

SELF-HARM MYTHS AND FACTS



1 hour

Create a safe and positive learning environment by agreeing ground rules for the lesson.

In this lesson we will learn:

- ➔ some of the facts about self-harming behaviour
- ➔ to recognise self-harming behaviour in ourselves and others
- ➔ how to ask for help when needed and that it is ok to ask for help
- ➔ how to support a friend.

This lesson should take place after sessions about emotional health and support networks. Students should be given prior notice about this lesson occurring so that they are able to opt out if they do not feel comfortable being there.

Resources

- 🕒 myths and facts handout
- 🕒 support slide
- 🕒 'Dear diary' page
- 🕒 ball.

Introduction

We have been learning about emotional health and how our feelings, thoughts and actions link together. We know that we can improve our own emotional health and build up our resilience to cope with difficult times. But sometimes pressures can be too great and lead to emotional health problems. Today's topic is about understanding self-harm and how to support someone who is self-harming. This subject is likely to affect some people in the group in some way so it's really important to be open and sensitive to other's feelings. Remember that it's ok to talk to someone about this if you need to. If you need to leave the room at any time everyone will understand and we won't ask questions. If you do wish to leave please go to... (specify a place).

Activity

1. Label ends of the classroom as 'true' or 'false' or hand out cards for students to hold up. Read out each statement and ask students to go to the end of the room according to what they think (or alternatively hold up true and false cards).
2. Lead a discussion about their opinions, being sensitive to differences in opinion and reinforcing class ground rules. Use the factsheet to give information and sources of support to the students.
3. In pairs look at the 'Dear diary' page. Consider what advice you would give to this person as a friend. What can they do that is helpful? What do you think would not be helpful?





4. Feed these back. Make sure that they:

- Feed these back and discuss. Make sure these points are reinforced:
- DO NOT tell the person what to do – allow them to have control over what they want to happen.
- DO NOT tell them to stop. Although this seems counter intuitive, it is very difficult and takes time and support to stop – the person will need to find other safer ways of coping first.
- DO offer to support them in seeking help if that is what they want. DO continue to be their friend.
- Seek help for yourself if you need support.
- Offer to listen to them and give them time and space to talk. Offer to help if they need it.

Make sure the key messages have been understood.

Look at a range of websites about self harm that offer advice and support for young people and for their friends and family. Ensure that the group look at helpful websites and that they understand that there are many unhelpful sites they may come across which can be a trigger for someone vulnerable to self harming. Remind them to talk to someone if they see anything that concerns or worries them.

Having support and talking about problems and difficult feelings can help.

Closing: Throw a ball to students and each time they catch the ball, they have to call out something they would do when they are feeling low that helps them feel better. Repeat for all students.

Reflection

What does this mean for me?

Note

When talking about the subject of self-harm it is important to acknowledge that this could be a trigger for young people who are currently self-harming or have self-harmed in the past. Be aware of any students that may be affected and make sure support is outlined and highlighted.

Links to: Coping with changes | Building resilience | Helping my friends | Let it out | Who are Samaritans? | My support network

Make sure young people know what support is available and how to access this support.

DEAL

Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening



SAMARITANS