



# Self Harm Practice Guidance

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# Context

- Guidance is part of process regarding framework to inform working with young people with emotional difficulties
- Self harm requires addressing regarding safeguarding as it could indicate that there are ongoing risks in this area
- Further training and resources are planned
- ‘Future in Mind’ recommendations regarding service developments for child mental health

# Self harm

- Self harm is common 10 to 20 % of yp have self harm,
- Suicidal thinking in adolescents common. Suicide rare.
- Self harm increases risk of suicide, relationship complex
- Epidemiology for mental health of young people needs further study highlighted in 'Future in Mind'
- An indication of distress, a difficulty with managing emotions
- A coping strategy
- An opportunity for all of us who have contact with a young person to contribute to improving their emotional health and wellbeing

# Emotional well being and mental health

- Promoting Emotional Wellbeing and mental health of young people involves us all if we have contact with young people and parents
- Supporting a young person to manage their stress, distress and emotions is a key part of development
- We all be part of setting an example to young people
  - How to manage stress and upsetting emotions
  - How to seek help and talk about difficulties or problems
  - How to talk about emotional problems and more severe mental health difficulties

# Self harm

- Is an indicator that a young person is struggling with their emotions
- Still can illicit negative responses from those who come into contact with a young person (or adult) who discusses self harm
- Stigma is still an issue
- Very variable in terms of what it can be eg scratching to repeated deep and multiple cutting
- How to decide what is needed ?

# What to do ?

- This practice guidance is a beginning in providing a framework for interventions
- First step requires gathering some information
- Seek support have discussions with others
- CAMHS are happy to be contacted to discuss options
- Prioritise what needs to be done

# Gathering information

- Easier said than done ?
- Young person may be distressed may not want to talk may not want you to contact parents
- A calm approach a quiet place and time is required to do this work
- Sometimes if immediate medical attention is required this needs to take priority

# Framework for supporting young people

- Prioritising immediate treatment if required
- Gathering information
- Involving parents and other agencies if required
- Making sense of why a young person has self harmed
  - Stress
  - Chronic difficulties emotional or physical
  - Early trauma, poor resilience



# What else is required ?

- Letting the young person know you can understand how they are feeling
- Reassurance that they can get through this with help and support
- Having in mind what support is available
- Consulting with others seeking advice from other agencies
- CAMHS are happy to be involved in planning a way forward

# Challenges

- Time is required
- Self harm is a common way for young person to cope with upsetting emotions. Can be difficult to change
- Adolescent development presents additional difficulties
- Independence 'does not want parents involved'
- Peer Group tells friends who can be positive or negative influence
- Group context Self harm and suicide can be catching ?  
Challenging in school environment

# Workshop session

- Opportunity to think thorough some cases
- Consider what other resources are needed
- Bring your own experiences and questions

# Questions ?