

SAFE FROM HARM

Guidance to help manage self-harm and increase safety in the home

Please note, this document contains generic risk advice. You know your child and your home environment best. Please read this document and implement the strategies that you deem are required to ensure your child's safety

1. Reduce Isolation

This is about helping the child/young person to feel connected to other people.

- Make plans to do something together on a regular basis.
- Encourage and support involvement in education, activities, clubs, hobbies and comfort from pets.
- Have regular time together to talk each day i.e. eating together as a family.
- Have plans to look forward to with friends and family and create reminders for these events e.g. make a positive calendar.
- Encourage spending time out of their bedroom. You can ask family or friends to check on them.
- Give information of support services available:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<http://www.themix.org.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/> or call: ChildLine 0800 11 11

<https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/>



2. Communication

This is about providing more opportunities for the child or young person to talk.

- Show that it is ok to talk, listen to them and always give them time.
- Take them seriously, validate feelings and help them to solve any problems they may have.
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help.
- Be creative with communication to make it easier i.e. use notes, texts, drawing or symbols.
- If the child or young person feels unable to talk, they can use a 'code word' to alert you.
- Don't forget, ChildLine are available for young people to talk to 24/7.
- Comfort them and remember to praise, it really does make a positive difference.
- Accept and acknowledge.

3. Minimise harm

This is about maximising safety around self-harm when stopping may not be possible.

- Remember there are no safe ways to overdose/self-poison (medication/chemical/fluid).
- Check out www.nshn.co.uk for lots of distractions that can help to cope with the upset.
- Increase monitoring/supervision if you have concerns about a child's/young person's self-harm.
- Medical support can be accessed at: School Health Nurse, First Aider, GP, NHS 111, NHS minor injuries unit, Children's Emergency Department.
- Have a first aid kit in the home with anti-septic wipes, anti-allergic plasters and bandages.
- Keep all wounds clean and looked after.
- Take steps to increase internet safety.
- Keep an eye out for any changes in mood or behaviour.
- If you are worried about the immediate safety of the child/young person (i.e. they have disclosed that they want to take their life or if you find evidence that they intent to take their life) please contact your out of hours GP.



4. Safe Storage

This is about reducing the chance of easy access to substances which could lead to overdose or self-poisoning.

- Keep all medicines, cleaning products and other harmful fluids locked away.
- Only keep small amounts of medicines in the home.
- Discuss the safe storage of items used for self-harm with a professional i.e. CAMHS Practitioner
- Remember we keep lots of things in our garages and sheds. Keep these places locked and secure.
- Young people can be creative in ways that they can harm themselves, things such as cords, belts, blades and sharp objects can cause serious harm, so think carefully about what you need to store safely.



Reference: National Institute of Clinical Excellence (2011) The short-term physical and psychological management and secondary prevention of self-harm in primary and secondary care.