

Self-Harm Booklet

Penumbra
Mental Health

Your journey. Your way.

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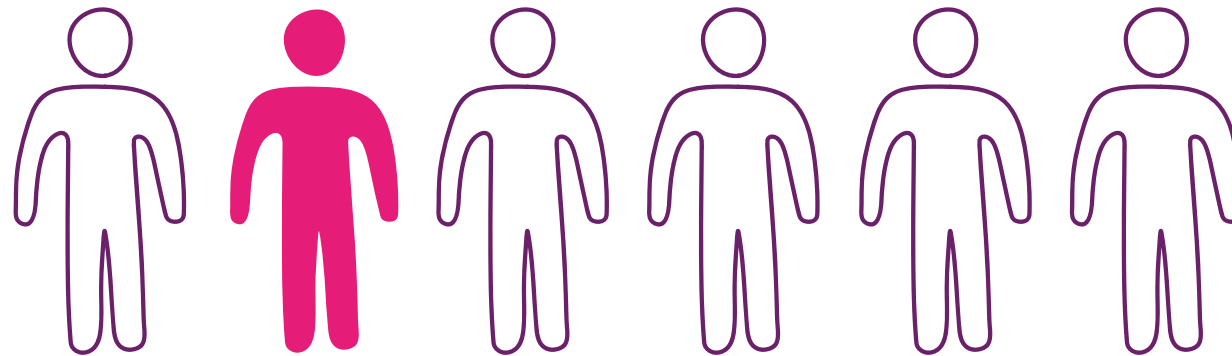
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A simple but effective way of feeling better about ourselves by taking time to remind us of our qualities and strengths. Fill it in, then pull it out and read it when we are feeling down.	
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Learn about what triggers and prevents self-harm by keeping a diary. Use the knowledge to help reduce self-harm.	
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Use this to think about a plan for staying safe. Think about places and people that are safe. The SOS! box is a plan for emergencies. Share this with people who are trusted and who will help keep you safe if this will help.	
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Use this to help think about what triggers self-harm and what helps avoid it.	
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What is important now and/or in the future? Put it in the box and treasure it, keep it, nurture it, work towards it, focus on it!	

Introduction

Self-harm affects people of all ages and genders. There is no such thing as an archetypal person who self-harms. Research does however indicate that young people are most at risk, and that approximately **1 in 6 young people in Scotland have self-harmed**. Some research suggests that this is a conservative estimate.

The reasons why a person self-harms are unique to each individual. Self-harm is an expression of a person's feeling of stress, anger, frustration, shame, being "at a loss", or other feelings of distress. Self-harm is often a response to an underlying problem and is often described as a way of coping with associated distress.



About Penumbra



Penumbra is a voluntary sector organisation working in the field of mental health. For many years we have sought to raise awareness of self-harm and to support those directly, and indirectly, affected.

This toolkit is designed as a resource for people who self-harm, and for those who may be supporting someone who is self-harming. It is a toolkit (not a workbook) and the tools can be used creatively and flexibly. Remember we are all individual and what works for one person doesn't necessarily work for another, but hopefully you might find some ideas in here that will help you, or someone you know, think about how to approach the issue of self-harm.

Useful Resources



Breathing Space

Open up when you're feeling down

Confidential phone line
for people who need
someone to talk to
breathingspace.scot
0800 83 85 87

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
childline.org.uk | 0800 1111

Helpline for
Children and
Young People
childline.org.uk
0800 11 11

SAMARITANS

Samaritans: 24 hour confidential
phone line for people who need
someone to talk to
samaritans.org
116 123



User-led voluntary
organisation creating
understanding
about self-injury
lifesigns.org.uk

HandsOn

Practical information, tools and
activities to respond helpfully to
troubling behaviours and to help
children and young people flourish
handsonscotland.co.uk

Penumbra
Mental Health

Information on
Self-Harm Services
penumbra.org.uk



Information

What is Self-Harm?

Drug and
alcohol abuse

Burning

Swallowing
poison

Overdosing

Deliberate
vomiting

Binge
eating

Hair pulling

Biting own
skin

Swallowing
foreign objects

Breaking
own bones

Cutting

Picking
wounds

Starvation

Head
banging

Signs of Self-Harm

**Sad, moody,
angry, quiet**

**Taking extra
long in the
bathroom**

**Plasters,
razors, scissors,
knives
disappear**

**Unexplained
cut marks,
bruises or
burns**

**Only wearing
long-sleeved
clothing**

**Trauma or
stressful life
event**

**Changes in
eating/sleeping
pattern**

**Need for
secrecy and
privacy**

**Smell of Dettol,
antiseptic etc**

**Low esteem,
feeling
worthless**

There may be many reasons why some or all of these signs may occur and do not necessarily indicate self-harm.

Myths and Facts



Try to... Try not to...

Try to...

- Listen
- Stay Calm
- Understand why the person is self-harming
- Explore what the person is gaining from their self-harm
- Ask how you can help
- Be sensitive
- Be reliable
- Make a plan to cope with difficult feelings
- Attend to any immediate medical concerns and talk about how they can stay safer if they self harm again

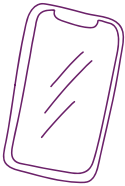
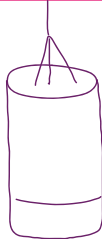
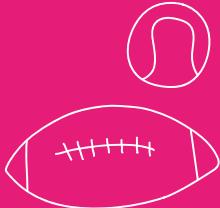
Try not to...

- Make quick judgements
- Make assumptions
- Issue Ultimatums
- Get angry
- Force the person to talk
- Tell the person to stop
- Confiscate self-harm equipment
- Show disappointment if the self-harm continues

Reducing Self-Harm



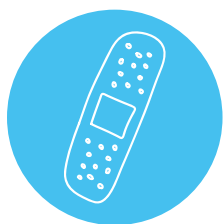
Alternatives to Self-Harm

Contact a friend or helpline 	Go to the gym 	Go for a run 
Listen to music or dance around 	Use a punching bag 	Practice a sport or swim 
Go for a walk 	Write a diary or do some art 	Use an ice cube or elastic band 
Do something for others/practice kindness 	Spend time with friends 	Value yourself Use positive affirmations and positive thinking 

Tips for First Aid



PHONE 999: for severe cuts or burns
shock, drowsiness or unconsciousness



Cuts & Wounds

Cover the wound

Apply **pressure** to the area

Lift the affected area above
head height



Overdose

Check **consciousness** -
turn on side if

drowsy and stay with them

Identify what taken, how
much and when

Re-assure by speaking
quietly and calmly

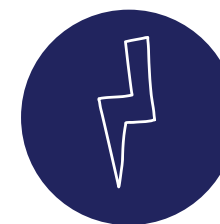


Burns

Cool the affected area with
cold running water

Remove jewellery and
clothes (if not sticking)

Cover with cling film/clean
plastic bag



Distress

Listen carefully

Speak calmly

Ask how you can help



Tools

Affirmations



I am good at...

I feel best about
myself when...

My best features are...

People like me because...

My talents are...

Things I recently did
for others...

My best qualities are...

Important to me is...

My favourite thing
to wear is...

I feel relaxed when...

What makes me laugh is...

People I admire are...

My favourite things are...

Self-Harm Diary



Use this part of the diary to describe what happened if you **did** harm yourself.

What was I doing today? (What was happening what were you doing? who were you with)	Triggers (What was happening just before you started to think about harming yourself?)	How did I feel? (How did the triggers make you feel? How did you feel when you thought about hurting yourself?)	What did I do? (How did you hurt yourself? What did you do, and when?)	How did I feel after? (How did you feel immediately after you harmed yourself? How did you feel a few hours after you had harmed yourself?)

What was I doing today? (What was happening what were you doing? who were you with)	Triggers (What was happening just before you started to think about harming yourself?)	How did I feel? (How did the triggers make you feel? How did you feel when you thought about hurting yourself?)	What did I do? (How did you hurt yourself? What did you do, and when?)	How did I feel after? (How did you feel immediately after you harmed yourself? How did you feel a few hours after you had harmed yourself?)

Use this part of the diary to describe what happened if you **didn't** harm yourself.

What was I doing today? (What was happening what were you doing? who were you with)	Triggers (What was happening just before you started to think about harming yourself?)	How did I feel? (How did the triggers make you feel? How did you feel when you thought about hurting yourself?)	What did I do? (What did I do instead/to avoid hurting myself?)	How did I feel after? (How did you feel immediately after? How did you feel a few hours after?)

What was I doing today? (What was happening what were you doing? who were you with)	Triggers (What was happening just before you started to think about harming yourself?)	How did I feel? (How did the triggers make you feel? How did you feel when you thought about hurting yourself?)	What did I do? (What did I do instead/to avoid hurting myself?)	How did I feel after? (How did you feel immediately after? How did you feel a few hours after?)

Things that lift me up



Write in the clouds the things/people that cheer you up, make you smile, occupy you or distract you from bad thoughts (things that might help you cope if you are thinking of self-harm).



Safe Plan



Use this to plan in advance for possible situations/events that may cause you distress and identify steps you and others can take to help keep you safe and well.

Safe places for me

Things that make me feel safe are

People I trust to help me feel safe

What soothes and relaxes me is

Triggers

Describe the possible triggers/crisis that might occur that cause you to hurt yourself

What can I do

Describe what you can do to help yourself avoid or minimise the crisis

What others can do

Describe what others can do to minimise the crisis

SOS!

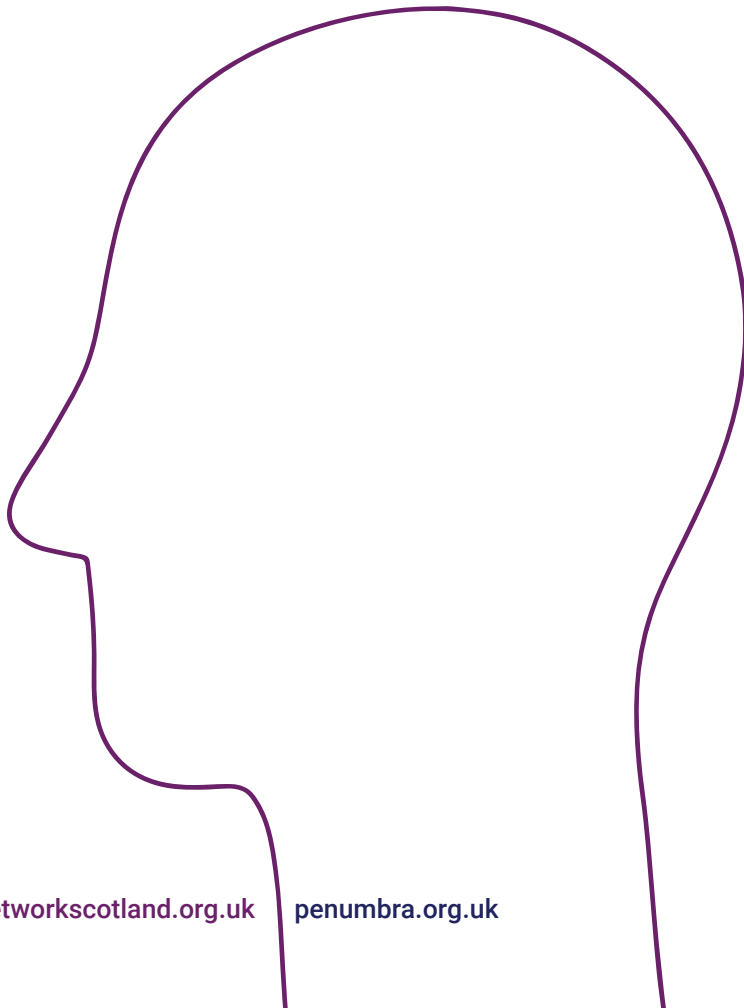
In an emergency, contact...

Talking Heads



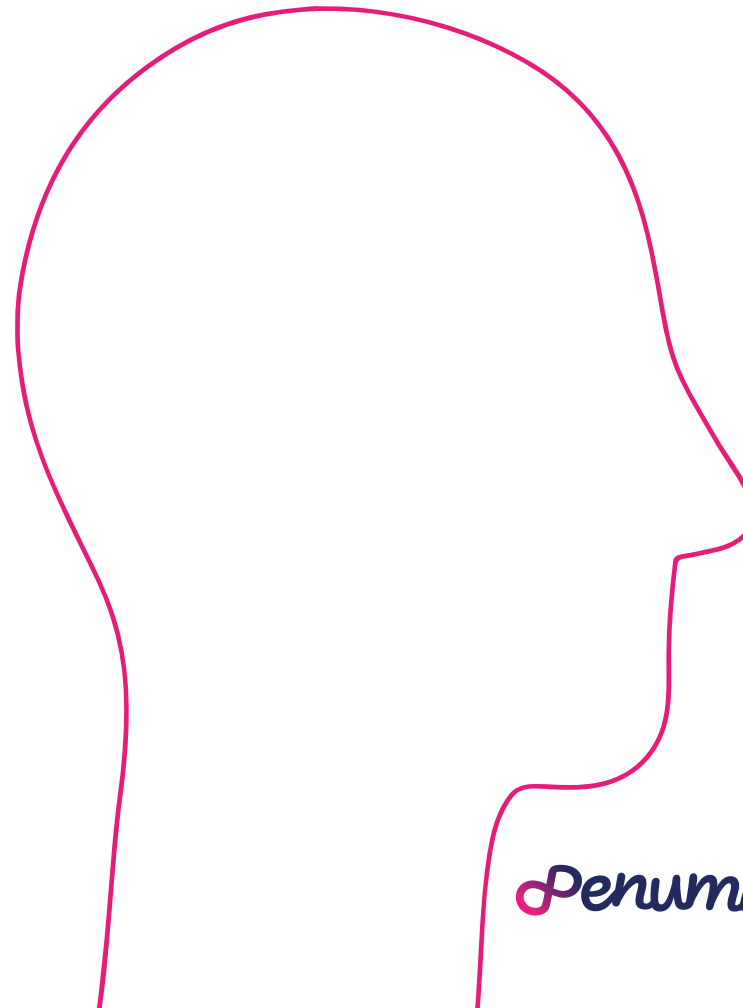
Inner voice

We all have an inner voice that can make us question ourselves, our abilities, our looks, our qualities, our popularity. Write in the box below things that your inner voice tells you that affect your confidence and self-esteem.

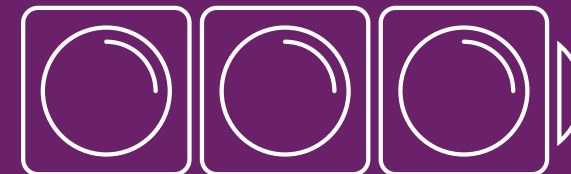


I will tell myself...

Have a different conversation with yourself by challenging your inner voice when it is negative and remind yourself of your qualities, strengths, skills and value. Write in the box positive messages that you will tell yourself when you have negative thoughts.



Traffic Lights



When I self-harm,
I am feeling,
thinking, doing...

Things that
trigger my self
harm are...

When I am not
thinking of self-harm,
I am thinking,
feeling, doing...

Things that I treasure are...

The form consists of seven empty rounded rectangular boxes arranged in a grid-like fashion for writing. There are two boxes in the first column, two in the second, and three in the third. Below the boxes is a larger, more detailed illustration of an open treasure chest, similar to the one in the top right corner, but larger and more prominent. It also has a keyhole on its front.

penumbra.org.uk

With thanks to people using Penumbra self-harm services,
Penumbra self-harm workers and to Aberdeenshire
council for their help putting this toolkit together.

Penumbra
Mental Health



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