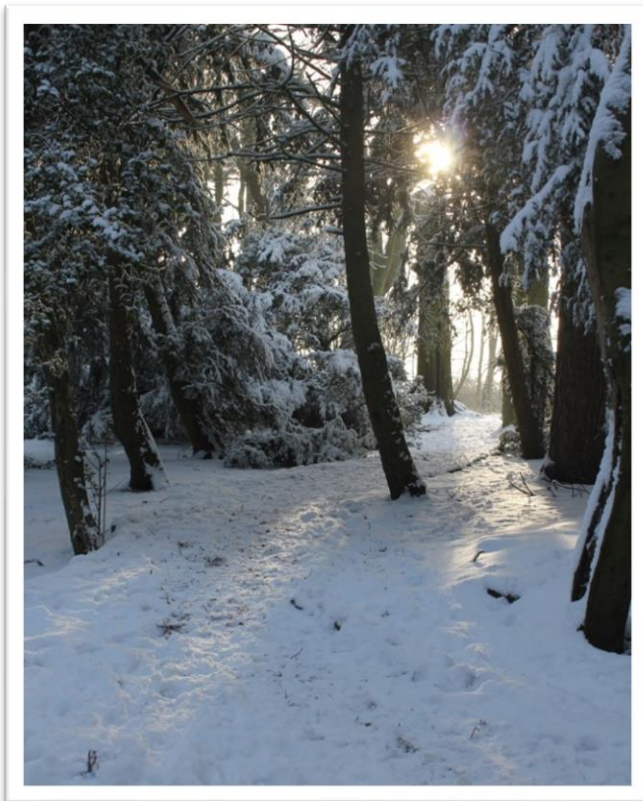
I am using this journal because....

My goal / aim is...



IMPORTANT

- Just stopping self-harm without support or alternative ways to manage emotions can cause severe damage and distress
- **If the self-harm urges are extremely strong, you are about to self-harm or are really struggling, please seek help immediately**
- You don't have to deal with everything on your own



Understanding what self-harm is

The Battle Scars definition of self-harm is very broad: **any harm that we do to our body and mind.**

It could be something you're doing to the outside or inside of your body or a way of thinking about yourself or a way of behaving. If what you're doing – whether you're aware of it or not – results in short or long-term damage (including psychological), consider it as self-harm.



Being aware of what you do will help you tackle all of it instead of swapping self-harm methods.



Why self-harm?

Self-harm is a way of dealing with intense emotion, or in some cases with numbness. A way to feel in control.

It is an internal response to something. You may not know the reason for this response, and you may not know why you deal with things through self-harm but that's ok.



IMPORTANT

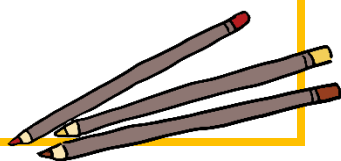
- Self-harm doesn't start from nowhere, there is a cause
- Self-harm will not just go away on its own
- You will not grow out of self-harming
- Self-harm isn't catching but people can be influenced by others when looking for a way to cope
- Self-harming is not a lifestyle choice
- Self-harm is used by people of all ages
- Self-harming is not a trend or a fad
- You have a much higher chance of managing self-harm if you get help
- There is a lot of misunderstanding about self-harm

All types of self-harm are damaging – it is not helpful to compare yourself to others.

There is hope. Self-harm isn't a life sentence – you can reduce how often you self-harm. You can find healthier ways to deal with your emotions and you can even stop self-harming completely.

*Use the "my space" pages any way you wish. Draw, write,
doodle – do what you like:*

my space

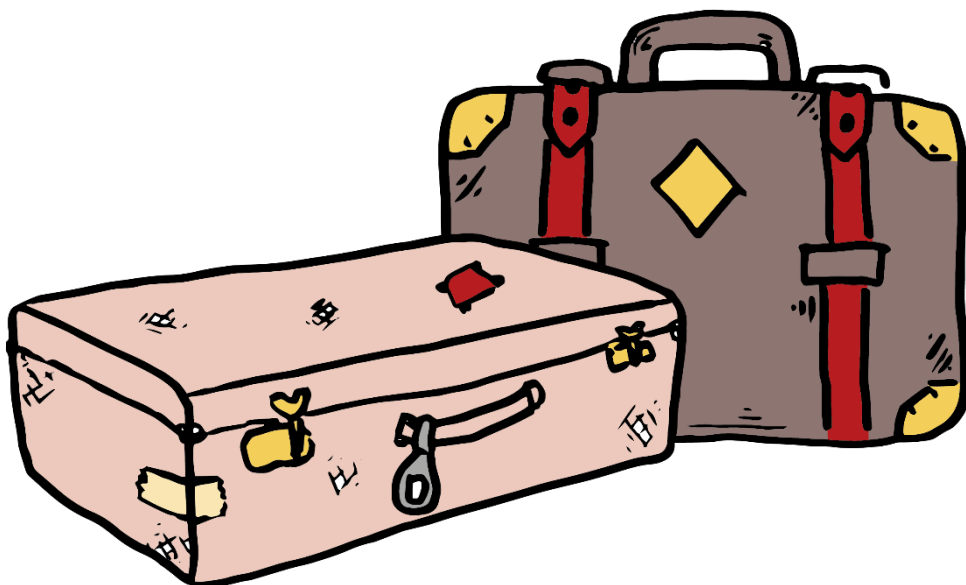


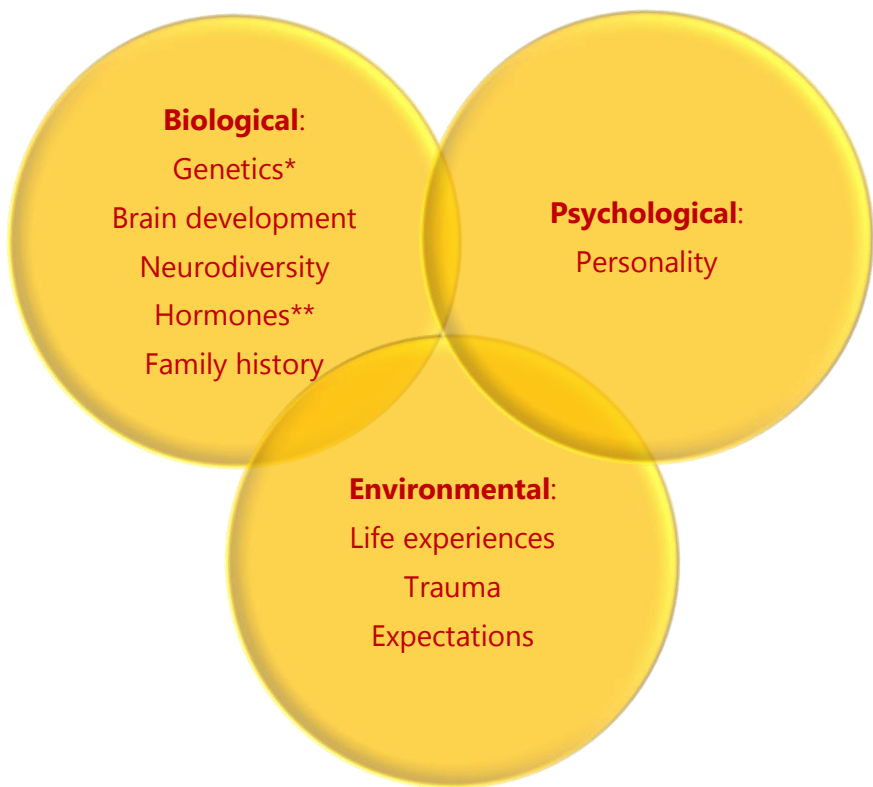


Understanding why I self-harm

As mentioned, self-harm is a response to something. It is a method of taking control, regaining power and/or managing difficult or intense emotions. This may be an unconscious response. You may not know why you have turned to self-harm. Exploration and reflection will help you understand why you respond to things by self-harming.

The reasons why people self-harm are complex, personal, individual and something that most people need support with identifying. Exploring why you self-harm will involve looking into what makes you behave, think and feel. You may have heard people call this the “baggage” they carry with them. Three elements make up this baggage.





It is the interaction of these three elements that make us who we are and determine why we respond to things the way we do. Looking into these can be a very difficult and/or upsetting process and something that takes time and cannot be rushed. There is no embarrassment or shame in seeking help with this – in fact, it is encouraged. It is a very brave step and one that you should be proud of taking.

* *Genetics is the study of how different qualities, called traits, are passed down from parents to child.*

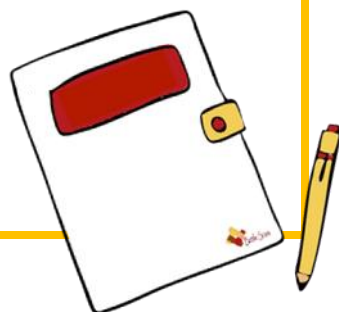
** *Hormones are your body's chemical messengers. They help regulate your body's processes, like hunger, blood pressure, and sexual desire. While hormones are essential to reproduction, they are fundamental to all the systems of your body.*

Alternatively, you may be fully aware why you self-harm and you may be looking for support and/or guidance on how to stop or manage your behaviour.

If you know why you self-harm you may want to log it down here. Being totally honest with yourself and admitting what you are doing and why you are doing it is an enormous but essential step, as it is difficult to develop and progress if you don't acknowledge what is causing you to respond this way.

This is not about blaming others, focus on you.

I self-harm because...



IMPORTANT

- There may be more than one reason why you self-harm
- There may be a combination of reasons why you self-harm
- The response may be a build-up of reasons
- The reason(s) why you self-harm are really important
- **Everyone is different. Don't compare yourself to anyone else**

Let's start thinking about people you know who you can talk to, who could help you understand why you self-harm and how they could support you in the process of exploring alternative ways to manage.





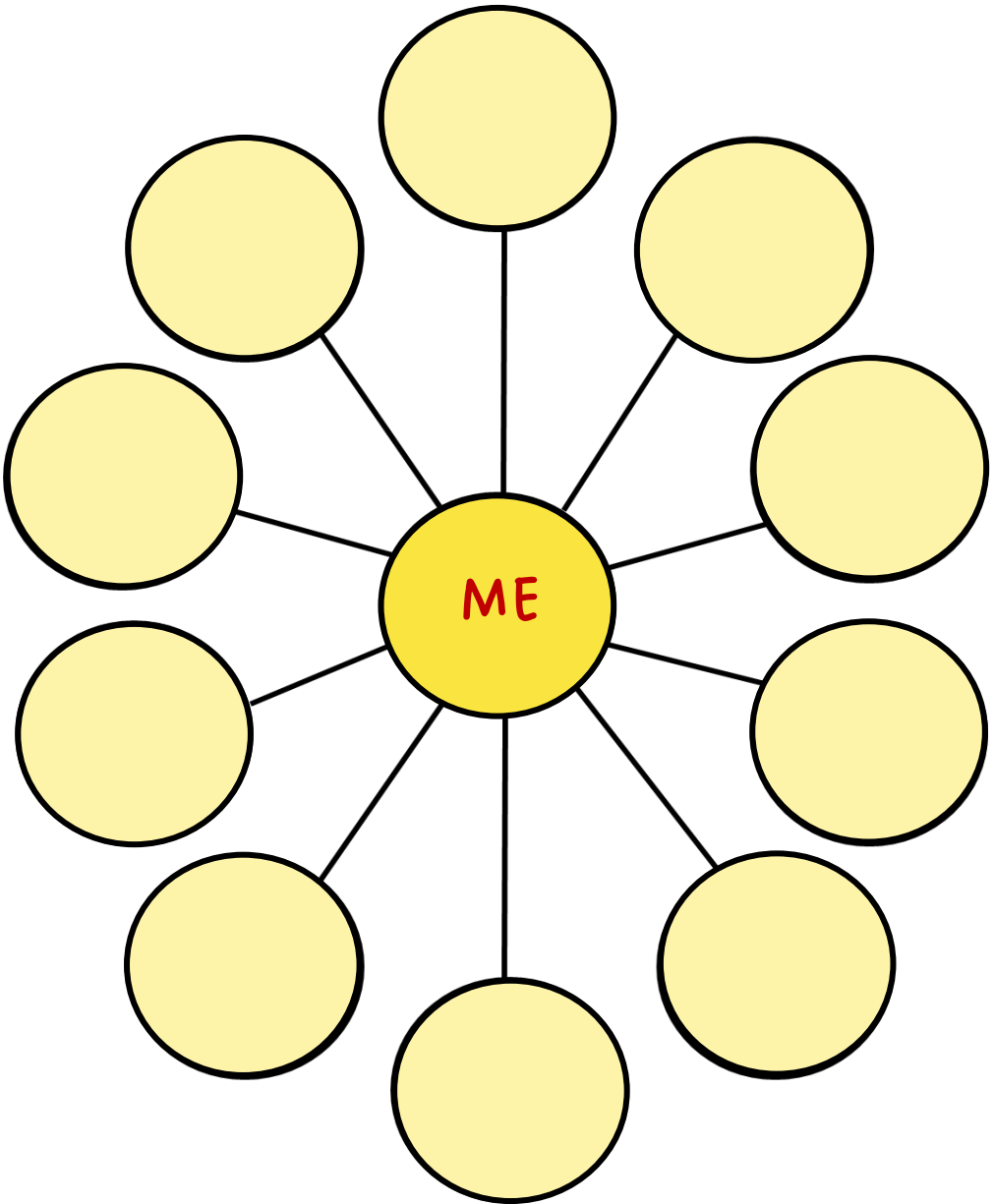
Who could support me

People around you who can help and support you can have various roles in your life. Support from people you already know could come from various places – some are in the chart below.



You will get different kinds of support from different people and that's ok. Getting support from different people can be more helpful than relying on one person for everything.

Notice you are in the middle of the next diagram, fill in the empty circles with people you know who support you.



You can find this on the Battle Scars website as an interactive worksheet

You may find doing the previous exercise hard, particularly if it highlights the fact that you don't have much support or perhaps you don't have the right kind of support. If that is the case – don't be discouraged. This can be useful and encourage you to look for support that is right for you. Even if you have loads of people to add to the diagram and have an extensive support network, ask yourself the following questions to help you get the most out of your support network.

Who can I trust with my personal information?



I may not like it, but who will not collude (agree) with me when it's unhelpful?

Who can I rely on to be there for me when I need it?

Whose opinion do I respect and accept even though I may not like what they say?

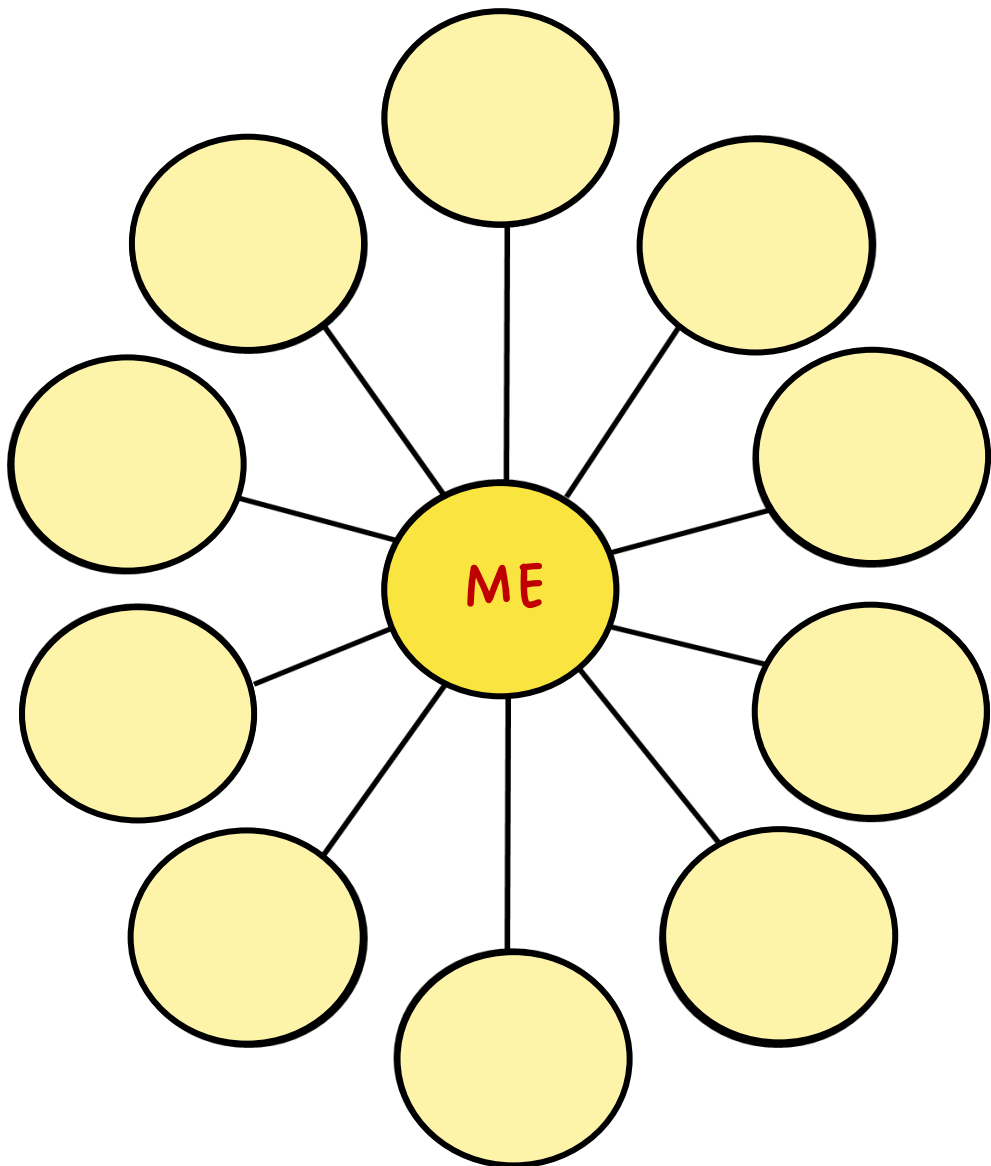
Who can remain calm when I am not?



Who will be non-judgemental?

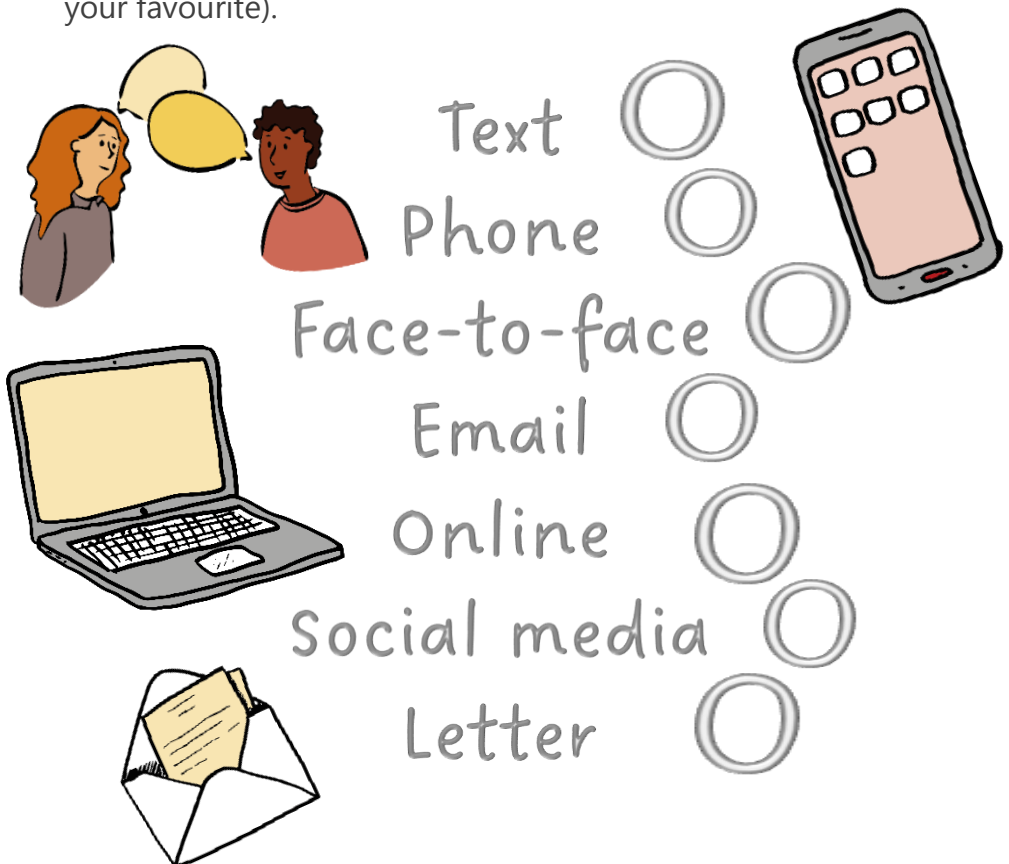
Am I happy with the support I have around me?

Having thought about these questions, do the exercise again adding anyone else you would like on it or what sort of people you would now like to include. It is also ok to remove people you feel might not be as helpful as you thought.



Sometimes when talking about something personal and difficult it is easier or more helpful to talk to someone you don't know and someone who has experience supporting people with problems.

There are lots of organisations and professionals that could help you. Plus, they can help you in lots of different ways. The following few pages help you explore what support you can access and what kind of support might suit you. First let's think about what method of support you would find most helpful (rank in order which method of support you prefer – 1 being your favourite).



You may find that you prefer different methods at different times and for different kinds of support. That's ok. **Do what works best for you.**

Now let's think about what aspects of support are important to you (circle which you prefer).



Anonymous.....Know who I am

Set Times.....Immediate/quick response

Same Person.....Different People

Lived Experience.....Trained Professional

Local to me Anywhere

Individual Group

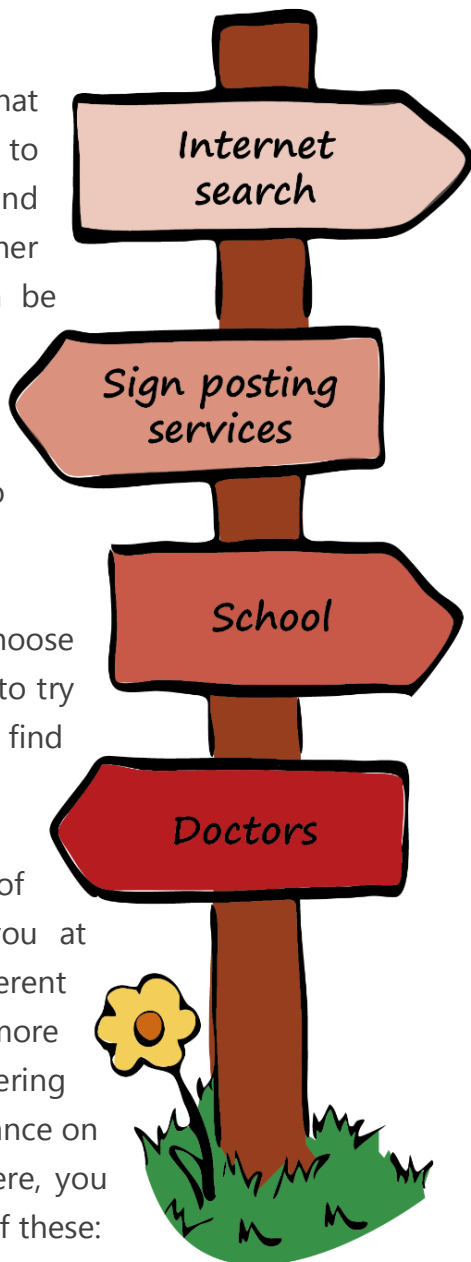


So, you have thought about the type of support you might like and what's important to you.

Now it's time to look at what services/people are out there to help you (please bear in mind support from one area to another may vary greatly). Support can be provided by a range of people. Some services are provided by the NHS, some are voluntary services, and you can choose to pay for some services.

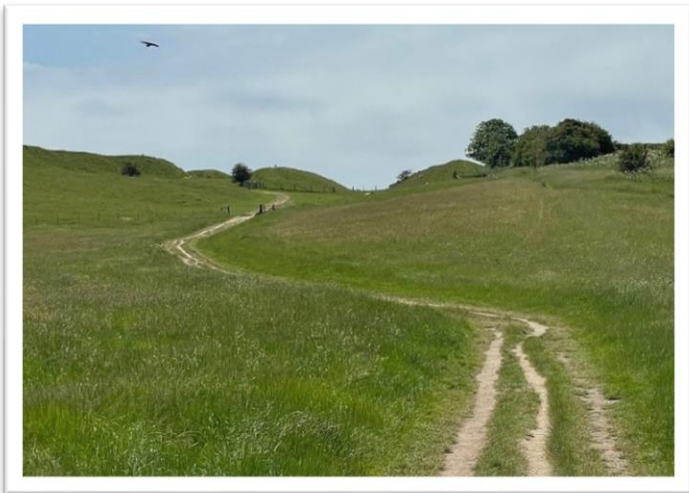
Don't panic about how to choose where to get help from. It is ok to try lots of different services until you find the ones that suit you.

Different services or types of support may be of help to you at different times and for different things. Remember it's ok to use more than one service. If you are wondering where to start, how to seek guidance on learning what support is out there, you could start by asking/using any of these:



IMPORTANT

- Support can come from a variety of places and people
- It is scary seeking support, but you will be glad you do
- You can seek support at any stage or relating to any aspect of self-harm, but if you can get support sooner rather than later, it is more effective
- Everyone is different and it may take time to find someone that you can work well with. That's ok, not everyone will suit everyone. Keep trying until you find the right person for you. Don't give up.

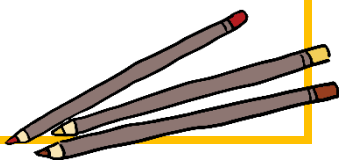


Here you can log which services you have found and how to contact them. By logging them here, you know where the details are when you need them.



Service	How I can contact them and when

my space



Opening up about self-harm

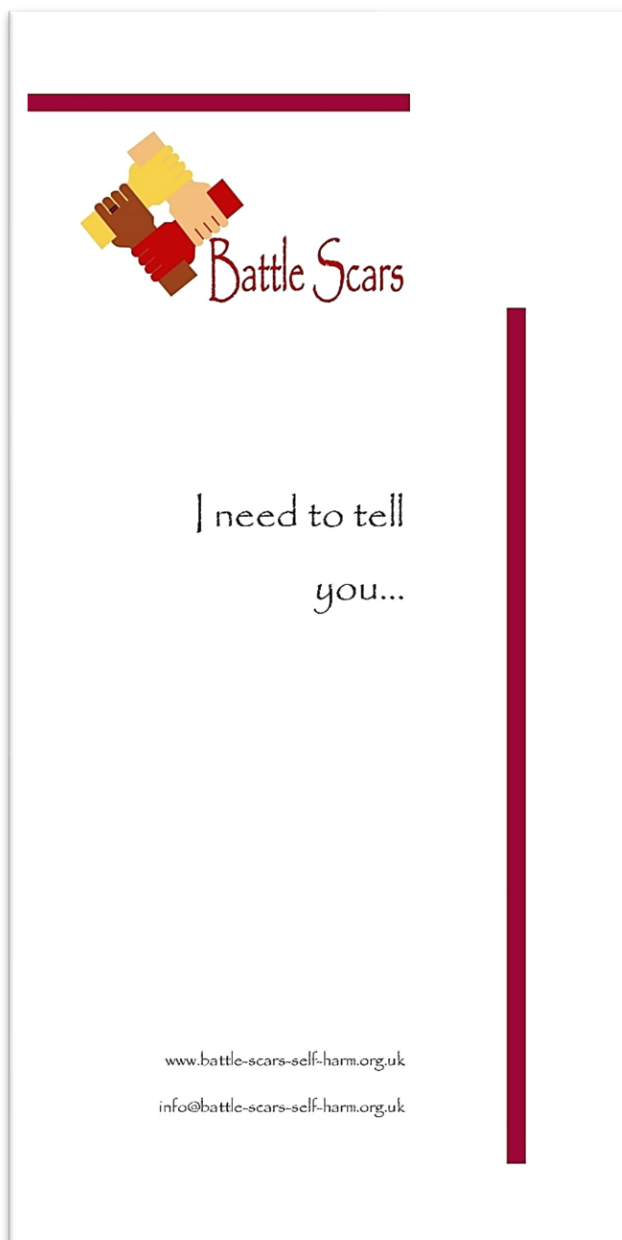
Some people keep the fact that they self-harm a secret from others. There are lots of reasons why this may be the case. It may be due to shame, embarrassment, worrying about the impact it may have on others (they may get angry, they may get upset, they may blame me, it will worry them, they may treat me differently). It may be you don't want to open up about it because you don't want to be told to stop or you simply don't know what to say. There are lots more reasons.

Most people find when they put these worries aside it is helpful and a huge relief to talk openly about self-harm and for it not to be a secret.



Opening up about the fact you self-harm can be very scary. It can also be scary for the person you talk to. This is because they may not know what to say or how to help you.

This leaflet can help you tell someone that you self-harm. This is a double-sided leaflet (folded in 3) that can be downloaded from the Battle Scars website.



*Front
page*

Please keep reading

I need to tell you that I self-harm.

To the person handing this out: tick what applies to you:

- ☐ I self-harm to cope.
- ☐ I do not feel in control and that makes me feel uncomfortable, trapped and frustrated.
- ☐ I do not self-harm to get attention.
- ☐ I do not self-harm to hurt or upset you.
- ☐ It helps me calm down. I use it to push my emotions aside when they're too hard to deal with.
- ☐ It doesn't mean I am suicidal.
- ☐ I do not know a better way to cope.
- ☐ I would rather not use it and I am trying to manage it.
- ☐ I don't use it all the time or as often as I want / need to. I do try to fight the urges but it can be extremely hard.

My other thoughts:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

"I self harm to feel physical pain to stop the emotional pain"

... this is important to me and I need you to understand

First page

Please keep
reading...

this is important to me and I

... need you to
understand

Facts about self-harm:

Many more people use this coping method than you might think. Self-harm does not discriminate, anybody can pick it up of any age, background, gender etc.

There are numerous methods of self-harm. It isn't only cutting. Overdosing, eating disorders and compulsive negative thinking are all self-harm.

Self-harm is addictive but unlike substance addiction its hold is almost completely psychological. It becomes a way of life and it's very hard to break this addiction because it requires major re-wiring of the brain.

People with Personality Disorders often self-harm. It's because they see the world as if through different colour tinted glasses and it's much scarier to them. They lack ways to deal with life and resort to self-harm to manage.

*"It relaxes me and chases
away the voices"*

Some people hear voices when stressed which often tell them to hurt themselves. They cannot simply make these voices stop or easily ignore them.

People who do not self-harm will never be able to fully understand it and that is OK.

Second
page

Please keep
reading, this
is important
to me and I....

need you to understand



Dos and don'ts:

- It's OK to not know what to say, just listen.
- Accept the fact that I self-harm.
- Don't judge me, I feel bad enough already.
- Don't overreact. I need you to remain calm.

"Self harm puts me back in control"

- Possible indications that I'm experiencing self-harm urges: panic attack symptoms, difficulty paying attention, shaking, mood dropping, retreating inside, needing to be alone, manic behaviour, severe agitation, anger. Please talk to me - I may not be able to express myself - or stay with me even if I try to push you away. I will be scared.
- Don't make assumptions and jump to conclusions. Ask me direct questions and I'll do my best to give you direct answers.
- Don't ask, make me promise or threaten me to stop.
- Don't add more guilt, I already have enough.
- Help me distract myself. If distractions don't work and it's getting worse I may have to hurt myself. Let me do it while I still have some control over my actions.
- Be patient with me. It'll take time to be able to reach out and speak about this.
- Don't take my self-harm 'tools' away. In desperation I may use something that will cause me much more harm.
- Be there for me.

Third
page



Thank you very much
for reading this

You will have your own emotions to
deal with after you've read this.
Give yourself time to process them.

If you wish to encourage more
discussion with the person who gave
you this leaflet try to remain calm,
honest and supportive.

We are a U.K. based charity but all
attempts are made to provide
information that can be useful
worldwide.

Our closed Facebook group is for
anyone, anywhere who needs
support.

If you need more information please
visit our website

www.battle-scars-self-harm.org.uk

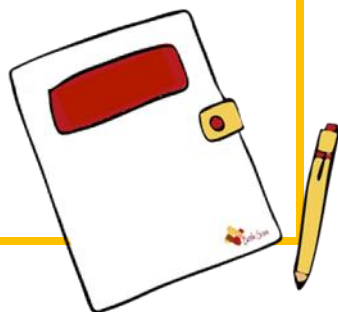
*Back
page*



How I self-harm

Acknowledging how you self-harm can be difficult, even acknowledging it to yourself. Being truly honest with yourself is a significant step forward. A lot of people use several methods of self-harm.

The self-harm methods I use are...





What I get out of self-harm

As already mentioned, self-harm is a response to something, and it serves a useful purpose. Self-harm always has a cause and self-harm always has a purpose and they are 2 very different things. What people get out of self-harming can vary enormously. Below are some of the reasons why people self-harm.

Avoidance

To feel better

To feel bad

Relief

To feel I'm in control

It's calming

It blocks out

I'm good at

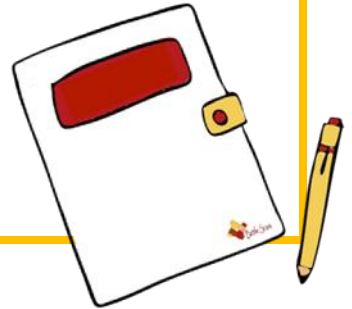
other thoughts
or feelings

Don't know
what else to do

To punish myself

Use the next space to log what you get from self-harm (what you get out of self-harm is different to why you self-harm).

What I get out of self-harm:

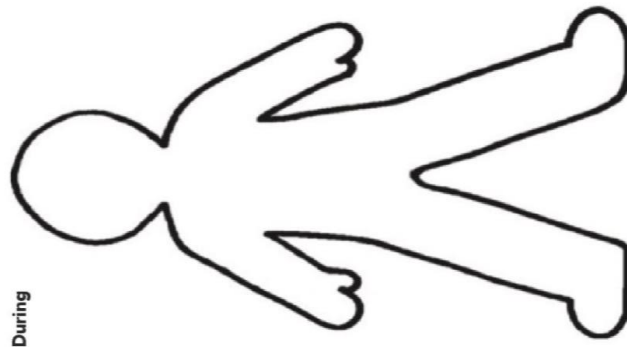


Before, during & after s/h

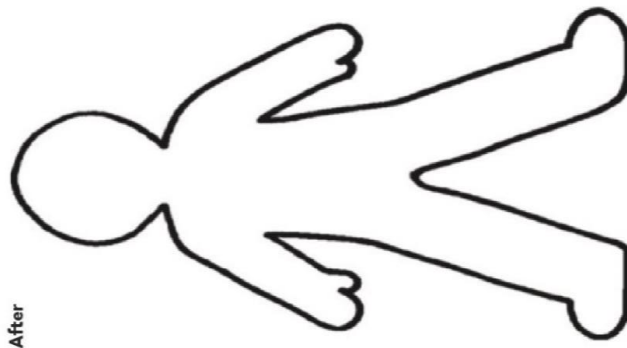
Before



During



After





Do I want to continue this way?

Ask yourself if you want to continue self-harming for the rest of your life?

YES

Maybe

Not yet

Unsure

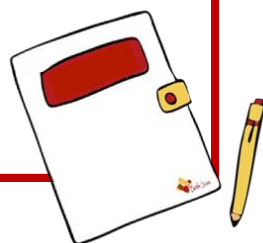
NO

The answer at this point may be “no” but it is normal to be nervous or scared about living without self-harm.

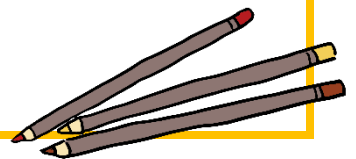
The following table will help you think about what may happen if you continue to self-harm or what your life could be like if you find alternative ways to manage your responses/emotions without self-harm. Some examples have been added to help you get started. Completing this table should help remind you that there is an alternative, a healthier alternative, to continuing to self-harm. We’ve put some examples to get you started.



Benefits to continuing to self-harm	Drawbacks to continuing to self-harm
<p>*It makes me feel better</p>	<p>*I will have more scars</p> <p>*I lie to people</p>
Benefits of living without self-harm	Drawbacks of living without self-harm
<p>*My body can heal</p> <p>*No more guilt</p>	<p>*It's scary</p>



my space



Triggers, Urges and Actions

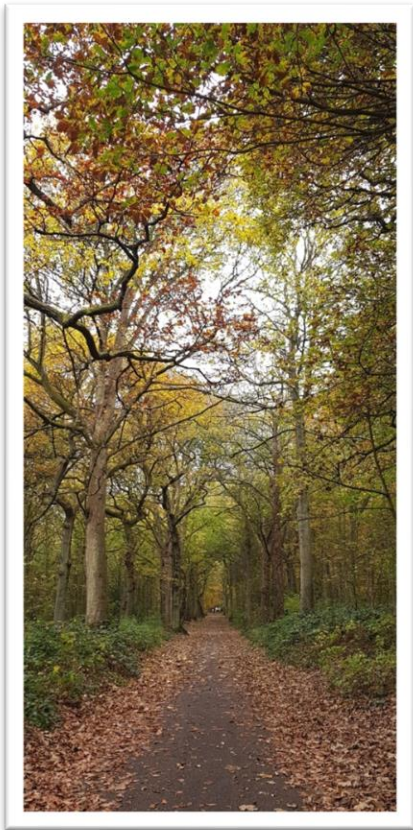
The illustration below explains the process of how self-harm happens in a simplified way. As discussed, self-harm happens for a reason(s). Basically, there is a cause. Something will **trigger** a connection with the cause. This trigger will set off an emotional response (an **urge**) to self-harm. Acting on this urge will result in self-harming behaviour.



Lots of things can be triggers. Examples of triggers are places, people, events, sounds, smells etc. The link between the cause and the trigger may not always be clear or make sense.



Exploring triggers can be a difficult thing to do and cause upset. Getting support while exploring triggers will be helpful. **Remember, you don't have to do this on your own and this process can take a lot of time.**



Understanding what triggers set off the urge to self-harm means that you can put measures in place to prepare yourself.

These measures could include avoiding certain situations; although this is not an ideal solution in the long-term, it could be useful in the short-term.

Alternatively, you could prepare yourself to deal with such situations in a positive and healthy way, so that the next time you face the same

trigger you are more prepared to deal with it.

If you can do that, the situation may not trigger an urge to self-harm - or the urge itself may feel more manageable.

Sometimes just acknowledging and facing a trigger that reminds you of something unpleasant can take the power away from the trigger.

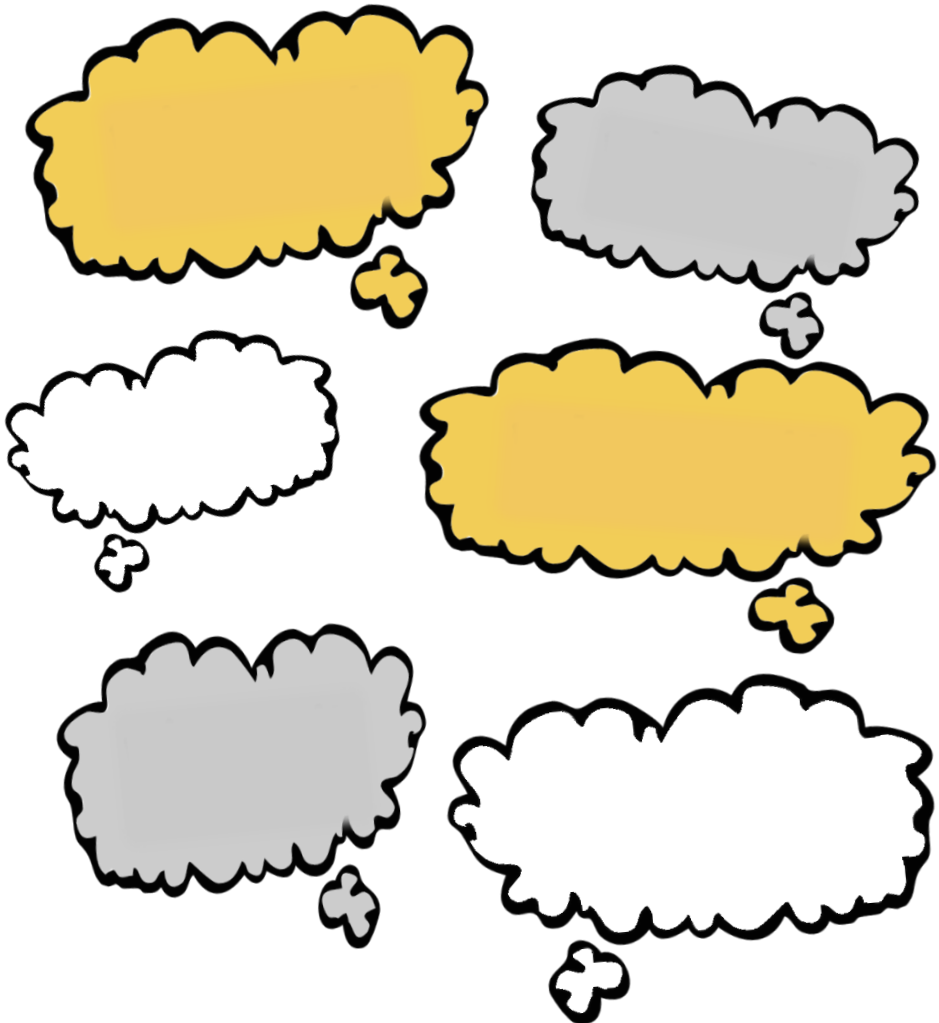


Remember that **triggers can be small things** as well as big obvious things or an accumulation of things. For example, being late for school because you couldn't find your tie can set off feelings of being useless, unreliable, and inadequate. Triggers can be unique to you.

What you find as a trigger may not be a trigger to someone else. That doesn't mean to say your trigger is "stupid" or not as important. All triggers are important no matter how big or small.

Thinking about Triggers

Think of situations, places, events, people, sounds or anything you can think of that triggers your urge to self-harm. Log them in the thought bubbles. **Don't spend ages thinking about this as it can be upsetting.** *More on managing urges in the next section.*



Now you know what (or some of what) triggers you, you can decide what to do about them. You have a few choices:

Do nothing

Even if what is causing your self-harm right now goes away, self-harm could remain as your go-to solution when distressed

Avoid the trigger

may be helpful in the short-term but not a helpful long-term solution

Acknowledge/accept why the trigger is a trigger and that this trigger causes a negative emotional response

Acknowledge that this is a valid response. By understanding why the trigger sets off this response, you can learn to take back control, manage the trigger and your emotions so they do not have power over you.

Managing Urges

Triggers will lead to urges, and sometimes you may get the urge to self-harm and not realise what the trigger was. In these situations, it is good to reflect on where you have been, what you have been doing, who you have been with, in an attempt to identify the trigger. There will be one (it could be tiny, big or an accumulation). You may feel it appropriate to think about this while having the urge to self-harm or manage the urge first and then reflect on what the trigger was.

IMPORTANT

- Do what works for you.
- There is no right or wrong way.
- Remember everyone is different and that's ok.
- It is not easy; managing urges can take loads of practice.
- Asking for support at any stage is ok.

Managing urges can delay the self-harm behaviour, reduce its severity, or stop you from acting on the urge.

So, let's think about managing urges - there are several options. We will explain each approach on the following pages:



Give them a go, you have nothing to lose. Don't get disheartened if they don't work at first. It takes practice to master but remember not every way will work for everyone. Everyone is different. If any of these techniques don't work for you or if they make you feel worse, try something else. Do remember that any attempt to manage urges can initially cause them to get worse. Urges want to keep their power and they want you to give in.

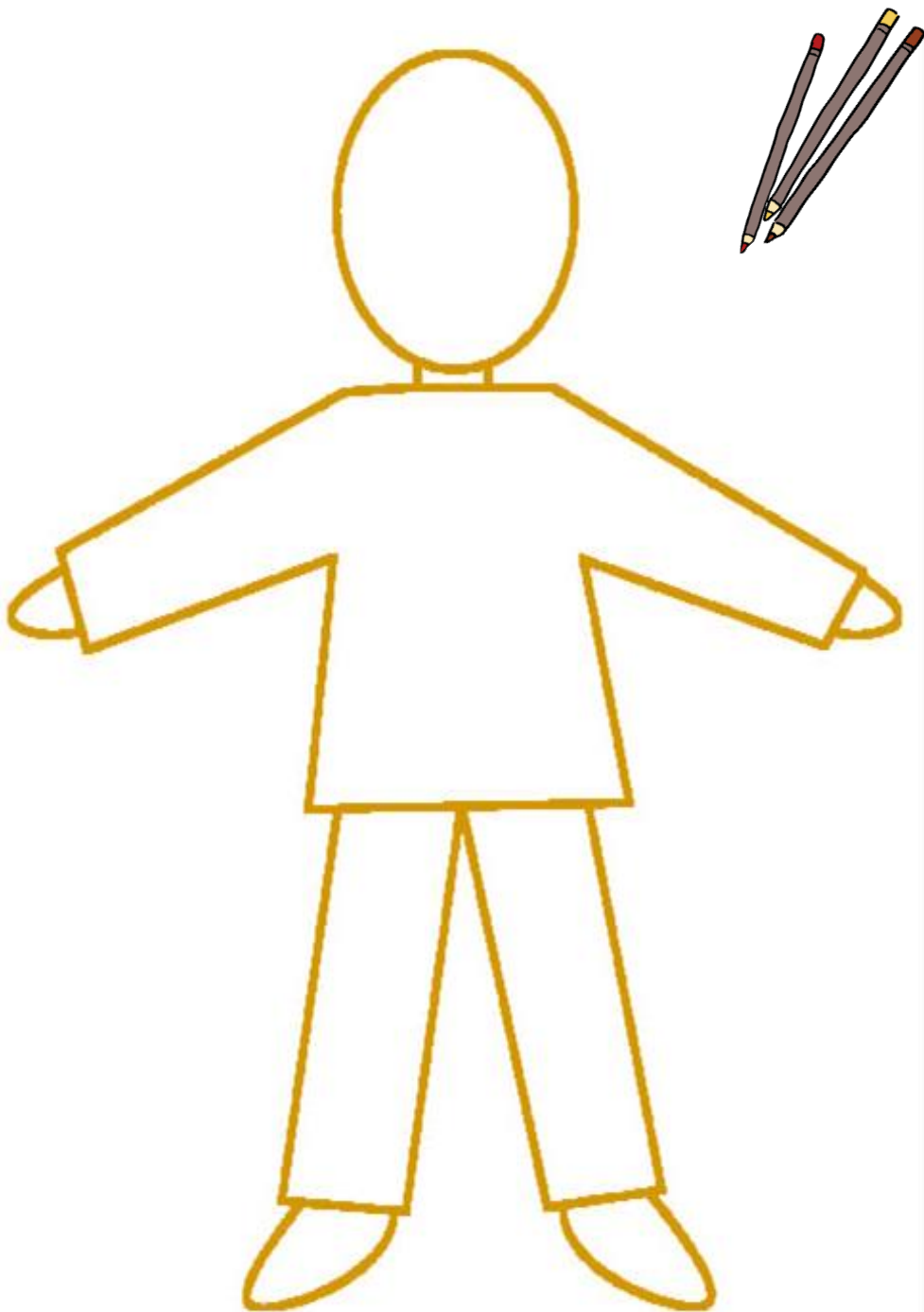


A Closer look at Observation

Concentrate on how your **body** feels and **where** you feel the urge. Your body is responding to a trigger, telling you it has been distressed and that something has reminded it of that distress. Being aware of this will allow you to review what caused the distress and help you figure out why. The quicker you do this after the urge has kicked in, the quicker you can deal with it.

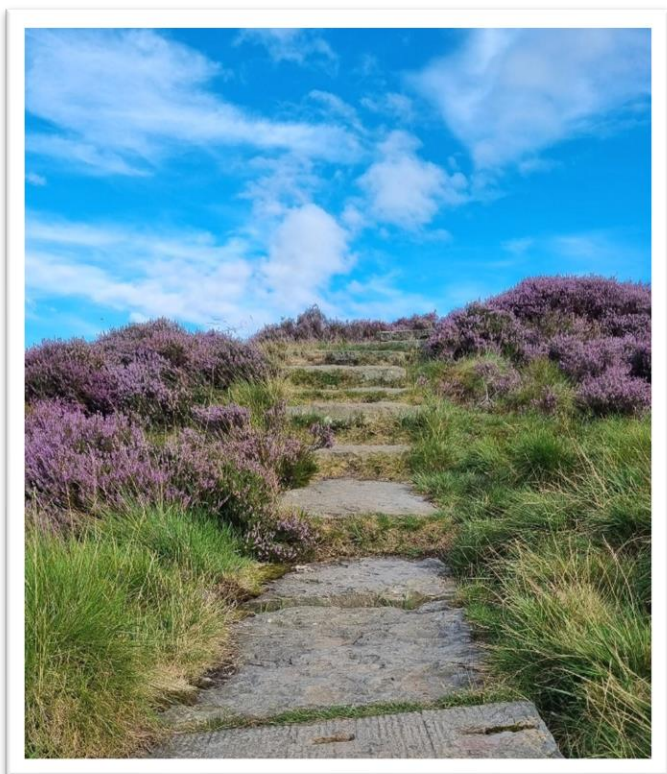
There is no doubt this can feel very uncomfortable. Stick with it **if you feel safe** to do so.

You may find it helpful to use the next image below to draw or write what you feel and where. For example, anger may feel like lightning around you, sadness may feel like a dark cloud in your head, anxiety may feel like a whirlwind in your tummy. Do this however you want.



A Closer look at Imagery

Visualise the urge, see the urge as something you can conquer, for example a wave, a mountain or a race. Choose which is most appropriate for you and something you can connect with and easily visualise. Acknowledge that it's tough, horrible and you may want to give in, but focus on what you will feel like when you have reached the top of the mountain or run through the finish line of the race. Paint the picture in your mind as if you are watching it on the television. Imagine all the good feelings you would feel.



A Closer Look at Delay Tactics

Making it harder to act on the urge, as well as **delaying** acting on the urge, could mean that the urge fades before you need to act on it. This may mean you don't self-harm or do not self-harm as much. For example, putting the tools you use to self-harm somewhere difficult to access can be a good delaying tactic.



A Closer Look at Logic

Rather than acting on the urge you can choose to think about what is causing the urge, look at the situation and consider your options. Or imagine what a trusted person would suggest. It may be as simple as writing down/thinking about both the positives and the negatives of acting on the urge.

Logic will be hard to use when you're experiencing intense urges but this process can be very useful especially if you can turn it into a habit.

It may be that you want to take this one step further and use a problem-solving technique. If so, follow the next steps.

Things I can think about:

- What's the problem?
- Possible solutions/alternatives
- Explore each option, including positive and negative implications
- Choose an option/put it into practice
- Evaluate/decide if it helped
- If it helped, I could use it again. If it didn't help, I know not to use it again. But must remember that different things work at different times, so it is always worth trying something that didn't work again at another time.

A Closer look at Distractions

When you get the feeling, you want to self-harm (urge) sometimes using a distraction (focusing on something else) can reduce the feeling.

It may sound too simple, but it can work and is worth trying. Distractions must ideally be used before the urges get too strong when they have a better chance of working. Some will work and some will not. Even if they don't stop you completely, they may delay the self-harm or reduce the damage done.

IMPORTANT

- Different distractions work for different people
- Different distractions work at different times
- It is worth giving as many as you can a try until you find the ones that work for you
- Don't give up, it may take time

The following pages have suggestions of lots of ideas you might want to try. These are all ideas from people who use the Battle Scars services, things that work for them. You can find this list on the Battle Scars website to check it out at any time.

How to avoid, delay or reduce self-harm



Distractions help re-direct the mind's attention and give it something better to focus on. **Must be used as early as possible after they urges start in order to work.** The distractions need to match your mood, the urges' intensity and the emotions you feel at the time.
Many of these ideas drop into more than one category.

Ground:

Feet firmly on the ground (sometimes better to be barefoot outside)
54321: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste (or favourite taste)
Breathing exercises
Be in nature
Focus on comforting textures
Hold something warm/cold and focus on the sensation
Stroke something smooth/rough and focus on the sensation
Squeeze a stress ball
Make a ball out of rubber bands
Count whatever is around (floor tiles, ceiling tiles, patterns on wallpaper, cars going past your window etc.)
Stand under the water in the shower or in heavy rain
Drink some water
Listen to birds
Fidget toys/play with coins
Play with blue tac
Smell/hold things that remind of safe times (perfume, scented candles, blanket/soft toy/item belonging to favourite person etc.)
Notice what is different today than it was yesterday (blooming trees, flower buds etc.)
Receive a massage, reiki or energy healing from a person you trust

Find comfort:

Curl up under a duvet/(weighted) blanket
Sleep
Hug a loved one
Stroke/hug/cuddle a pet
Hug a soft toy
Have a hot drink
Have a pyjama day and watch TV
Use a Worry Bear
Massage own hands

How to avoid, delay or reduce self-harm



Listen/watch:

Music through speakers or headphones
Watch favourite TV series
Watch favourite film
Watch something easy
Watch something engaging
YouTube videos (funny, engaging etc.)
Put together a new playlist on your phone
Watch documentaries on a subject you are interested in
Listen to the sound of waves/stream
Gaze into a flame (candle or campfire/firepit)
Cloud watch
Star gaze

Be active but do not overdo it:

Go for a walk somewhere quiet, a park or in nature
Run
Swim
Tai chi
Yoga
Go to the gym
Play sports
Ride a bike
Dance
Bounce a ball against a wall
Wash the car
Gardening
Walk the dog
Play with pets
Play outdoor games with the dog
Do some tidying up (remove clutter)
Do some cleaning (create a better environment for yourself)
Do some vacuuming
DIY

Create:

Draw (from own imagination or copy depending on what is safer/more effective)
Paint
Doodle
Colour in
Knit
Sew
Crochet
Embroider
Felt shapes (sewing)
Needle felting
Cross stitch
Weaving
Decorate glass
Painting/stickers by numbers
Creative kits (making candles/soap etc.)
Do Origami
Modelling clay
Draw/doodle/squiggle on your legs or arms (use a felt tip pen or poster paints – NOT red)
Carving (wood, candles etc.)
Make models (from paper planes to kits)
Paint nails
Make greeting cards
Write in a journal
Write a blog
Write stories
Write poetry
Write a song
Sing
Bake
Cook
Learn a new craft/new skills

How to avoid, delay or reduce self-harm



Play: games, toys, puzzles:

Video games	Games on the phone
Board games	Word searches
Crosswords	Sudoku
Rubik's cube or similar puzzle	
Lego	Geomag

Reach out to others/be a part of the community:

Be with others who accept you as you are
Be with loved ones – just be
Speak to a friend/family member
Meet up with a friend
Post on the Battle Scars Facebook group
Reply to posts in the Battle Scars Facebook group (or similar) and help yourself by helping others
Post or reply to posts on web forums
Talk to your therapist
Join in the Battle Scars groups (face-to-face or virtual) or similar mental health/self-harm support groups
Help someone else
Call a helpline
Spend time at a day centre/community centre/club
Go out to a public place (instead of being alone)
Text/message/video friends/loved ones

Vent:

Punch a pillow Scream into a pillow
Loud music in the car and sing as loud as you like, scream or swear Cry
Use a punch bag (or hay bale if you have access to one) – use boxing gloves and avoid bruising
Smash things you do not need/want (such as bottles at a bottle bank)
Write what is annoying/winding you up or swear words on the things you break
Scrub/vigorously clean (doors, skirting boards etc.)

Be productive:

Write a to-do list for one day or longer (keep it small!)

Write a have-done list (make it as big as you can!)

Schedule some things to avoid procrastination (be sensible)

Make a weekly plan but be flexible

Do some admin/paperwork

Work on a project

Focus on work

Catalogue your books or CD's or collectables etc.

Do some voluntary work

Help educate others about self-harm

How to avoid, delay or reduce self-harm



Other:

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|------------------------|
| Read | Play a musical instrument | Meditate | Do a guided meditation |
| Write a list of things you are grateful for | | Write a list of things you are looking forward to | |
| Change your body temperature by having a warm/cold bath/shower, hold on to something cold (but not frozen), put an ice back on the back of your neck | | | |
| Write whatever words come to mind (extra: using different colours and/or styles) | | | |
| Write down thoughts and destroy them (crumple or burn them) | | | |
| Pampering (facemask, haircut etc.) | Feed the ducks at the park (not bread) | | |
| Let craft glue/PVA dry on your body and peel it off | | | |

Delaying techniques can result in avoiding self-harm- Be aware of your safe self-harm limits and when delaying becomes more dangerous than beneficial

Put obstacles in the way: keep self-harm tools or tablets out of easy reach.

"Not enough time now", "too many people about", "not now, later/after I've done this" etc.

Walk away from food sources (if bingeing/overeating is one of your self-harm methods)

Deterrents – not meant to create guilt or negative emotions but might work for some

Consider the discomfort of healing injuries

Consider how hard it can be to hide scars (if you hide them)

Consider the difficulty explaining new injuries

Consider the time it can take at the Emergency Department if you need treatment or the possible negative staff attitude **(ALWAYS get help if you have badly hurt yourself or if you have overdosed)**

Harm reduction – use with caution, these are still self-harm methods causing pain/discomfort or resemble self-harm. They reinforce the self-destructive programming in the brain that pain or blood is the solution to emotional distress. Use as a last resort

Snap a rubber band/hair tie on the wrist Draw on yourself using a red felt tip pen

Clutch ice cubes or hold them on the area of the body you are planning on injuring (red food colouring can be added [may stain])

Hold strong mouthwash in your mouth Eat very spicy food, eat a chilli

Suck on extra strong mints (extra: drink cold water afterwards)

IMPORTANT

- You will notice we DO NOT recommend the use of elastic bands, ice cubes or drawing with red pen on the skin where you want to cut as distraction techniques but only to be used for reducing harm and only if everything else you've tried has not reduced the intensity of the urges.
- As mentioned right at the beginning of this journal, self-harm is a method of managing intense emotions. By using self-harm repeatedly, when used to experience pain, the brain has learnt that a way of managing these emotions is by hurting yourself. Elastic bands and ice cubes are meant to cause pain. Drawing with a red pen is meant to look like a cut. Using these reinforces the message to the brain that self-harm will help you to deal with these emotions.
- Our aim is to help you break these learnt patterns and learn new healthier ways to manage.

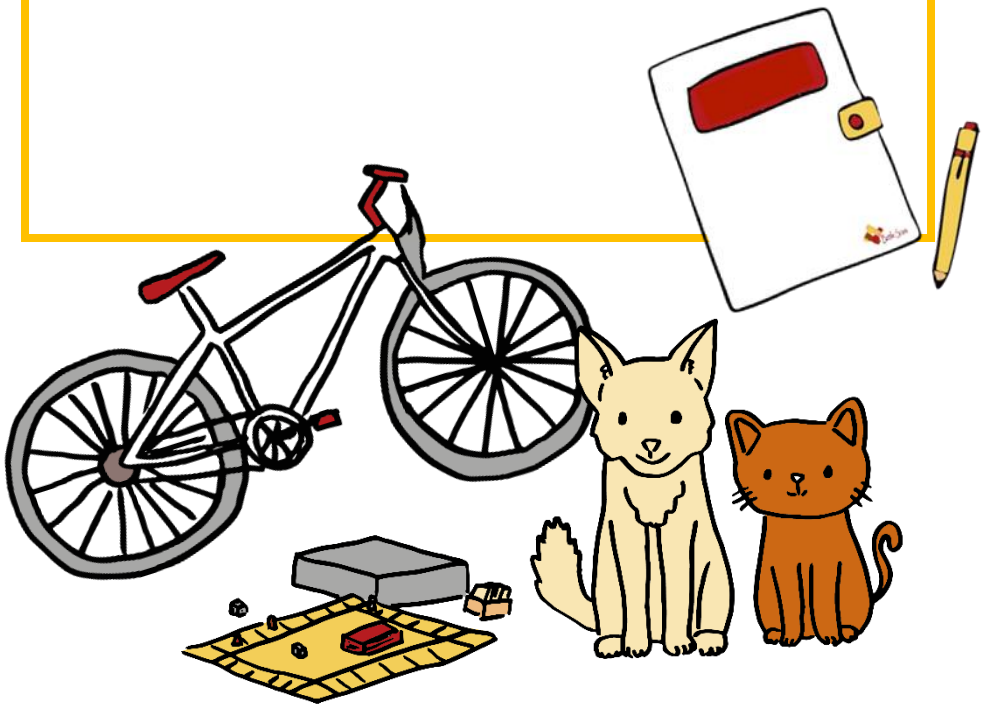
Use this space to log distractions you have tried and indicate if they are helpful or not. It is also worth logging what situation

you used them in, so that you can remember which distractions worked at combating particular thoughts, feelings or situations.

Idea tried	Situation used in	Helpful or unhelpful



Ideas I haven't tried but would like to try
in the future:



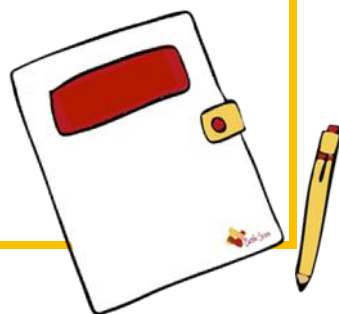
Acting on Urges

Acting on self-harm urges resulting in physical self-harm can cause a range of feelings and thoughts, some of which may be completely contradictory. Here are a few of those thoughts and feelings but there are loads more.



See section on guilt
on the next page

Thoughts and feelings I experience after I
self-harm:



After you self-harm, the resulting feelings and thoughts need to be explored as they can give you an insight into why you continue to do it. Talking this through with someone may be helpful.

IMPORTANT

- All self-harm is dangerous
- Self-harm can be life threatening
- Different methods of self-harm are dangerous in different ways
- Always seek the appropriate help immediately after you have self-harmed in order to limit the damage done
- Do not be afraid of seeking help
- You are not wasting anyone's time
- You are not attention seeking
- You have nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about

Guilt – useful or not?

There are two kinds of guilt: healthy and unhelpful. If you did something wrong, like borrowing something without permission, and you feel guilty about it, that's healthy guilt. You can apologise and not do it again.

Feeling guilt when self-harming serves no purpose. It only makes you feel awful which, by itself, can be a trigger and can turn into psychological self-harm. Unfortunately, people do not stop self-harming just because they feel guilty. Self-harm is best described as an unhealthy coping method but feeling guilty about it is unhelpful and a waste of energy. Instead, use your energy to learn to manage it and work your way towards no longer needing it.

Getting help

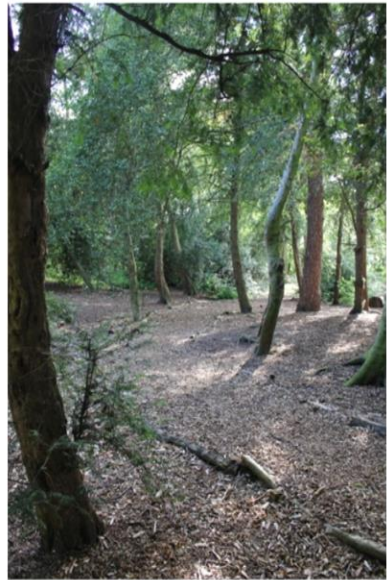
Here are some of the places you can seek medical help when you have self-harmed.



To count or not to count?

Some people find that counting the days they don't act on their self-harm urges is a helpful way to reduce the number of times they self-harm.

Although this may be a positive tactic, some find it upsetting and disheartening when they do act on the urge and "have to start again". This can result in feelings of failure and make some people feel like they "have gone back to zero". This method can disregard all the positive times when you didn't act on the urge.



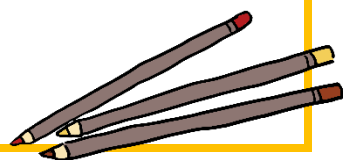
Rather than a number system

it may work better to use a sticker system in a diary or put buttons/dried pasta in a jar. If you can't manage the urge and do self-harm **DON'T** remove the stickers/buttons/dried pasta.

Nobody can take away the times you didn't self-harm.

Keep them there as a reminder of what you achieved. Don't beat yourself up for acting on the urge and self-harm. It's not helpful. If you do want to empty the jar pick a timescale, for example, every month or when the jar is full.

my space



It's All About Me!!!!

The next few pages are going to be focusing on the positive things about you and what you experience.

It can be hard at times to think good things about yourself but with **practice** you can learn to notice the good stuff about yourself including who you are and what you do.

IMPORTANT

- This can be hard, but if you find it tricky don't give up. Maybe ask someone to help you to get you started. It does become easier to do. Positive thoughts create positive thoughts
- Thinking about yourself is not selfish
- Thinking good things about yourself does not mean comparing yourself to other people or make you better than other people, it is about recognising YOU and the importance of YOU

Reflecting

The aim of doing the following exercise is to help you think about making the most of each day and looking for the positive moments in each day.

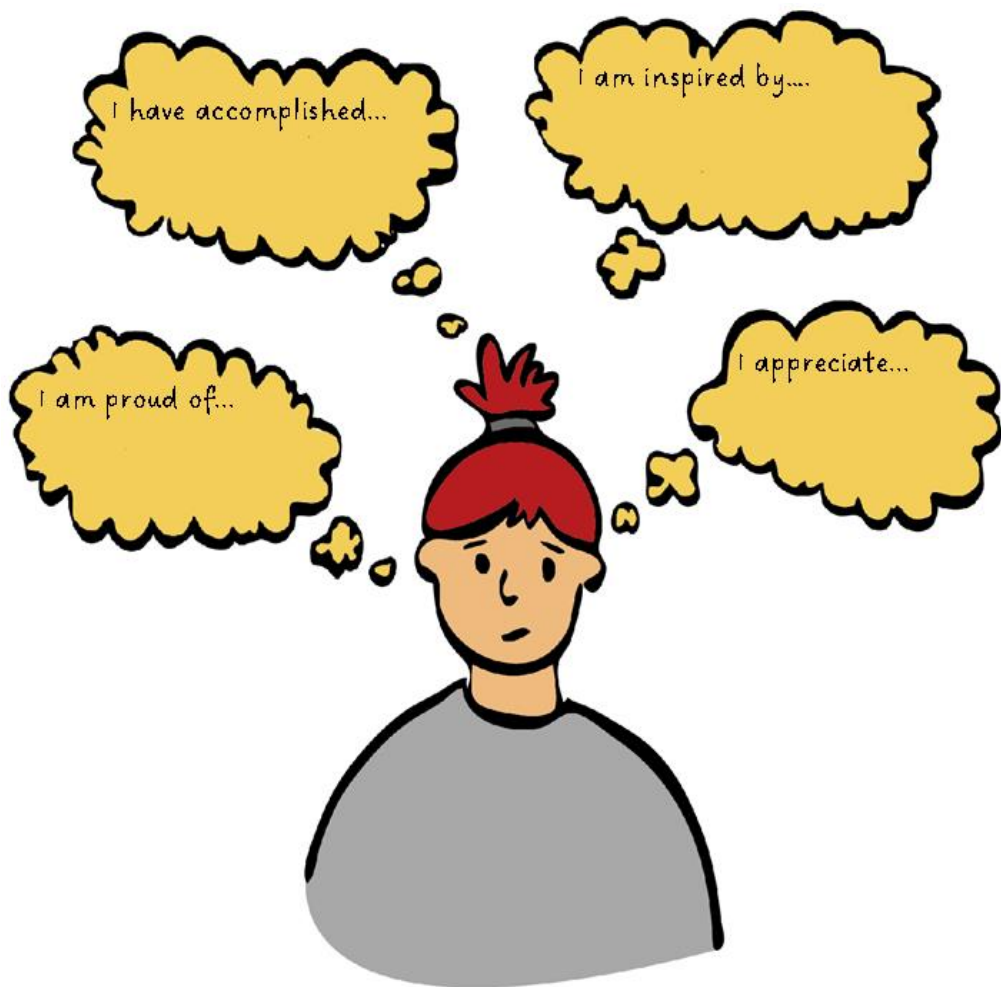


Date:	
Things I did well today were...	
Today I learnt...	
Today's positive moments were...	
Today I'm thankful for...	
Today I smiled when...	
Today I took care of myself by...	
Today I did this new...	
Today I felt...	

There are several blank copies of this exercise at the back of this journal.

Thinking About...


The aim of this exercise is to help you think about the good stuff you have in your life.



Forward Thinking

The aim of this exercise is to plan and think about how you can get the most out of each day.

Date:	
Today's challenges are...	
Today's goals are...	
I would like to improve...	
I hope that...	
My priorities today are...	
Today I want to achieve...	
Today I will focus on...	
My dream is...	
I will improve tomorrow by...	



There are several blank copies of this exercise at the back of this journal.

Positive Affirmations

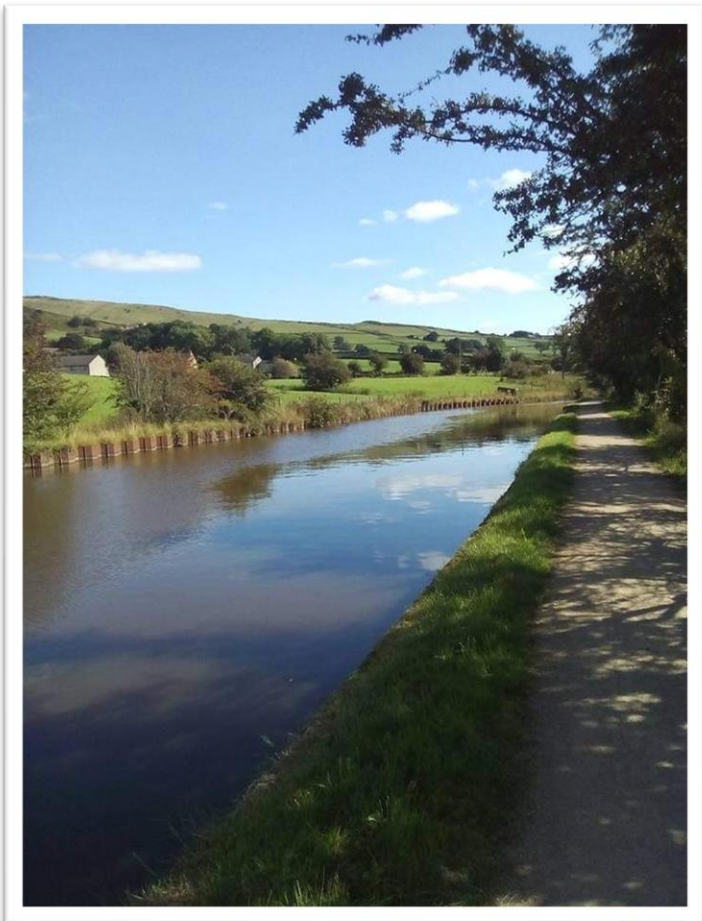
Negative thought patterns (a psychological form of self-harm) don't just start out of nowhere. These thought patterns are learnt over time just like how you had to learn how to fasten your shoelaces. You learnt from those around you while you were growing up what you were like as a person. If you repeatedly heard/experienced negativity, then you would have started believing the negativity.



For example, if you were repeatedly called "naughty" or told "you could do better," you would take on those thoughts about yourself and believe you are naughty or not good enough. Thinking negative thoughts about yourself can be very damaging and limiting on its own, but it can also lead to physical self-harm.

Just as negative thought patterns are learnt over time, positive thought patterns can be learnt to replace them. You can actively do this using positive affirmations.

Positive affirmations are positive statements that if repeated on a regular basis can change negative thoughts into positive ones.



There are other benefits to repeatedly saying positive affirmations. They can include:

- Help you feel more positive about yourself
- Boost confidence
- Increase positive energy
- Turn attentions to the here and now
- Increase self-esteem
- Decrease stress
- Promote positive coping methods
- Increase control over emotions
- Aid the control of sabotaging thoughts
- Assist with the ability to recognise unhelpful thoughts

There are no rules regarding how often to repeat affirmations, what time of day is best, how many affirmations to repeat etc. Some suggest that repeating affirmations in the morning for a few minutes and focusing on just a few affirmations so you don't dilute their effectiveness is best.

Do what feels right to you. There is no right or wrong but the more you repeat them, the more effective the process will be.

Next are a range of positive affirmations to try. Pick the ones that suit you. You may want to copy them and display them somewhere, so you are reminded to say them.

- I make good decisions
- I deserve to be happy
- I am in control of my emotions and thoughts
- I grow and improve every day
- I believe in myself
- I make mistakes but I learn from them
- I choose positive thoughts
- I am trying my best
- I release tension and anxiety
- I accept myself
- I am safe
- I am at peace
- I am strong

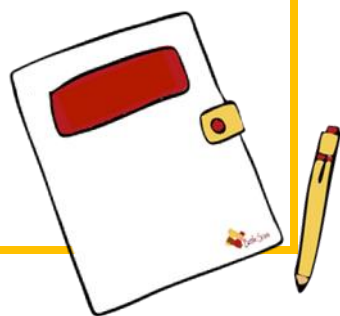
- o I am enough
- o My voice and opinions matter
- o I can ask for and accept help
- o I can handle anything
- o I am important
- o I can reach my goals
- o I respect myself and my body

You can always write your own positive affirmations. They are easy to create and will be bespoke to your needs.

Below are some tips to help you write your own positive affirmations.

- Think about what you want to improve in your life/about yourself
- Keep your affirmations short, so they are easy to remember
- Use the present tense - write as if you already "are" or "have" what you want.
- Use "I" or "my"

Positive affirmations I've created for myself:



Just Bin it !!!!!

Sometimes, no matter how much positive thinking you do, those negative thoughts/worries still can persist. They go round and round in your head and you just can't shake them off. A simple technique to get a negative thought/worry out of your head is to write it down and then "bin it".



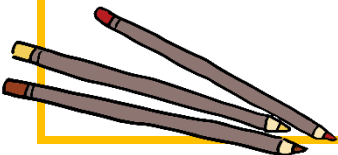
It may sound silly and too simple, but it does work. Give it a go!

Another technique is to write it down and shred it. It is therapeutic seeing that negative thought/worry being torn to pieces.



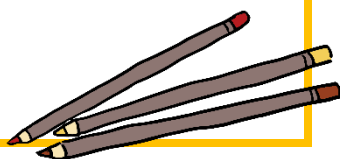
Use the space below as you wish. You could take this opportunity to reflect on what your thoughts are about this journal. What have you discovered? What have you learnt? Think about how you have progressed and how will you now move forward.

my space





my space



Extra resources

Reflecting exercise (extra copy 1):



Date:	
Things I did well today were...	
Today I learnt...	
Today's positive moments were...	
Today I'm thankful for...	
Today I smiled when...	
Today I took care of myself by...	
Today I did this new...	
Today I felt...	

Reflecting exercise (extra copy 2):



Date:	
Things I did well today were...	
Today I learnt...	
Today's positive moments were...	
Today I'm thankful for...	
Today I smiled when...	
Today I took care of myself by...	
Today I did this new...	
Today I felt...	

Reflecting exercise (extra copy 3):

Date:	
Things I did well today were...	
Today I learnt...	
Today's positive moments were...	
Today I'm thankful for...	
Today I smiled when...	
Today I took care of myself by...	
Today I did this new...	
Today I felt...	



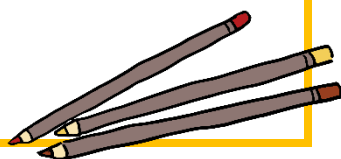
Reflecting exercise (extra copy 4):



Date:	
Things I did well today were...	
Today I learnt...	
Today's positive moments were...	
Today I'm thankful for...	
Today I smiled when...	
Today I took care of myself by...	
Today I did this new...	
Today I felt...	



my space



Forward thinking exercise (extra copy 1):



Date:	
Today's challenges are...	
Today's goals are...	
I would like to improve...	
I hope that...	
My priorities today are...	
Today I want to achieve...	
Today I will focus on...	
My dream is...	
I will improve tomorrow by...	

Forward thinking exercise (extra copy 2):

Date:	
Today's challenges are...	
Today's goals are...	
I would like to improve...	
I hope that...	
My priorities today are...	
Today I want to achieve...	
Today I will focus on...	
My dream is...	
I will improve tomorrow by...	



Forward thinking exercise (extra copy 3):

Date:	
Today's challenges are...	
Today's goals are...	
I would like to improve...	
I hope that...	
My priorities today are...	
Today I want to achieve...	
Today I will focus on...	
My dream is...	
I will improve tomorrow by...	



Forward thinking exercise (extra copy 4):

Date:	
Today's challenges are...	
Today's goals are...	
I would like to improve...	
I hope that...	
My priorities today are...	
Today I want to achieve...	
Today I will focus on...	
My dream is...	
I will improve tomorrow by...	



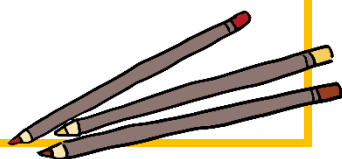
Forward thinking exercise (extra copy 5):

Date:	
Today's challenges are...	
Today's goals are...	
I would like to improve...	
I hope that...	
My priorities today are...	
Today I want to achieve...	
Today I will focus on...	
My dream is...	
I will improve tomorrow by...	





my space



For a wide range of resources check out the Battle Scars website



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