

Whole school approach

Whilst there is much that proactive, supportive individuals can do to help a young person within their school or organisation, this support is best provided within the context of a whole school approach in order to keep both ourselves, and the young person as safe as possible.

Simple steps that your school could take include:

1. Developing and implementing a mental health policy

Clear guidance can give staff the knowledge and confidence they need to respond to issues appropriately. It is important to develop a policy that feels relevant and achievable within your setting and to ensure that all staff know who to refer to with concerns.

2. Providing training for all staff

Providing basic training for all staff on how to recognise and respond to self-harm will increase the confidence of both staff and students in making and responding to disclosures.

[Funded training](#) can be provided by the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust and YoungMinds regularly runs [self-harm training](#) as part of its Open Access programme.

“Most importantly, the INSET day got us talking about self-harm. It was uncomfortable at first but we all grew in confidence throughout the day. It was really empowering – we’re no longer scared of disclosures, we feel confident we can help.”

3. Addressing self-harm as part of PSHE

Your PSHE curriculum can provide a great opportunity to tackle myths and misunderstandings surrounding self-harm and to provide students with an understanding of how to keep themselves and each other supported and safe. The [PSHE Association guidance](#) on teaching about mental health provides background information about how to tackle sensitive issues safely as well as model lessons on self-harm and healthy coping.

4. Looking after staff wellbeing

Before we can look after others, we must first look after ourselves. Supporting young people who are in emotional distress can be physically and mentally draining for staff; this needs to be recognised and appropriate support put in place, both in terms of training and supportive listening.