

**Avon and Wiltshire**   
Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

**Royal United Hospital Bath**   
NHS Trust



**Information**

**Following Self-Injury**

This leaflet has been produced by the generosity of:

Janssen-Cilag Ltd

**"I walked slowly home and up to my bedroom, not knowing what to do with myself. I felt as if I was going to explode. My head was pounding and my stomach was churning as I went into my mother's bedroom and got the razor she keeps for cutting our hair. Then I went back to my room and slashed my arms with it. I was trying to hurt myself because of the pain I had caused my father - even though I hated him. It was like I deserved to be hurt for what I had done."**

We realise that coming to hospital after harming yourself in some way can be extremely difficult. After the assessing nurse and one of the doctors have seen you, you will probably be told that you can go home. This in itself, can be difficult. Here, we aim to provide an understanding, respectful and helpful approach to you and your difficulties.

The term 'self-injury' generally refers to any act where the person deliberately inflicts some form of injury on himself or herself, usually because they want to relieve some sort of emotional pain or distress.

It is recognised that people who injure themselves frequently describe being either physically or sexually abused as a child. These abusive events are often kept secret from outside the family and are often denied within the family as well. Self-injury can be an outward, visible sign to you and others about the pain and hurt you are feeling inside.

There are quite a number of ways in which people who are experiencing high levels of distress can end up harming themselves. Some people cut parts of their body, often arms and legs, while others may take an overdose of tablets, and some may use even more violent methods of hurting themselves.

Once the medical and nursing staff have assessed your physical injuries, they will ask you whether it might be helpful to talk about how you are feeling and what might have led up to your injuries. However, some people prefer to just sit quietly or to have a cup of tea. Whatever is most helpful to you will be respected.

Depending on your experience of hospitals, doctors and counsellors, etc., you may have gained the impression that other people think you are trying to kill yourself. Here, we understand that most people who injure themselves do not wish to kill themselves, rather they want to find some tangible way of relieving their emotional pain and distress.

✦ **Your GP/family doctor**

He or she can refer you on to a range of specialist services

✦ **Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN)**

For psychiatric nursing, specialist therapy and on-going support. Please contact your GP, who can discuss with you how to get in touch with the CPN service that covers your geographical area.

## **Counselling Services**

✦ **The Samaritans ☎ 01225 429 222 or 08457 90 90 90 (local call rate)**

A confidential telephone support and counselling service for people feeling depressed or suicidal. Operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you would like to talk to someone face-to-face the centre is open to callers between 9am and 10pm - no appointment required. Contact: *10 Newbridge Hill, Bath, BA1 3PU.*

✦ **Bath MIND ☎ 01225 316 199**

Bath Mind, runs several projects in Bath for people experiencing mental ill health and their carers, these include: a Drop in, an Advocacy Service, a Befriending Service and four housing projects.

✦ **Mind in Western Wiltshire ☎ 01249 814447**

Confidential counselling and support. Covers Bradford-on-Avon, Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Devizes, Malmesbury, Melksham, Trowbridge, Warminster and Westbury. Ring the above number to arrange an appointment or write to:

*MIND in Western Wiltshire, 22 High Street, Calne, SN11 0ES.*

- ✦ **Wessex Counselling Service** ☎ **01373 453 355**  
Provides counsellors to help work through personal, marital and family difficulties. Covers Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Dorset. Ring the above number for more information, or write to: *Fairfield House, King Street, Frome, BA11 1BH*
  
- ✦ **Relate** ☎ **01225 465 593**  
Confidential counselling for adult couples and individuals with relationship problems, including sexual therapy. Daytime and evening appointments available. Ring the above number to make an appointment or write to:  
*21 Milsom Street, Bath, Somerset, BA1 1DE*
  
- ✦ **Off The Record** ☎ **0800 335551**  
Confidential advice and counselling for young people. To arrange an appointment, call the above number or write to:  
*Open House Centre, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW*
  
- ✦ **Mosaic** ☎ **01225 461 444**  
Provides advice, support, advocacy and counselling for black people and individuals from other ethnic minorities. Ring the above number or write to:  
*Riverside Youth & Community Centre, York Place, London Road, Bath, BA1 6AE.*
  
- ✦ **Cruse Bereavement Care** ☎ **01225 465 878**  
Support, advice and counselling to any bereaved person including children. Also organises a range of support and social groups. Contact the above number for more information or to arrange an appointment. You can also write to: *11-12 Laura Place, Bath, BA2 4BL.*

## Information for Those Who Self-Injure

### ✦ **National Self-Harm Network**

A survivor-led organisation that campaigns for the rights and understanding for people who self-injure. Contact:  
*Louise Pembroke, PO Box 16190, London, NW1 3WW.*

### ✦ **SASH - Survivors of Abuse and Self-Harm**

Pen-friend network which offers support and friendship on a one-to-one basis in writing. Contact:  
*20 Lackmore Road, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 4PB.*

### ✦ **The Basement Project** ☎ **01873 856 524**

A range of low cost publications aimed at helping and supporting people who self-harm.  
Also publications and a newsletter 'Waves' are available for those dealing with the effects of childhood abuse.  
Ring for more information or write to:  
*PO Box 5, Abergavenny, NP7 6XW.*

### ✦ **SHOUT - Self-Harm Overcome by Understanding & Tolerance**

Bi-monthly newsletter aiming to breakdown isolation and provide support for women affected by self-harm.  
Includes details of self-help lines, groups and resources.  
Write to: *PO Box 654, Bristol, BS99 1XH*

We have nurse specialists who link with the Emergency Department of the Royal United Hospital. If you are unsure of which service is right for you, or you would like to discuss how to be referred to one of the more specialist mental health services, they can be contacted by ringing 01225 825320. Alternatively, you can ask the nurse looking after you to refer you.

It is advisable to make an appointment to see your GP within one week of an overdose.

If you are unsure of anything, please feel free to ask the nurse looking after you, who will be happy to explain things. If it would be helpful to talk about what led up to your attendance at the hospital, the staff are able to offer you time to sit and talk about how you are feeling. However, if you would rather sit and have some quiet time on your own, that's fine too.

If you have any comments or suggestions about the care you have received whilst attending the hospital, please feel free to discuss these with the nurse looking after you. If you prefer, you can write to either of the following:

- ✦ The Chief Executive, Royal United Hospital, Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG.
- ✦ The Chief Executive, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Care NHS Trust, Bath NHS House, Newbridge Hill, Bath, BA1 3QE

## **What We Believe**

It does not matter about the origins of your self-harm or injury - here you will be treated with respect and understanding, however your injuries were caused. We will challenge any negative or blaming attitudes towards those who have taken an overdose or experience self-injury. We welcome comments and views on the service you receive whilst attending the hospital and will respond positively to suggestions for further improvements in the standard of care we provide.

*Date of Production: September 2004*  
*Date of Review: September 2007*

*Compiled by the Mental Health Liaison Team*