

What can teachers and frontline school staff do to help?

- **School staff shouldn't feel responsible for sorting out all the problems** for the young person
- **This may need more specialist help** and time than you can provide (although school staff do a huge amount of good work dealing with young peoples mental health all the time!!)

The good news is there are some simple things you can do that can really help:

- **Don't panic!** The worst thing you can do is to do nothing and ignore the self-harm – talking about the problem will not encourage more self-harm
- **Speak with the young person** – invite them to tell you about the self-harm and any problems or worries they might want to share
 - This should be an invitation and not a demand to share everything
 - It may take a few invitations to talk before the young person feels able to risk sharing with you
 - The most important thing you can do it offer to listen
- **Don't tell them to “just stop doing it”** the self-harm will always be of great importance to the young person and may be their only coping mechanism - so just stopping might leave them more at risk
- **Make a plan** - this might be as simple as making another time to listen or the plan might be to make a referral on
 - What is important is that you and the young person discuss and (ideally) agree the plan
- **If someone is actively suicidal:**
 - They are clear they want to die
 - They have a plan and intend to act on that plan immediately
 - Make sure someone stays with them
 - You still have time to seek advice as long as they are kept safe with someone
 - If the young person has already taken an overdose - or if you suspect have might have - get them to A&E for medical assessment and treatment for the poisoning
- **Share with someone** – always speak to colleagues in school and ideally speak to your local CAMHS team for advice
 - Your local safeguarding protocol will also mean you have to share with a parent or carer
 - Be clear with the young person why you are doing this and give them choices about how you might tell parents
- **Act** – do what you have agreed
 - Even the best plans don't always go to plan
 - But do what you can as soon as you can
- **Let them know what you have done** and what you haven't managed to do yet, and why
- **Stay in the loop** - if the local CAMHS or Social Care start work with the young person – school still has a great deal to offer
 - It is important for the young person that schools and specialist services continue to communicate and work together in the interest of the young person