

## WBSA

# Addressing Self-harming Behaviour, Support & Resources

### Introduction:

Self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures themselves. It is often a way of dealing with difficult feelings, painful memories or overwhelming situations and experiences. It is thought to affect around 1 in 5 young people.

People involved in sport and activity can help by:

- Recognising self-harming behaviour.
- Knowing how to talk with a young person who may be self-harming.
- Referring the young person to support services.

### Healthy Environment:

In the sport and activity sector we need to recognise that taking part in sport can have both a positive and negative influence on a young person's mental health and wellbeing and try to minimise the risks where possible.

WBSA aim to create a healthy environment where it is understood that everyone needs to look after their mental health and wellbeing in the same way that we look after our physical health.

### Why young people self-harm:

Some young people view self-harm as a way of coping or feeling in control. Self-harm can be a response to many different stressors, situations or experiences.

### Common reasons include:

- Pressures at school, home or in sport.
- Bullying.
- Sexual, physical or emotional abuse.
- Bereavement.

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- Confusion about sexuality.
- A health problem.
- Low self-esteem.
- An increase in stress or pressure – maybe regarding expectations of winning and losing.
- Difficult feelings, such as depression, anxiety, anger or numbness.
- Parental or Coaching expectations.
- Feelings of not belonging.

### Signs of self-harm:

Young people engaging in self-harming behaviour, or at risk of self-harm, may display warning signs:

- These could include:
- Physical injuries on more than one occasion.
- Neat and ordered physical injuries.
- Secrecy at times of high emotion.
- Wearing long or baggy clothing covering arms or legs, even in warm weather.
- Reluctance to take part.
- Avoiding changing rooms.
- Absence or lateness.
- General low mood or irritability.
- Unhealthy body image.
- Expressing low self-worth, feeling hopeless or aimless.

If you recognise any of these behaviours, it's important to create a safe space for young people to talk. Try to make time during practices or sessions and let young people know that you're available to listen. Please contact us for support or advice [safeguarding@welshsnooker.com](mailto:safeguarding@welshsnooker.com)

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### Responding to self-harm:

The sooner a young person can talk about what they are experiencing the sooner they can be encouraged to access appropriate support.

#### Things to try:

- Remain calm and non-judgemental
- Let the young person know that you are there for them. Say it, and mean it.
- Recognise how hard the conversation must be for them.
- Relate to them as a person, not just the act of self-harm.
- Listen with empathy
- Allow them to be in control of decisions.
- Remind them of their positive qualities and the things they do well.
- Try to have an honest conversation
- Be brave talking about things you don't like about yourself or others or the activity.
- Encourage them to seek further help. People want to help. It makes them feel valued.
- Provide contact information for further support.
- Make effort to stay in regular contact and keep checking in.

#### Things to avoid:

- Trying to force them to change:
- Taking control of their decisions.
- Either ignoring their injuries or overly focusing on them.
- Labelling self-harm as attention seeking.
- Imposing your view instead of listening to their truth.
- Stopping the contact after a disclosure
- Applying shame or silliness to their actions.
- Making them feel wrong instead of realising they are hurting.

If you believe a young person to be at immediate risk, call emergency services on 999

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**Practical Ideas:**

Once a young person has begun to talk to you about their self-harming behaviour, you might want to discuss these practical ideas which could help the young person during times of intense urges. These include:

**Identify triggers and stressors:**

- Keeping a diary of feelings before, during and after periods of self-harm can help the young person to identify the triggers and start thinking about how to address them.
- Triggers and stressors can be people, situations, anniversaries, specific thoughts or feelings.
- The urge to self-harm can include physical sensations like a racing heart, feelings of heaviness, a loss of sensation, repetitive thoughts or unhealthy decisions.

**Use a range of distractions:**

- Different distractions will work better for different feelings - someone feeling angry might benefit from hitting a cushion, whereas someone feeling fear may benefit from wrapping up in a blanket.
- Other ideas include exercise, dancing, walking in nature, spending time with an animal, listening to music, writing a list, colouring, writing a letter to tear up, flicking elastic bands on the wrist or holding ice cubes.
- Try adding a waiting time — not immediately acting on the urge to self-harm, the length of the waiting time can be gradually increased until the urge has lessened or finished.
- A self-soothe box full of things to be used to distract or soothe from the urge to self-harm such as music, colouring, photographs or inspirational quotes.
- Phone or message a friend or someone you trust and interrupt the urge to harm. Talking can release the urge by putting words to your feelings.

**More information about these practical steps is available from Mind and Young Minds.**

**Support:**

Professional help may be needed to help the young person in the long-term to develop healthy coping mechanisms and to address the underlying reasons behind their urges to self-harm.

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**People who can help include:**

- GPs and psychiatrists
- NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Social workers
- Counsellors and other mental health practitioners
- Specialist charities — such as Young Minds and Mind

**Support & Resources:****For young people:****Childline**

Information and support for young people on a range of issues.

Tel: 0800 11 11

[Childline](#) | [Childline](#)

**Beat**

Advice and support about eating disorders.

Tel: 0808 801 0711 / 0300 123 3355

[The UK's Eating Disorder Charity - Beat \(beateatingdisorders.org.uk\)](http://beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

**Mind**

Advice for helping yourself during feelings of intense urges

[Treatment and support for self-harm - Mind](#)

**Samaritans**

24-hour confidential listening and support for anyone who needs it

Tel: 116 123

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

**State of mind**

Mental health support for sportspeople and supporter groups

[State of Mind – A charity that harnesses the power of sport \(stateofmindsport.org\)](http://stateofmindsport.org)

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**Self-harm UK**

Information and advice on self-harm recovery, insight and support

[selfharm.co.uk](http://selfharm.co.uk)

**The Mix**

Support for people under 25 on a range of issues

Tel: 0808 808 4994

[themix.org.uk](http://themix.org.uk)

**Young Minds**

No Harm Done — Things can change, information for young people

[Self-Harm & Mental Health](#) | [Guide For Parents](#) | [YoungMinds](#)

**For those working with young people:**

**NSPCC helpline**

Help, advice and support for professionals with concerns about a child Tel:

0808 800 5000

[nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do](http://nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do)

**English Institute of Sport**

Works with elite athletes to improve sporting performance and athlete wellbeing

[UK Sports Institute: Sport Performance Support Services](#)

**Mind — Self harm pages**

Information on mental health, awareness training and advice

[Self-harm - Mind](#)

**NHS**

Information about the medical support available to those who self-harm

[Self-harm - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Rethink**

Information and advice on mental health as well as local support services

0300 500 0927

[Rethink Mental Illness](#)

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**Young Minds**

No Harm Done — professionals pack, guide to responding to self-harm

[Supporting a Young Person Struggling With Self-harm | YoungMinds](#)

**References:**

Mind — [Home - Mind](#)

NHS [Self-harm - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Young Minds - [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#)



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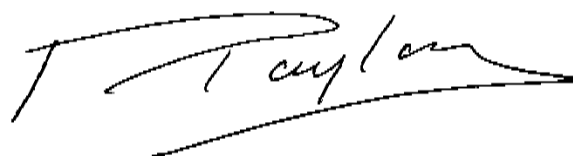
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