**Alternatives to Self-Harm and Distraction Techniques**

These are some ideas for helping people delay or avoid self-harm that you might wish to consider – ***they’ve all been suggested by people who self-harm*.** Some ideas might seem ridiculous, but others might work. Different people find that different things help, and it isn’t failure if you try something and it doesn’t help. You may be able to add things which you have discovered.

**Expressing Feelings**

**Letting it out** PHYSICALLY

• *Scream* as loud as you can

• HIT a cushion / punch bag / throw a cushion *against a wall*

• Smash a water melon

• Kick a football against a wall

• **Squeeze** ice really hard

• Squeeze a stress ball

• Tear up a newspaper/phone directory

• Play loud music and dance energetically – be as wild as you like

• Draw on the place you want to cut with red marker pen, fake blood or watered down food colouring

• *Write words* on yourself with a red marker pen

• Spend some energy - go for a walk/swim/go to the gym/ride a bike/go running

**Trying to work out how you’re feeling…**

• Ask yourself “Do I feel ANGRY?’ ‘Do I feel anxious?’ ‘What about?’

• Ask yourself ‘What would the razor blade say if it could talk to me?’

• **Write a letter** to someone you’re angry with (hurt by etc.) saying how you feel (No need to send it.)

• Write a list of your achievements

• Write a letter to yourself saying ‘I love YOU because….’

• **Make a list** of things you’re thankful for

• Make a wish list

**Talking about it….**

• Talk to a **friend**

• Call Kids Help Line **(1800 55 1800)**

• Allow yourself to cry (if you can)

**Use your Creativity**

• Draw / paint / collage / paper mache / finger paint / sculpt in clay - to express what you want to do or what you are feeling

• Write a poem / story / song / joke / autobiography / parody / musical

• Write a DIARY / journal or read old diaries (unless there might be triggers)

• Scribble a word again and again to say how you’re feeling e.g. ‘lonely’, ‘angry’

• Deface a magazine (preferably your own)

• Paint with ***red paint*** using your fingers

• Draw yourself

• Write a message in a self-harm newsgroup on the internet

• *Take some photos*

• Play an instrument / Sing to music as LOUD as you can

• Put on music which *expresses* how you are feeling

• Write out the soundtrack to your life if it were a film

• Imagine a colour which expresses your feelings then change it in your mind to another colour

• Make a **memory box** / scrapbook

• Write an **alternative** ending to a story

• Watch a foreign language channel and make up your own interpretations

• **Create** your own cartoon characters / legends

• Create a SECRET CODE

**Comforting Yourself…**

• Have a bath or **shower**

• Stay in bed

• Use aromatherapy oils

• Eat **chocolate** (or whatever)

• Have an ‘emergency box’ with whatever helps you cope

• Buy something special

• ***Massage*** your hands / arms / feet (or the area you want to harm)

• Stroke a pet / cuddle a teddy

• Ask a friend to **hug you**

• Paint your nails / Have your hair done

• Have a *cup of tea*

• Rock / hug yourself

• Give yourself a henna tattoo

• Meditate / yoga

DISTRACTING **yourself**

***Leisure Activities***

• *Watch* television / video / DVD

• Play on a computer

• Go on the internet

• Learn a new skill (juggling / making balloon animals)

• Do puzzles / play chess / make your own puzzles

• Origami / make jewellery (beading)

• Sew / knit

• Go through a *photo album*

• Design a **dream** house

• Build a card house

• Make a paper chain of the days its been since you last cut (add a new one every day)

• Make a T-shirt

• Look for pictures in the clouds

**GETTING OUT AND ABOUT……..**

1. *Sweep* the path

2. Wash the **car**

3. Do some gardening

4. Go for a drive

5. Go to an **arcade** or playground

6. Make a kite/fly a kite

7. Go to the sea

8. Look at constellations

**Being Productive…….. .**

1. Catch up on **DIY** / housework

2. Cook/bake something

3. Have a clear out – give your old stuff to charity

4. Re-arrange your room/decorate

5. Read/study

6. Give your pets a bath

7. Volunteer somewhere

8. Join a class

9. Think about what you’d like to ***change*** about your life and make a plan