

Worksheet 11.3: Self-harm

Self-harm is a very common coping strategy for Edi for several reasons including:

- a) It works instantly
- b) It is often free
- c) It is easily accessible

Carers who discover that their loved one is self-harming are often extremely distressed and their natural instinct is to tell Edi to stop. This is not helpful, and this exercise seeks to help carers understand why a patient, non-violent, passive approach can be much more successful.

These are useful resources:

- The 'No Harm Done' resources at <https://youngminds.org.uk/what-we-do/our-projects/no-harm-done/>
- *Cutting Down* – a CBT workbook for treating young people who self-harm, by Lucy Taylor, Mima Simic and Ulrike Schmidt.

In pairs or as a group think of a scenario in which Edi is using self-harm as a coping strategy or use this scenario.

- Think of the benefits that Jasmine might be deriving from her self-harm behaviour.
- Provide reasons why just saying 'stop' might not be the best approach.
- Come up with a menu of possible options to best support Jasmine.

Scenario

Jasmine is a popular, pretty and talented student and has never caused any trouble for her parents. She is their 'golden girl'. They get a phone call from school to inform them that Jasmine has admitted that she has been cutting her legs for 6 months and is starting to worry that it could get out of control. The school organise a meeting with Jasmine and her parents and in that meeting they are given a range of resources called 'No Harm Done', which are aimed at students, parents and staff.

Self-harm is a common coping strategy for young people in distress and in particular those affected by ED. Carers can use all their MI skills to come alongside Edi and gently walk with them as they explore a range of more healthy alternatives.