

# SELF-HARM



## WHAT IS SELF-HARM?

It is an act of "intentional infliction of harm on one's own body."

"Love yourself first and everything else falls into line."

You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world."

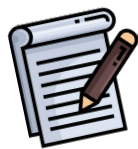
## SELF-HARM BEHAVIOUR INCLUDE:

- Cutting or scratching
- Taking toxic or corrosive substances
- Overdosing on medications
- Scalding oneself with hot fluid
- Hitting oneself against hard surfaces or using hard objects
- Hair-pulling

## WHY SELF-HARM?

- Relieve painful emotions, psychological distress or tension
- Self-punishment from the sense of guilt or shame resulting from past traumatic/abusive experiences
- Express emotional conflict or turmoil which one has difficulty putting into words
- Communicate a need for support – a desperate cry for help
- Regain a sense of control – especially for one who perceives that everything is out of control in his or her life except for "when, how, and how much I cut myself"
- Distract oneself from difficult life circumstances and situations – e.g. parental divorce, relationship problems and academic setbacks

## MANAGING SELF-HARM BEHAVIOUR



### Keep a Journal

When you have the urge or need to harm yourself but did not, write down what had happened. Ask yourself, 'How did you manage to control your urge against harming yourself?'

### Engage Others

Know someone who is supportive and whom you can trust? Talk to them instead of hurting yourself. Have the telephone numbers of your friends or helplines ready at hand.



### Try Other Forms of Expression

Whenever you feel the urge to hurt yourself, use other less harmful ways like drawing with a red pen, squeezing ice, or wearing a rubber band and snapping it.

## SUPPORTING A FRIEND WHO SELF-HARM

**Be Vigilant to Tell-Tale Signs**  
Such as always wearing long-sleeved clothing even in hot weather, unexplained wounds or scars on the body, and discovering sharp objects in the bags

**Approach with Open Communication**  
Allow individual to know what you have noticed and express your concern in a caring and non-confrontational way

**Do Not Judge or Criticise**  
Stay non-judgemental and avoid critical comments when approaching the individual. Doing so will help to avoid amplifying the feeling of shame and guilt, and possibly triggering another round of self-harm

**Encourage Individual to Seek Treatment**  
Perhaps, offer to accompany them to make an appointment. Your company can help them feel less alone and uncertain

## HELPLINES

### Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)

- ☎ 1800 221 4444
- 🕒 24-hour helpline

### IMH Mental Health Helpline

- ☎ 6389 2222
- 🕒 24-hour helpline

### Helpline for Mandarin Speakers 华语辅导热线

- ☎ 1800 353 5800
- 🕒 Mon – Sun, 10am to 10pm  
(Closed on public holidays)

### Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH)

- ☎ 1800 283 7019
- 🕒 Mon – Fri, 9am to 6pm  
Sat, 9am to 1pm