

Useful Resources

Living with Your Thoughts on Suicide

After a Suicide (SAMH)

Art of Conversation (SAMH)

Do You Know Somebody Who Is Thinking About

Taking Their Life

MIND Booklet – Understanding Self Harm

Truth about Self Harm (Mental Health Foundation)

Useful Contacts

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Acorn Centre, Vale of Leven Hospital
Alexandria G83 0AU
Tel: 01389 817324

Samaritans
Tel: 08457 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org.uk

Childline
Tel: 0800 11 11 11
www.childline.org.uk

Scottish Association for Mental Health
www.samh.org.uk

Young Minds
Telephone advice service for anyone with concerns about the Mental Health of a young person.
Parents Information Service: 0808 802 554
www.youngminds.org.uk

VIK (Very Important Kids)
Young Minds micro-site – for young people run by young people.
www.vik.org.uk

National Self-harm Network
Provides information and support to people who self harm.
www.nshn.co.uk

RecoverYourLife.com
Self-harm support community.
www.recoveryourlife.com

The National Self Harm Network
www.nshn.co.uk

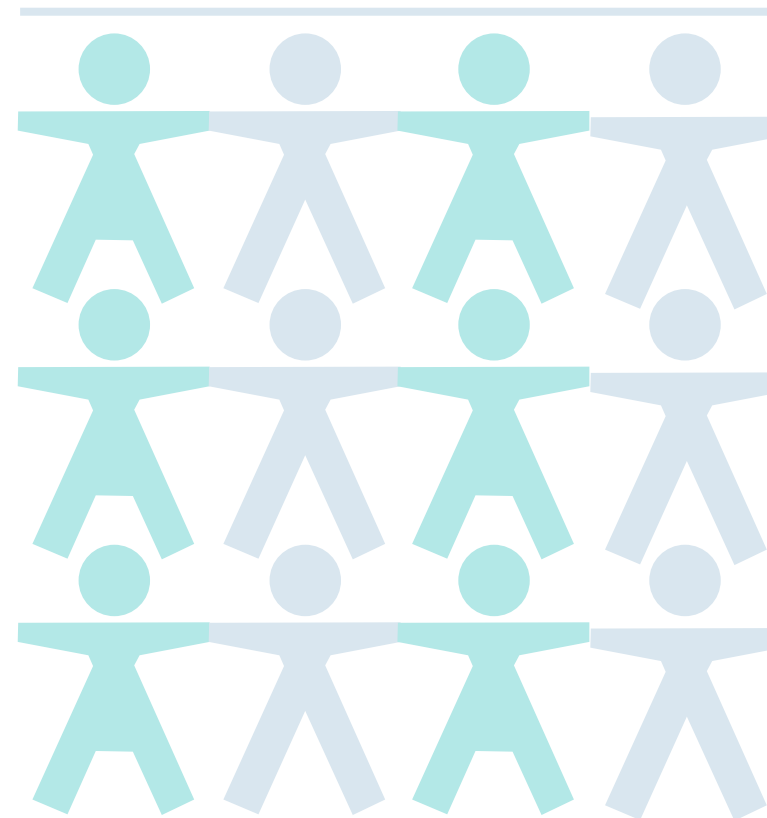
TheSite.org - Self-harm
TheSite.org is an online guide to life for 16 to 25 year-olds which includes a section on self-harm.
www.thesite.org

For local information visit:
www.wdchcp.org.uk/our-services

Self-harm and Suicide

The Myths and Facts for Parents, Children and Young People

January 2014



West
Dunbartonshire
COUNCIL

NHS
Greater Glasgow
and Clyde

West Dunbartonshire
Community Health & Care Partnership

chooselife
A national strategy and action plan
to prevent suicide in Scotland

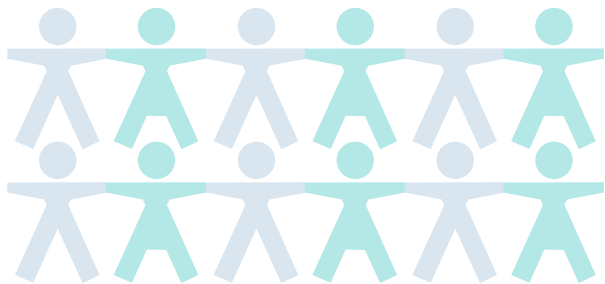
getting
it right
for every child

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE
COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP



For the majority of young people, self-harm is not the same as a suicide attempt. In fact it is often something very different: an attempt to cope and to stay alive in the face of emotional pain.

The difference between self-harm and a suicide attempt may not be apparent to others, since often the same sort of injury (such as cutting of the wrist area) could be interpreted in either way. However most people who self-harm, if asked, are clear about their intention. Therefore the difference between suicide and self-harm is about the intention. The severity of the injury is not necessarily an indicator of intent.



Self-Harm doesn't = Suicide

In its broadest sense, self-harm refers to deliberate actions someone takes to harm themselves. It is widely accepted that self-harm is usually a response to emotional pain or a way of dealing with distress and feelings that are difficult to cope with and which the person finds difficult to deal with any other way. Self-harm is a way of releasing feelings such as self-hatred, anger, sadness and depression.

Self-Harm

Myth: Self-harm is a failed suicide attempt

Fact: People who self-harm do not usually intend to die. Self-harm can also be a strategy which some young people consider makes it possible for them to continue with life.

Myth: Self-harm is attention seeking behaviour

Fact: Most young people self-harm in private. However, some young people harm themselves in a way that can be noticed by others as a way of asking for help, when they cannot find the words or when they don't know why they are experiencing difficulties. It is preferable to acknowledge that the young person has needs, rather than labelling them at this time.

Myth: Only girls self-harm

Fact: Self-harm is often thought to be more common in girls and women but research shows that boys and men also self-harm, it may be harder for them to ask for help.

Myth: It is best not to mention self-harm

Fact: Talking and emotional support is helpful. Self-harm indicates a young person is experiencing difficulties and could be ready to talk about the issues with someone who can provide support and is a good listener, such as a trusted adult or friend.

Myth: People who self-harm have a mental illness

Fact: Self-harm is not a mental illness, it is likely to be a sign of distress. Some young people who self-harm may have mental health problems. The majority of young people who self-harm require emotional support to help them seek alternative coping strategies and to address the underlying problems.

Suicide

Suicide is an act of deliberate self-harm which results in death.

Myth: Young people who talk about suicide never attempt or complete suicide

Fact: Talking about suicide is one of the factors suggesting a risk of attempted suicide. Every discussion about suicide should be taken seriously.

Myth: People who threaten suicide are just seeking attention

Fact: Do not dismiss a suicide attempt threat as simply being an attention-seeking exercise. It is likely that the young person has tried to gain attention and this attention is needed. The attention may save their lives.

Myth: Talking about suicide encourages it

Fact: Responsible talk about suicide does not encourage people to attempt suicide.

Myth: If someone has decided to kill themselves there is nothing anyone can do about it

Fact: If appropriate help and support is offered to the person with suicidal thoughts their risk of suicide can be reduced.

Myth: If a person attempts suicide and survives, they will never make a further attempt

Fact: A suicide attempt is regarded as a probable indicator of further attempts; the danger may also rise with each attempt.

"They might not know who to ask that could actually help"
Young person, West Dunbartonshire

"You might be ashamed and not want to tell someone"
Young person, West Dunbartonshire