

Supporting a child/young person who has self-harmed: a guide for professionals that work in non-healthcare settings in Surrey



Try to respond calmly and with compassion. Treat the person with respect, dignity and with an awareness of cultural sensitivity.

Step 1 Assess the severity of the injury

Is urgent treatment needed?

If yes: Address any immediate physical health needs; keeping any wounds clean to avoid infections.

If necessary, call 111 or 999.

Step 2 Connect, Listen and talk

Identify an appropriate member of staff to carry out the following steps (e.g. Designated Safeguarding Lead), and keep a record of proceedings.

- 1. Connect with the child about what is going on for them.** Notice their emotional and mental state and level of distress.
- 2. Listen non-judgementally to work out the best course of action.**

Work collaboratively with the child/young person to ensure that their views are taken into account when making decisions. Focus on what's causing their feelings rather than the self-harm itself.

- 3. Talk to the child/young person about how to inform parents/carers and agree how this will be done.**

Step 3 Assess further concerns

Are there any safeguarding concerns?

If yes: If yes: complete a [Request for Support Form](#). If you require advice and support around making a referral, or if you are unsure about the best course of action, you can contact the Child Protection Consultation Line: **Availability: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday** **Phone: 0300 470 9100 option 3** **NB:** Even if a referral has already been made by a different organisation, it is always worth making a separate referral: this provides C-SPA with clearer picture of the child or young person's needs.

Is there a need to refer the person to a specialist mental health or emotional wellbeing being service for assessment?

If yes: Seek advice from a healthcare professional e.g. School Nurse, Primary Mental Health Worker, Educational Psychologist or through [Mindworks](#).

Do you have concerns around a young person going to a high-risk location or somewhere they may attempt to take their life?

If yes: call 999.

Step 4 Does the child have a safety plan?

This can be established by contacting Mindworks via the Access and Advice Team on 0300 222 5755.

If yes: with consent for it to be shared: work collaboratively with the child/young person to discuss, review and implement the safety plan.

If no: work with the child/young person to develop and implement a [safety plan](#).

Remember to:

- Include the child's strengths, protective factors and network around them.
- Tailor the plan to the child/young person's individual needs, triggers and means of harm.
- Seek consent to involve relevant professionals and parents/carers.

Step 5 Ensure the child/young person knows how to access additional support

- The Mindworks website lists mental health and wellbeing resources including telephone and in-person support.
- Chat Health is a text service for anyone aged 11-19 to reach out to a school nurse for help with a range of issues, available **Monday to Friday 9am – 5.00pm: 07507 329951**. The number can also be used to make a confidential appointment with a school nurse.
- The Surrey Children and Young People's Crisis Line is **available 24/7 on 08009154644**.

Step 6 Consider if close friends/peer group also need support

If a number of children/young people with shared characteristics (e.g. peer group) are engaging in self-harm/suicidal behaviour, this can be shared with the Children and Young People's Suicide Prevention Partnership via customer.surreycc.gov.uk/emerging-risks. **Your information will enable us to support where we can and also to gather intelligence to inform prevention work across Surrey.**