

Self-Harm – Alternative Coping Strategies

A number of young people report that they find alternative coping strategies and techniques useful.

However it is extremely important to recognise the need for individual techniques otherwise this approach will not work. Some of the most useful alternative coping strategies used by a range of young people include:

<p>Distraction Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cleaning or tidying ➤ Washing clothes ➤ Playing games – cards/board games/ computer ➤ Sports exercise – walking/running/dance – exercise releases endorphins and can reduce anxiety ➤ Gardening ➤ Visiting, texting or phoning a friend ➤ Painting or drawing pictures/ posters/cards ➤ Writing letters ➤ Puzzles ➤ Watching TV/DVD ➤ Listening to music ➤ Going out – to the cinema or shopping ➤ Hobbies – sewing, knitting, collecting 	<p>Comforting Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hold a safe object ➤ Sit in a safe place ➤ Listen to soothing music ➤ Sing favourite songs ➤ Use perfume/hand cream ➤ Spray room with fragrance ➤ Use pot pourri ➤ Buy fresh flowers ➤ Eat a favourite food ➤ Have a soothing drink ➤ Have a bubble bath ➤ Soak your feet ➤ Change the sheets on your bed ➤ Stroke your pet ➤ Wear comfortable clothes ➤ Hug someone ➤ Put lights on (to sleep)
<p>Positive Emotional Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Read old letters ➤ Look through old photos ➤ Listen to emotional music ➤ Watch funny/heart-warming film ➤ Read joke book ➤ Say positive statements to self ➤ Make an emergency bundle ➤ Read your list of assets or strengths 	<p>Emotional Focusing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ List emotional triggers ➤ Write poetry about your feelings ➤ Paint/draw emotions ➤ Write a diary ➤ Discuss feelings with another person ➤ Access online help
<p>Relaxation Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus solely on breathing/breath deeply ➤ Count your breaths ➤ Focus on the position of your body ➤ Relax each muscle individually ➤ Listen to relaxation music ➤ Listen to guided relaxation ➤ Meditation ➤ Yoga ➤ Massage hands, feet, head etc. 	<p>Alternative ‘Safer’ Forms of Self-Harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hold ice in hand or rub ice on your skin ➤ Use a pen to draw on your skin ➤ Squeeze rubber ball ➤ Listen to very loud music ➤ Rubber band on wrist – snap it against your skin when you have the urge to self-harm ➤ Throw things/scream, punch cushions (in a safe place) ➤ Stand under hot/cold shower ➤ Snap/break sticks