

Developing a Self-Harm Policy

Aims:

- To promote clarity and confidence amongst participants in regards to how they respond to incidences of self-harm.
- To clarify some of the most important issues which are likely to arise when working with people who self-harm; and to consider ways of addressing them.
- To assist in promoting a consistent, cohesive approach in terms of organisational and individual response to self-harm.
- To facilitate discussion with the organisation about how they can achieve a workable, useful and effective policy around self-harm.

Objectives:

- To ensure that participants are all working from a shared understanding of self-harm i.e that it is a coping strategy which people use in order to cope with difficult feelings and situations.
- To clarify that self-harm and suicide are two distinct issues.
- To identify the advantages and disadvantages of working from either a preventative or harm-minimisation approach
- To arrive at a definition of harm-minimisation by referring to research and practice
- To refer to research and experience to examine the ethical and practical rationale behind harm-minimisation practice, from staff and client perspectives.
- To establish a legal and practical framework for harm-minimisation practice
- To access and examine recent developments and examples of practice around harm-minimisation.
- To identify any other policies/guidelines that may impact on content and direction of self-harm policy.
- To acknowledge the importance of involving staff with different skills, knowledge and roles to add insight and a broader perspective to policy under development.
- To identify areas of concern and to facilitate discussion as to how these concerns may be addressed.

