

Working with Self-Harm

Suitable for:

staff or carers who wish to acquire or develop a general understanding of self-harm, working in the wide range of services accessed by people who self-harm. This may include: mental health services, education, drug and alcohol services, youth services, criminal justice, accident and emergency, counselling service etc.

Aims of the course:

- To develop participants' awareness and understanding of self-harm.
- To establish that self-harm is a coping strategy which clients are likely to have developed as a way of dealing with difficult feelings and situations; and that helpful responses from workers and carers may play a vital role in supporting someone who self-harms. That staff and carers require access to information and resources, along with opportunities to reflect on their practice, in order to maximise the positive potential of their work with self-harm.
- To increase participants' confidence when offering a supportive, informed response to people who self-harm.

Objectives of the course:

- To construct a definition of self-harm, and to consider how self-harm relates to other self-damaging behaviours, including suicide.
 - To identify why people may self-harm, and what consequences this may have for service response
 - To measure rates of prevalence amongst different groups of young people, and to think through the reasons behind different rates of prevalence.
 - To listen to experiential accounts of self-harm; as well as having access to current self-harm research, publications and resources
 - To identify and evaluate various responses, treatments and professional approaches to self-harm
 - To explore the emotional impact of self-harm on staff and carers, and their consequent need for support, supervision and self-care.
 - To identify 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 develop participants' skills and confidence when working with and responding to self-harm
 - To provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on their own personal responses and their practice in working with self-harm
- To provide an opportunity for participants to share experiences, knowledge and opinions around the issue of self-harm.

Course content:

"I now have much more awareness of why people self-harm and how I could help/support them" (community mental health worker, Oct 17th 2006).

An introduction to some of the most important issues around self-harm such as:

- What is self-harm?
- Why do people self-harm?
- Diversity and self-harm
- How should we respond to self-harm?
- What resources are available to support work with self-harm?

Learning materials and methods

Whilst being structured and facilitated in order to ensure a safe and comfortable space for all participants, it is also informal, friendly and participatory. Course facilitators use a range of different learning materials and methods, including:

- Published research
- Literature
- Experiential accounts of service users and carers
- Experiential accounts of staff
- Participatory exercises
- Group discussion and debate
- Individual reflection and feedback

In addition, all participants receive a reading pack containing relevant articles, statistics, leaflets and details of further sources of information

