


For Young People who Self-Harm



Self-harming is more common than you might think – 1 out of every 4 young people have hurt themselves in the last year and the number of young people who self-harm is increasing.

The world is an increasingly stressful place to be in and people are needing to find ways to cope.

you are not alone



Why do I self-harm?

Young people have all sorts of reasons to self-harm and often one person will have different reasons at different times. There is no right or wrong reason.

This is what we hear from young people. Do any of them sound familiar to you? Would you add any?



"It's my way of punishing myself. It makes me feel better because I deserve it"



"It's a relief. I feel all my tension leaving my body"



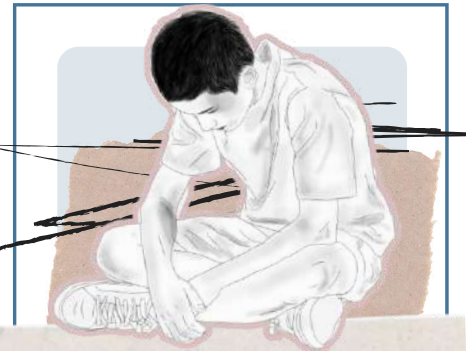
"It's the only way I can show people how I'm really feeling"

"I can't control much in my life, but I can control when and how I hurt myself and this makes me feel in control again"

"I can't show people the real me or tell people what is really happening to me, so I self-harm instead and it somehow helps"



"When I feel sleepy and dazed, self-harming wakes me up and makes me feel alive again"



"My emotions are just unbearable. When I self-harm I prefer the physical pain over my emotional pain"



"I'm so angry at others that I feel better when I self-harm because I'm punishing them"

"MY FRIENDS DO IT, SO I DO IT. IT HELPS ME FEEL LIKE I BELONG"

"I have a strong urge to hurt others, so I hurt myself first"

"I want to die, but instead I just hurt myself"



"Sometimes, it is the only way to get other people to notice me"

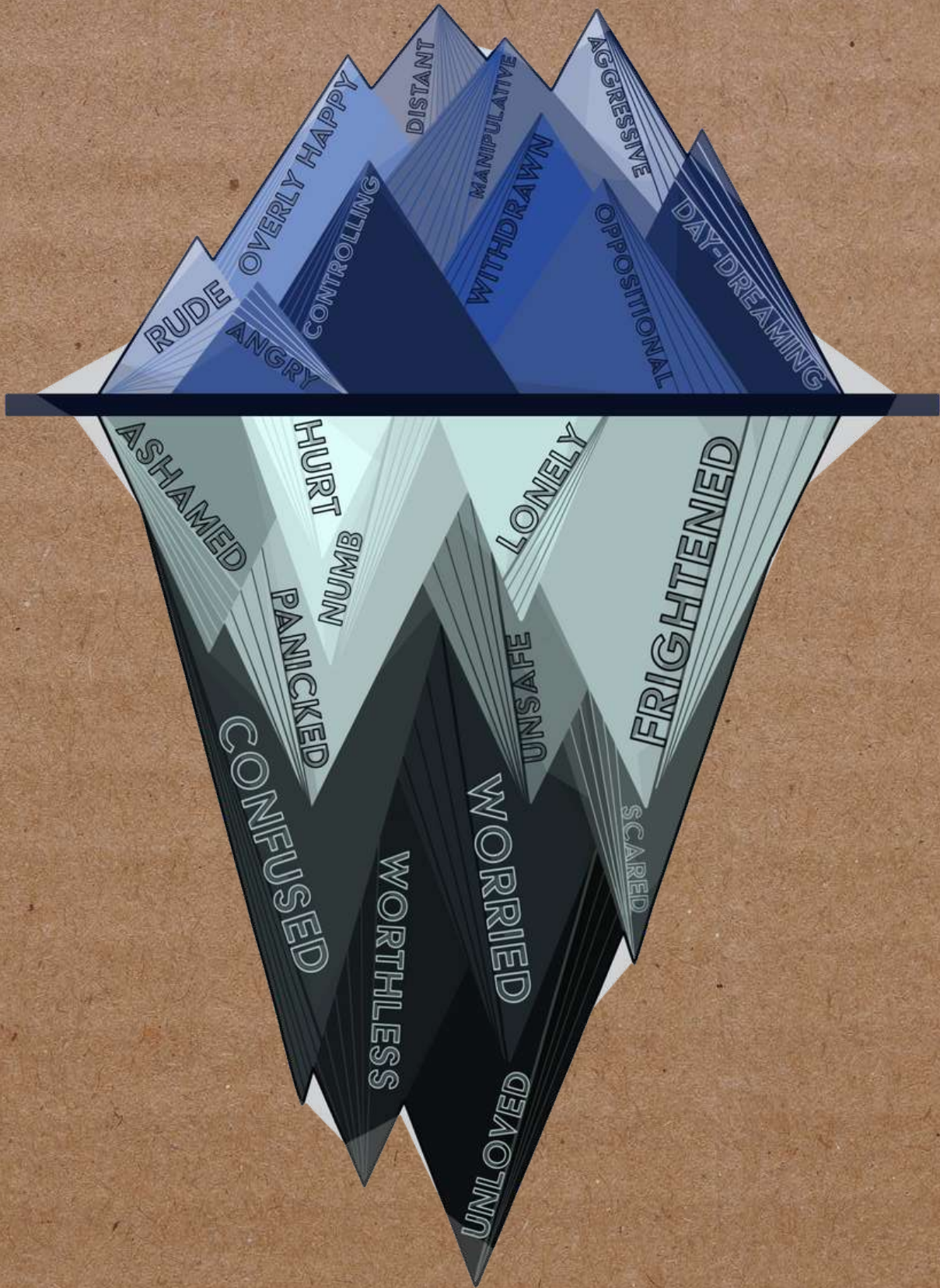


"Although I'm in pain, I quite like it when I'm looked after when I have hurt myself"



"I hate my body and I want to attack it by hurting it"

SELF-HARM IS THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG



BENEATH THE SURFACE THERE IS A LOT GOING ON THAT OTHERS CANNOT SEE.

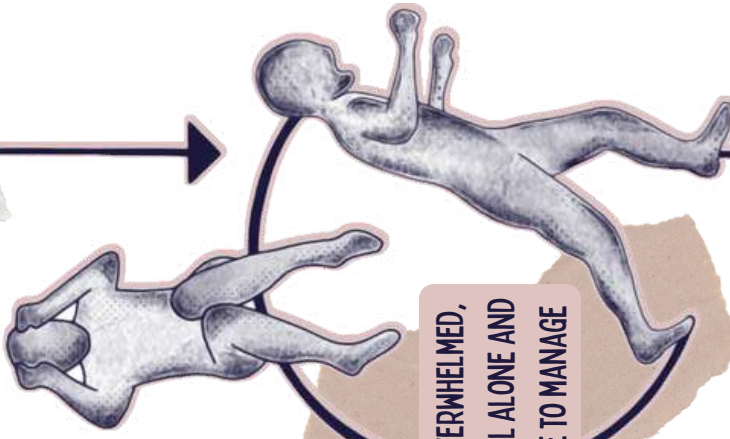
SELF-HARM CYCLE

Young people who self-harm can often find themselves in a painful cycle that is hard to break out of. It can go like this:



SOMETHING TRIGGERS ME

I MIGHT HAVE FEELINGS OF FAILURE, REJECTION, LONELINESS OR THOUGHTS OF NOT BEING OKAY

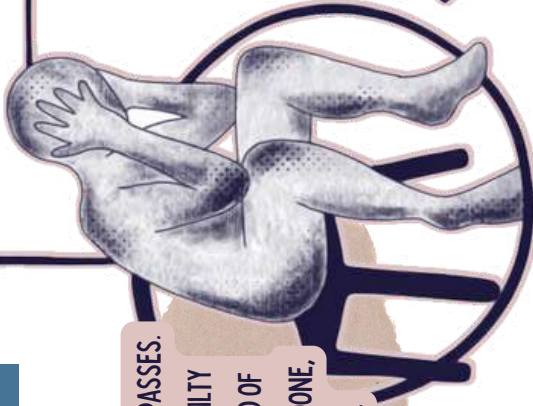


I AM OVERWHELMED, FEEL ALL ALONE AND UNABLE TO MANAGE

PEOPLE ARE ANGRY OR DISAPPOINTED WITH ME. I FEEL WORSE THAN I FELT BEFORE.



THE MOMENT PASSES. I NOW FEEL GUILTY AND ASHAMED OF WHAT I HAVE DONE, AND WHO I AM.



I SELF-HARM



FOR A BRIEF MOMENT IT HELPS ME TO FEEL BETTER



It can be a really tough, painful cycle to find yourself in, and often, you need trusted adults to help you break out of it.

What helps?

No one single thing will help everyone, and only you can discover what takes the edge off the urge to self-harm.

Here are some ideas to try out:

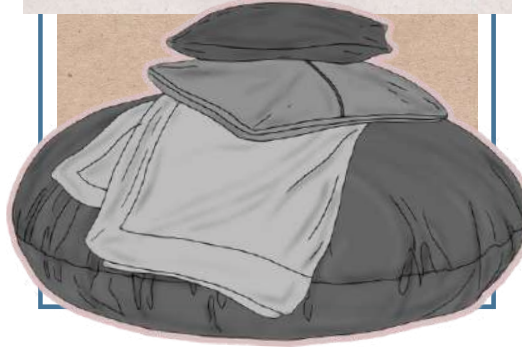
EXPRESSING YOURSELF

Self-harm is often about things feeling bottled up inside with no way to come out. If you can, experiment with different ways to express yourself. You may notice some relief...



SCREAMING INTO A PILLOW

PUNCHING A PILLOW OR PUNCH BAG



WRITING DOWN YOUR FEELINGS AND THEN SCREWING IT UP OR SAFELY BURNING IT



SINGING, DANCING, ACTING

DRAWING, SCRIBBLING, PAINTING



WRITING POETRY



KEEPING A DIARY

SCULPTING USING POLYMER CLAY

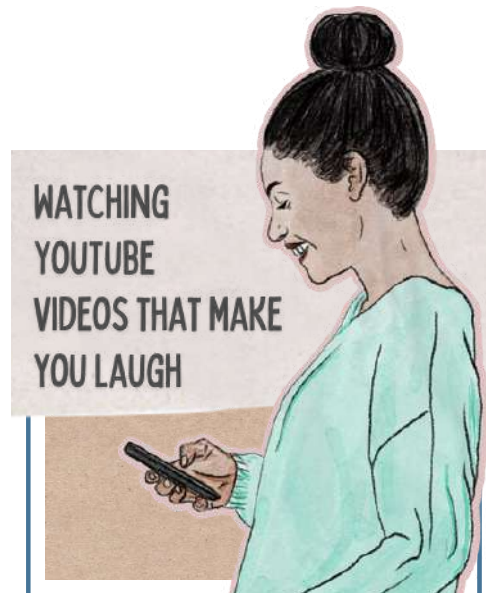
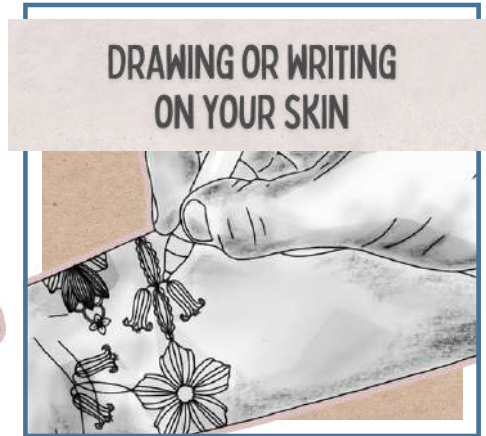


MAKING A VIDEO

What helps? (cont)

DISTRACTING YOURSELF

Sometimes, taking our attention away from the urge to self-harm is enough. Try...



What helps? (cont)

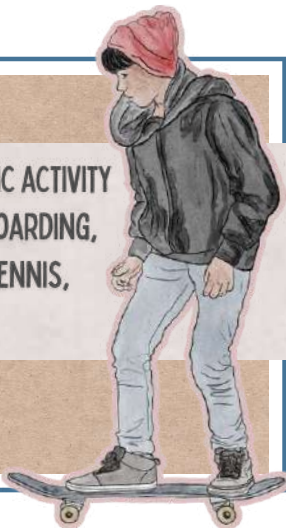
REGULATING YOUR BODY

Our body holds everything. See if you can regulate your body and notice what that does to your emotions and thoughts:



RHYTHMIC ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS JUMPING, DRUMMING, WALKING, RUNNING AND BOUNCING ALL HELP TO CALM THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

OTHER RHYTHMIC ACTIVITY IDEAS: SKATEBOARDING, BASKETBALL, TENNIS, PING PONG



WEAR TIGHT OR HEAVY CLOTHING OR A HEAVY BAG



CHEW SOMETHING WITH A STRONG TASTE

SMELL SOMETHING WITH A STRONG SCENT

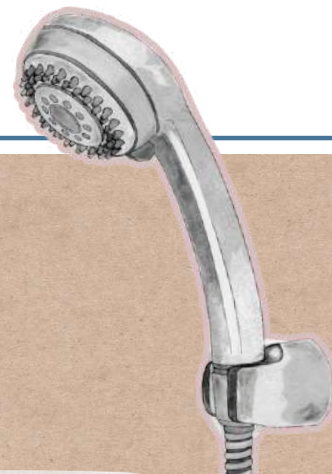


IF YOU HAVE A PET – HANG OUT TOGETHER



RUB ON CREAM

HAVE A CHEWY SNACK LIKE SWEETS OR A CEREAL BAR OR HOT CHOCOLATE AND WARM BUTTERY TOAST/BAGEL



HAVE A COOL SHOWER OR BATH

What helps? (cont)

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Self-harming can be a lonely place and it can build barriers between you and the people who care about you. Try reaching out to someone safe, and see what happens for you:



LET SOMEONE KNOW YOU ARE NOT OKAY

ASK FOR A HUG AND LET SOMEONE HOLD YOU TIGHT



CALL A FRIEND, A PARENT, A PROFESSIONAL - SOMEONE YOU TRUST



MESSAGE SOMEONE YOU CAN RELY ON AND LET THEM KNOW HOW YOU ARE

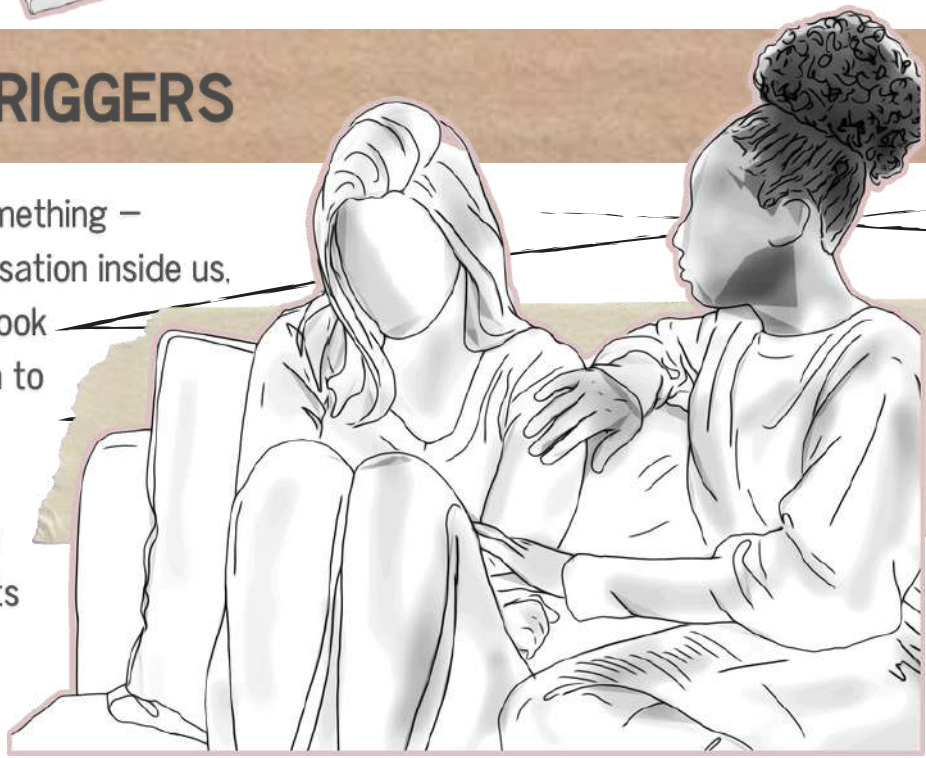
WRITE LETTERS TO PEOPLE WHO YOU'D LIKE TO EXPRESS YOURSELF TO



SIT WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK

WORKING OUT THE TRIGGERS

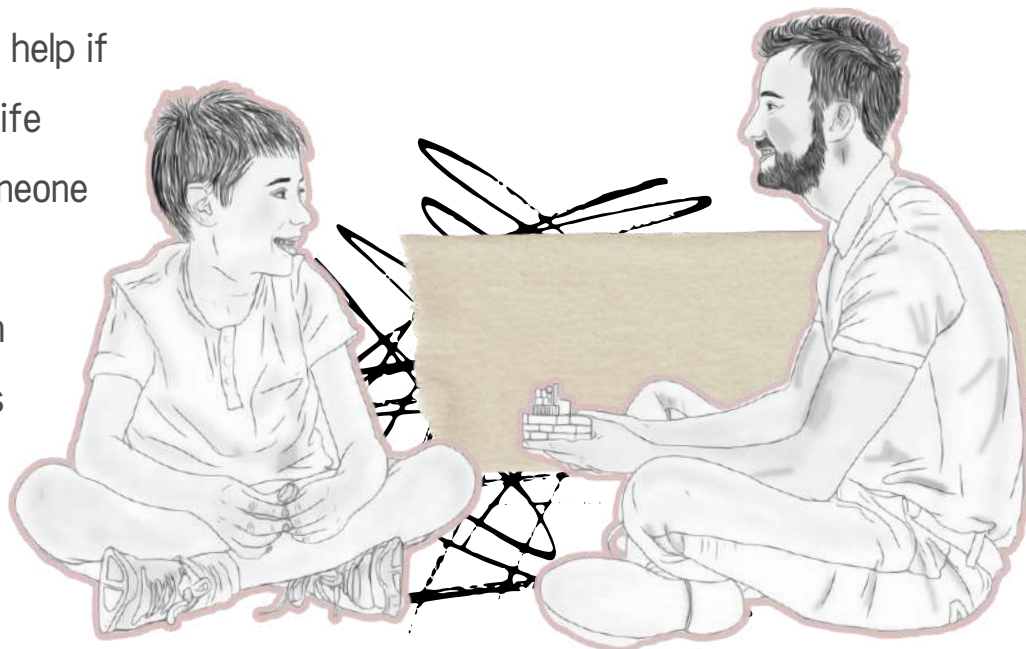
Self-harming is always triggered by something – whether that is a thought, feeling or sensation inside us, or something that happens outside us. Look closely to see if you can notice a pattern to your self-harming. If you can spot the triggers you might be able to start managing them in different ways. It can be really useful to ask friends and parents to help us spot our triggers, because often they are in our blind spots.



What helps? (cont)

DOES TALKING HELP?

In short, yes – talking does help if you have someone in your life that you can trust, and someone who is good at listening to you. Talking helps the brain and body to organise all its thoughts and feelings and it also helps us to feel less alone in the world.



WHAT ABOUT THERAPY?

Sometimes young people and their families find that trying some of the ideas above is enough for things to feel better. Sometimes the feelings beneath the self-harm are too hard to reach or too painful and frightening.

If this is true for you, then therapy might be a really helpful thing to take up. Working with a therapist would mean very slowly and sensitively exploring what is hidden beneath the iceberg tip for you and understanding how you might start to feel better in yourself.



Keeping safe

Keeping safe is really important when young people self-harm. Wanting to self-harm is not always the same as wanting to die.

Here are some ways you can keep yourself safe:



IF YOU HAVE HURT YOURSELF BADLY, CALL 999 OR TELL AN ADULT WITHOUT DELAY

IF YOU CUT YOURSELF, USE CLEAN BLADES

KEEP YOUR WOUNDS CLEAN AND IF THEY NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION, LET AN ADULT KNOW

CONSIDER MOVING DANGEROUS ITEMS OUT OF YOUR REACH, TO HELP IN THOSE MOMENTS OF IMPULSE



Sometimes the urges of self-harm or wanting to die become too much. If you do not feel you are safe, you can:



CALL 999

ASK SOMEONE TO TAKE YOU TO A&E

CALL YOUR DOCTOR

Keeping safe (cont)

There are also lots of great, expert, friendly services who you can call, text or email 24/7:

SAMARITANS

CALL: 116 123
(OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY)

CALL: 0300 123 3393 OR TEXT 86463
(9AM-6PM ON WEEKDAYS)
OR VISIT WWW.MIND.ORG.UK



 **HARMLESS**
support | information | training | consultancy

EMAIL: INFO@HARMLESS.ORG.UK OR
WWW.HARMLESS.ORG.UK

YOUNGMINDS
fighting for young people's mental health

TEXT YM TO 85258 (OPEN 24/7)
OR VISIT WWW.YOUNGMINDS.ORG.UK

CALL: 0800 11 11 OR VISIT
WWW.CHILDLINE.ORG.UK

childline

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

NSPCC

CALL: 0808 800 5000 OR
VISIT WWW.NSPCC.ORG.UK

CALL: 0300 330 0630
(10AM-10PM EVERY DAY)

VISIT WWW.SWITCHBOARD.LGBT


Switchboard
LGBT+ helpline

You might also want to have a look at these apps:



BLUEICE

BLUEICE IS A PRESCRIBED EVIDENCE-BASED APP TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE MANAGE THEIR EMOTIONS AND TO REDUCE URGES TO SELF-HARM.

VISIT:
WWW.OXFORDHEALTH.NHS.UK/BLUEICE



CALM HARM

CALM HARM IS AN AWARD-WINNING APP DEVELOPED FOR TEENAGE MENTAL HEALTH CHARITY STEM4 BY CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST DR. NIHARA KRAUSE, IN COLLABORATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, USING PRINCIPLES FROM THE EVIDENCE-BASED DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOUR THERAPY (DBT).

VISIT: WWW.CALMHARM.CO.UK



DISTRACT

THE AWARD-WINNING DISTRACT APP PROVIDES TRUSTED INFORMATION AND LINKS TO SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO SELF-HARM AND MAY FEEL SUICIDAL.

VISIT:
WWW.EXPERTSELFCARE.COM/HEALTH-APPS/DISTRACT

Reminder

Before we say goodbye, remember:

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

**SELF-HARMING DOES NOT
MAKE YOU A BAD PERSON**

**YOU ARE COPING THE BEST
WAY YOU KNOW HOW**

**THERE IS HELP OUT THERE, REACH
OUT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS**