



Why do I self-harm?

There are always reasons why people self-harm. These reasons vary from person to person. People often harm their own bodies because it makes emotional pain more bearable. When people start to try and understand why they self-harm they sometimes have to face lots of painful feelings and experiences – this can take time and it's important to be kind to yourself when you are doing this, if it feels too hard or frightening leave it for a while and give yourself credit for having the courage to start thinking about it.

To start understanding why you self harm and what you get from doing it you could try asking yourself some questions like these below. It might be useful to take lots of time and come back to the same questions and put down different ideas. Maybe write all this in a journal or diary like the [Rainbow Journal](#) and spend time answering one question a day or a week and making sure that you spend some time doing relaxing things that you enjoy as well.

- When did I first start harming myself? What was going on in my life then that might be relevant?
- How did self-harm help me cope or survive in the past? How does it help me cope or survive now?
- How do I feel before I hurt myself? How do I feel afterwards? What feelings may I be expressing or avoiding through self-harm?
- What situations in my life can I list that make me want to self-harm? Eg: When I feel criticised / when I spend time with these people..... / when I get drunk. (
- How do I imagine life without self-harm? What might be difficult, frightening or overwhelming?
- What do I like about my self-harm – about the act itself, the wounds, the scars?

Every time you manage to spend some time reflecting on your relationship with self-harm give yourself some appreciation for having the courage to explore something that is possibly complex and painful. If you want some support to help you go through this process then you can text or email TESS and let us know how you are getting on and we can support you with how you are feeling and what you are understanding about yourself.