



You will also be only too aware of the damage you are doing to yourself by continuing to use this method of managing your feelings. Are you ready to commit to creating and embarking on a self-harm reduction plan?

## My self-harm reduction intention statement

I am ready to commit to reducing my self-harming behaviour.

I will fill in my Self-Harm Coping Plan by \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

I will ask \_\_\_\_\_ (friend or professional) to help me write my plan.

I will commit to using my Self-Harm Coping Plan whenever I feel the urge to self-harm.


Remember that you don't need to go 'cold turkey' and give up completely - this is a step by step approach to reducing the impact of self-harm while you slowly replace it with more constructive strategies for managing your feelings

## 2. Making a self-harm coping plan

The attached framework sets out a series of steps for you to follow whenever you notice the urge to self-harm. Giving yourself these steps to follow helps you to learn your triggers and find alternative ways to manage your feelings. In the early stages you may still go on to use self-harm – however, the plan also helps you reduce the damage you cause. Gradually you can learn skills like mindfulness and emotion tolerance which will allow you to manage very difficult feelings without resorting to self-harm.

## 3. Next steps

A self-harm reduction plan is best undertaken with the help of a good support network. Use the 'Build your support network' section to make sure you have as much support as possible.



***"Self-harm doesn't make you feel any better in the long run. It is much better to let out your emotions; have a good cry, do something creative, or if you're not a very creative person, then do something else like go for a walk or a run." – Lucy***

Fill in this Safety Plan with precise details that are relevant to you for each step, then keep it somewhere where you can access it easily when you need it. The aim is to try not to get to the end of the plan.

<b>If I am feeling overwhelmed and in danger of acting on urges to harm myself deliberately, I will do the following:</b>	
<p><b>1. I will make a deal with myself not to act on this immediately and to follow my Coping Plan to reduce the risk of acting on these thoughts.</b>  <i>(Write a clear statement using 'I' that you can read and repeat to yourself: eg. "I will give myself time to notice what I am feeling and help myself in other ways before I consider using self-harm to cope.")</i></p>	
<p><b>2. I will speak to myself with compassion and caring, reminding myself of ways to calm myself down and soothe myself:</b>  <i>(Write down caring things you can say to yourself, thinking about what you might say to a friend who was feeling this bad eg. "It's hard to feel this way – try to be kind to yourself." "These are just thoughts – you don't need to act on them." "Remember your breathing and relaxation techniques.")</i></p>	I can say:
<p><b>3. I will reduce the risk of acting on my self-harming urges by removing dangerous items and avoiding risky behaviour:</b>  <i>(Write down what you can do to make it more difficult for you to harm yourself eg. not drinking alcohol or taking any drugs while you are feeling this way, also note what items should be kept locked away, and who you can call in an emergency to help you keep yourself safe)</i></p>	<p>I will _____</p> <p>I will _____</p> <p>I will _____</p> <p>I will _____</p>
<p><b>4. I will resist the immediate urge to make the feelings go away and will try to tune in to what has triggered my urge to self-harm and to name the feelings that I am feeling.</b>  <i>(It is a good idea to identify how you will do this, eg. have somewhere to write down what you notice about how you feel)</i></p>	I will identify my feelings by:

<p><b>5. I will remind myself of the following options for expressing my feelings in creative ways and choose at least one of them to try:</b> <i>(eg. having a good cry, doing vigorous activity or exercise like going for a run, writing all my feelings down, drawing or using other creative expression like playing music, telling someone else how I am really feeling, keeping a blog, using a list of feelings words to underline which ones I am feeling right now)</i></p>	<p>Ways I can express my feelings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. _____</li><li>2. _____</li><li>3. _____</li><li>4. _____</li><li>5. _____</li><li>6. _____</li><li>7. _____</li><li>8. _____</li><li>9. _____</li><li>10. _____</li></ol>
<p><b>6. I will remind myself of the following options for soothing and taking care of myself when I am experiencing difficult feelings:</b> <i>(eg. have a soothing bath; go for a walk with upbeat music on my mp3 player; focus on my breathing or listen to a relaxation or mindfulness mp3; get outside into natural surroundings; take time to cook a tasty meal; contact a friend or family member; give myself a hug, or do some self-massage etc – see ‘Taking care of myself’ for more self-soothing ideas)</i></p>	<p>My self-soothing list:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. _____</li><li>2. _____</li><li>3. _____</li><li>4. _____</li><li>5. _____</li><li>6. _____</li><li>7. _____</li><li>8. _____</li><li>9. _____</li><li>10. _____</li></ol>
<p><b>7. Once I have paid attention to my feelings (or if I have found it too difficult to do that right now) and I have tried some self-soothing strategies, I can choose one of the following activities to distract myself:</b> <i>(eg. watch TV or a light-hearted DVD; read a book; write in a diary; tidy my room; getting some of my work done; connecting up with housemates or friends; people watching in the park; going for a run or doing other exercise; doing something creative – see ‘Focusing outward’ for more ideas)</i></p>	<p>My list of constructive distractions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. _____</li><li>2. _____</li><li>3. _____</li><li>4. _____</li><li>5. _____</li><li>6. _____</li><li>7. _____</li><li>8. _____</li><li>9. _____</li><li>10. _____</li></ol>

<p><b>8. Other people can help me by:</b>  <i>(Write down reminders of the specific kinds of help you can ask other people for eg. keeping me company or letting me come over, being in touch with me online, taking away dangerous items for safe-keeping, giving me a hug)</i></p>	
<p><b>9. If I have tried my best to use the previous steps to help me with my difficult feelings and I am still feeling like I need to use self-harm then I will try the following substitute/s first:</b>  <i>(Choose a technique to substitute for self-harm eg. squeezing an ice cube, snapping an elastic band against your wrist, hitting a pillow or cushion etc)</i></p>	<p>Instead of self-harm I will try:</p>
<p><b>10. If I still feel the need to self-harm I will do my best to limit the damage by:</b>  <i>(eg. scratching instead of cutting, or whatever less intense version is relevant to your usual form of self-harm)</i></p>	
<p><b>11. If I have hurt myself I will still try to treat myself with compassion and take the best care of myself that I can by:</b>  <i>(eg. attending to the physical damage and using first aid, seeking out help and support from others, returning to the self-soothing list and comforting myself with something constructive etc.)</i></p>	<p>I will _____</p> <p>I will _____</p> <p>I will _____</p> <p>I will _____</p>
<p><b>12. Any other thoughts of my own that might help me when I am being disturbed by urges to self-harm:</b></p>	