



## Am I a freak if I hurt myself?

Self harm is a way of coping with things in life that are difficult, things from the past or things going on right now. **In society there is a lot of judgement about people who self-harm** and words like freak, nutter, mental and sad have been used to describe people who are simply trying to help themselves. It can be easy to take on the views of other people and label yourself or your behaviour in ways that feel negative. It is important for your good mental health that you understand and respect the choices that you make. Often people who hurt themselves feel bad about themselves and can use judgements that other people make as a way of giving themselves a hard time. **Try to be careful about how you describe yourself, taking care to use gently and accepting language.**

### Using affirmations can be helpful to challenge particular ways of thinking.

Sometimes I hurt myself, I do this because .....(it makes me feel better/ it distracts me from painful feelings /it releases horrible feelings)

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I am not just a 'self-harmer' / I am not a freak, I am someone who hurts themselves as a way of coping with life at the moment. I am doing the best I can right now.

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I self-harm and I have the right to do this.

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There are lots of people who self-harm to cope with life, like everyone else who does this, I have the right to make this choice.

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Every time I feel scared I can focus on my breathing to calm down.

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Even though sometimes I don't like hurting myself, it is my way at the moment of getting through.

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I want to stop hurting myself. When I have found other ways of helping myself to deal with my life I will be able to let go of hurting myself.

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## Changing the way you think about yourself.

If you are trying to make a change to the way you think about yourself or the way you deal with difficult things in your life, remember that it may take a little time. Often when people first start using affirmations they will quickly have another thought in their mind that says the opposite. **It is worth persisting with a new thought for some time to take some of the power away from the old thought.**



Sometimes other thoughts will come into your mind straight away. **Repeating the affirmations and acknowledging the other thoughts may, over time take away some of the strength that the judgements have in your mind.**

If you would like to explore more about how your thoughts affect how you feel you could have a go on the online thoughts and feelings course at [The Mood Gym](#)