

## SELF-HARM

Self-harm is defined as 'a person deliberately inflicting injuries upon themselves, often as a way of relieving emotional pain'.

HARCSAC's policy regarding self-harm and clients is as follows:

- We do not exclude clients on the basis of self-harm. However, it is not acceptable for clients to self-harm on the premises or in our presence.
- If a client does self-harm or attempt to self-harm, this information will not be disclosed to other agencies in the interests of client confidentiality.
- We will NOT contact medical or emergency services without the express permission of the client.
- Anyone dealing with an incident or threat of self-harm must seek support from another member of the group or the clinical supervisor to discuss the incident at the earliest opportunity.
- Incidents of self-harm must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible after the event.
- Incidents of self-harm must be reported back to peer group and/or clinical supervision at the earliest opportunity.
- Confidentiality must not be breached under any circumstances other than those expressed in the Confidentiality Policy.
- When a client is known to self-harm, a verbal agreement will be made between volunteers and client at the outset of support outlining these points.

### Meetings in person

- If a client attempts to self-harm on the premises they will be told that the meeting must end. If the harm inflicted is severe enough to require medical treatment an ambulance should be called giving the address. The nature of our work must remain confidential.

If the injury is not severe, the client will be asked to leave, and agreement will be sought from the client to a welfare telephone check to take place at an agreed time.

Under no circumstances will volunteers offer to take the client to hospital or to anywhere else in their car.

### Meetings on-line/telephone

- If a caller to the helpline discloses that they are intending to self-harm, the volunteer should stay on the line with them and explore the material that they bring and any alternatives to self-harm that there may be in their circumstances at this time.
- If a caller discloses that they have self-harmed and need treatment, the volunteer should ask if they would like her to call the emergency services. Stay on the line with the client. If they are willing, the volunteer should enable them to explore the material that they bring and other alternatives to self-harm in the future.



- If a client attempts to self-harm during a video or telephone call, we will try to establish the nature of the injury. The client/caller will be asked if they would like us to contact emergency services for them and if so, the address must be taken to pass on. If the client/caller declines emergency services, the counsellors will discuss other medical assistance that the client might need/seek.
- Having met the client's medical needs/choices she must be told that the meeting will end and agreement will be sought from the client to a welfare telephone check to take place at an agreed time.

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