

Child, Adolescent and Youth Mental Health Patient and Carer Information



Non-Suicidal Self Injury

Self-injury is deliberate and self-inflicted damage to the body without wanting to die, including:

- **Cutting** with razors, knives or sharp objects
- **Intentionally taking an overdose** of medicine or drinking poison
- **Burning** self
- **Scratching** which results in bleeding or welts
- **Picking** at skin
- **Pulling** hair out
- **Biting** self
- **Hitting** self with your fists or something else
- **Punching** walls or objects to hurt self.



Why do people self-harm?

People self-harm for many reasons, the main ones are:

- To manage feelings of distress
- To punish themselves
- To communicate personal distress to others.

Self-harm does not always mean that someone wants to die. They are not “looking for attention” or being manipulative.

When someone finds hurting themselves brings relief, it can become their main way of dealing with problems, this can affect their life in many negative ways.



How can I support my child after leaving the Emergency Department?

1. **Follow through with Discharge and Safety Plan** recommendations provided by Emergency Department staff. If you are not clear on details, ask staff to write them down.
2. **Inform your child's school** before they return to school. Explain the Discharge and Safety Plan recommendations you received at the Emergency Department. The school will be able to put additional supports in place to help keep your child safe.
3. **Watch out for signs** that your child may be at increased risk of serious injury or suicide
4. **Seek professional support** for longer term care and support. A general practitioner or school counsellor can discuss options, or call the Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511
5. **Acknowledging your own feelings**, consider talking to somebody supportive.

For advice and support contact:

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

If you have immediate concerns about your child's safety:
call 000 or take them to the Emergency Department



Things that can help at school

By informing and keeping the school up to date you can help your child adjust back into school life and keep on track with their education. Your child's school will communicate and work with you, your child and support services to support your child in school. This may include:

- school specific safety planning
- return to school planning
- identifying a support person
- consideration of reasonable adjustments to the student's program
- ongoing monitoring and support
- accessing specialist support services.

Regular communication between school and parents and carers is essential to ensure that your child is receiving the best care and support.



Things that can help at home

- **Use your child's Safety Plan**, including the list of supportive people your child can talk to
- **Remain calm and supportive**, your child needs a caring space and the support of family.
- **Be open to listening to your child** if they want to talk about their thoughts and feelings, encourage strategies they could use to manage these thoughts and feelings.
- **Find ways to enhance your child's self-esteem** and acknowledge their positive qualities.
- **Keep occupied** to keep your child's mind off stress. Plan things to do together to occupy free time.
- **Restrict access to items** that can be used to injure such as sharp objects and medications.
- **Try deep breathing** and relaxation exercises, to help you and your child feel relaxed and reduce the focus on strong emotions.
- **Ask for help** if you have any concerns about your or your child's safety.

For more information

This sheet is for education purposes only, please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure that this information is right for your child.

Reachout



<https://au.reachout.com/>

Project Air



<https://www.uow.edu.au/project-air/>

Lifeline



<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

Need an Interpreter? Interpreters are available if you need help to communicate with staff. The service is free and confidential. We will book the interpreter for you. You can also call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 if you need to speak to someone before your appointment.

Need an Aboriginal Health Worker? An Aboriginal Health Worker (AHW) advocates for the needs of consumers who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. They can provide support and information to help you. Tell staff you would like to speak to an AHW, or let them know if there is an AHW you would like us to contact.