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Community Interest Company

Supporting Someone with Self-Harm Workbook

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Disclaimer

This workbook has been created by Safe Haven Connect CIC to provide general information and practical guidance for adults supporting someone who self-harms.

It is intended for partners, family members, friends, carers and volunteers supporting adults aged 18 and over.

This workbook is not a substitute for professional medical or mental health advice. If you believe someone is at immediate risk of serious harm or suicide, contact emergency services or an appropriate crisis service straight away.

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Supporting Someone with Self-Harm

PAGE 1 – Understanding Self-Harm

Self-harm is when someone deliberately hurts themselves as a way of coping with overwhelming emotional pain, distress or difficult feelings.

For many people, self-harm is not an attempt to end their life. Instead, it can be a way of managing emotions that feel too difficult to express.

Recovery is possible, and compassionate, non-judgemental support can make a significant difference.

♥ Self-harm may be linked to...

- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Trauma
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed
- ☐ Low self-esteem
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Difficult life events
- ☐ Emotional distress
- ☐ Other:

♥ What do I hope to learn from this workbook?

♥ How can I become a better supporter?

♥ Remember

People who self-harm need compassion, understanding and support—not judgement.

Listening calmly, taking their feelings seriously and encouraging appropriate support can help someone feel less alone.

Support the person, not just the behaviour.

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PAGE 2 – Understanding the Person

Every person who self-harms has their own story.

Self-harm is often a sign that someone is struggling with overwhelming emotions, not that they are seeking attention.

Avoid making assumptions or asking "why?" in a way that feels blaming. Instead, focus on listening, understanding and offering support.

The person is much more than the challenges they are facing.

♥ Things that may help them feel supported

☐ Being listened to without judgement.

☐ Feeling safe.

☐ Having someone stay calm.

- ☐ Being treated with kindness.
- ☐ Knowing they are not alone.
- ☐ Having someone check in regularly.
- ☐ Being encouraged to seek support.
- ☐ Other:

 How can I support them today?

- ☐ Listen more than I speak.
- ☐ Stay calm.
- ☐ Respect their feelings.
- ☐ Avoid judging or criticising.
- ☐ Ask what they need.
- ☐ Remind them they matter.
- ☐ Encourage professional support when appropriate.
- ☐ Other:

 What have I learned about what helps them?

♥ What strengths do they have?

♥ Remember

You don't need to have all the answers.

Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is listen with compassion, stay alongside the person and remind them they don't have to face things alone.

Your calm presence can make a meaningful difference.

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PAGE 3 – Communicating with Compassion

Talking about self-harm can feel difficult for both you and the person you're supporting.

They may worry about being judged, misunderstood or rejected. Creating a safe, calm and supportive space can make it easier for them to talk when they're ready.

You don't need to have all the answers. Listening with compassion is often the most important thing you can do.

 Helpful ways to communicate

- ☐ Stay calm and listen.
- ☐ Let them speak at their own pace.
- ☐ Listen without judgement.
- ☐ Acknowledge their feelings.
- ☐ Ask how you can support them.
- ☐ Respect if they don't want to talk.
- ☐ Reassure them they're not alone.
- ☐ Other:

 Helpful things I can say

- ☐ "Thank you for telling me."
- ☐ "I'm here for you."
- ☐ "You don't have to face this alone."
- ☐ "How can I support you today?"
- ☐ "I'm glad you spoke to me."
- ☐ Other:

♥ Things to try and avoid saying

- ☐ "Just stop."
- ☐ "Why would you do that?"
- ☐ "You're only doing it for attention."
- ☐ Becoming angry or blaming them.
- ☐ Making promises you can't keep.
- ☐ Comparing their struggles to someone else's.
- ☐ Other:

♥ One thing I can do today to show I care

♥ Remember

A calm conversation can help someone feel safe enough to open up.

You don't need perfect words—your patience, compassion and willingness to listen may be exactly what they need.

Listen with kindness, respond without judgement and remind them they matter.

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PAGE 4 – Providing Safe and Practical Support

Supporting someone who self-harms can feel overwhelming, but you don't have to have all the answers.

One of the most helpful things you can do is create a safe, calm and supportive environment where the person feels able to talk openly without fear of judgement.

Recovery takes time, and support should always be offered with compassion and respect.

 Practical ways I can help

- ☐ Check in with them regularly.
- ☐ Spend time together.
- ☐ Encourage healthy coping strategies.
- ☐ Help them access professional support if they want it.
- ☐ Support them to attend appointments.
- ☐ Help reduce stress where possible.
- ☐ Be patient during setbacks.
- ☐ Other:

 Things that seem to help them cope

💚 Things that may make them feel worse

💚 One practical thing I can do this week

💚 Remember

Recovery is rarely a straight line.

There may be setbacks, but every conversation, every act of kindness and every moment of support can help someone feel less alone.

You don't need to fix everything—you simply need to keep showing that you care.

Support with patience, hope and compassion, one day at a time.

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PAGE 5 – Supporting Emotional Wellbeing

Someone who self-harms may experience a wide range of emotions, including sadness, anxiety, guilt, shame, anger or feeling emotionally numb.

These feelings can change from day to day, and recovery is different for everyone.

By responding with patience, compassion and consistency, you can help create a safe environment where the person feels accepted and supported.

♥ They may be feeling...

☐ Overwhelmed.

☐ Anxious.

☐ Low in mood.

☐ Ashamed.

☐ Guilty.

☐ Lonely.

☐ Emotionally numb.

☐ Hopeless.

☐ Other:

♥ How can I support their emotional wellbeing?

- ☐ Listen without judgement.
- ☐ Stay calm and patient.
- ☐ Spend quality time together.
- ☐ Encourage healthy coping strategies.
- ☐ Remind them they are valued.
- ☐ Encourage them to seek support when they're ready.
- ☐ Celebrate small steps forward.
- ☐ Other:

♥ What usually helps them feel calmer or more supported?

♥ One thing I can do today to show I care

Remember

Recovery doesn't happen overnight, and there may be setbacks along the way.

Showing compassion, being consistent and reminding someone that they are not alone can make a meaningful difference.

Hope grows through connection, understanding and knowing that someone genuinely cares.

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Supporting Someone with Self-Harm

PAGE 6 – Looking After Yourself as a Supporter

Supporting someone who self-harms can be emotionally challenging.

You may feel worried, frightened, helpless or unsure of what to do. These feelings are normal.

Looking after your own wellbeing is important. Taking time to rest, talk to someone you trust and seek support when needed helps you continue providing compassionate support.

Remember, you don't have to carry this alone.

 How am I feeling today?

☐ Calm

- ☐ Hopeful
- ☐ Tired
- ☐ Worried
- ☐ Stressed
- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Frustrated
- ☐ Emotionally drained
- ☐ Other:

 This week I will...

- ☐ Take regular breaks.
- ☐ Get enough sleep.
- ☐ Eat healthy meals.
- ☐ Spend time outdoors.
- ☐ Talk to someone I trust.
- ☐ Make time for activities I enjoy.
- ☐ Accept support when it's offered.
- ☐ Practice self-care.
- ☐ Other:

♥ People who support me

1.

2.

3.

♥ One thing I will do for myself this week

♥ Remember

Supporting someone who self-harms doesn't mean you have to cope on your own.

Looking after your own mental health helps you remain patient, compassionate and able to continue supporting the person you care about.

By caring for yourself, you're better able to care for someone else.

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PAGE 7 – Encouraging Recovery and Building Hope

Recovery from self-harm is possible, but it often takes time.

There may be progress, setbacks and difficult days along the way. Supporting someone means recognising every step forward, however small, and reminding them that change is possible.

Recovery isn't about being perfect—it's about finding healthier ways to cope and building hope for the future.

♥ Ways I can encourage recovery

- ☐ Celebrate small achievements.
- ☐ Encourage healthy coping strategies.
- ☐ Remind them of their strengths.
- ☐ Be patient during setbacks.
- ☐ Encourage realistic goals.
- ☐ Spend quality time together.
- ☐ Offer hope without pressure.
- ☐ Other:

♥ Things that give them hope

♥ One positive step we can take this week

♥ How can I help them build confidence?

♥ Remember

Recovery isn't measured by perfection.

It's measured by courage, resilience and taking one step forward at a time.

Every conversation, every act of kindness and every moment of encouragement helps someone believe that recovery is possible.

Believe in the person, celebrate progress and never underestimate the power of hope.

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PAGE 8 – My Self-Harm Support Plan

Every person's journey is different.

There is no single right way to support someone who self-harms. The most effective support comes from listening, respecting their choices and being a consistent source of kindness and encouragement.

This support plan can help you focus on what works best for the person while also remembering the importance of looking after yourself.

 What helps them most?

- ☐ Being listened to.
- ☐ Staying calm together.
- ☐ A safe, non-judgemental space.
- ☐ Spending time with someone they trust.
- ☐ Encouragement without pressure.
- ☐ Healthy distractions.
- ☐ Accessing professional support.
- ☐ Knowing someone cares.
- ☐ Other:

My Three Priorities

1.

2.

3.

People and Services That Can Help

1.

2.

3.

My Personal Reminder

When supporting someone who self-harms, I want to remember...

Remember

Supporting someone doesn't mean solving every problem.

It means standing beside them with compassion, patience and hope while encouraging them to access the support they need.

Recovery is possible, and no one should have to face it alone.

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PAGE 9 – My Commitment as a Supporter

Congratulations on completing this workbook.

Supporting someone who self-harms can be challenging, but your compassion, patience and understanding can make a real difference.

You don't need to have all the answers. By listening without judgement, encouraging hope and helping the person access appropriate support, you can remind them they are not alone.

Every act of kindness matters.

I Will Remember To...

- ☐ Listen without judgement.
- ☐ Stay calm and patient.
- ☐ Treat the person with dignity and respect.
- ☐ Encourage healthy coping strategies.
- ☐ Support them to seek help when needed.
- ☐ Celebrate progress, however small.
- ☐ Continue learning about self-harm and recovery.
- ☐ Look after my own wellbeing too.

My Personal Reminder

When supporting someone who self-harms, I want to remember...

My Support Promise

"I will support this person with kindness, patience and compassion. I will listen without judgement, respect their experiences and encourage hope while recognising that recovery takes time. I will continue to learn, offer support and remind them that they do not have to face their journey alone."

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Final Thoughts

Recovery from self-harm is possible.

With compassion, understanding and the right support, people can develop healthier ways of coping and move towards a more hopeful future.

Thank you for taking the time to learn how to provide safe, respectful and person-centred support.

Explore our growing library of free workbooks and wellbeing resources at:

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