

## Self-Harm and Neurodiversity

Approximately fifty percent of people with autism have self-harmed at some point in their lives. Daily life can feel more challenging for autistic people and the reasons they may start self-harming can be different from non-autistic people.

What could be the causes?

- Feeling out of control with their environment
- Difficulties with changes at home or in school
- Sensory differences such as trying to manage the sound, light and texture around them
- Difficulty in processing feelings and emotions rationally
- Difficulty in social communications and interactions
- To shock themselves out of intolerably strong emotions
- To help to reduce stress and pressure
- To punish themselves

What could help when starting a conversation about self-harm with a young person who is neurodivergent?

- Try reducing the number of questions you ask them
- Notice their window of tolerance
- Use visual support
- Alternatives that offer a feeling of deep pressure
- Share experiences of times when you were a child/teenager which were difficult
- Model healthy behaviours

### Further Support

Autism Hampshire:

Information, Advice & Guidance for adults, young people and children with autism, their parents, carers and professionals.

[www.autismhampshire.org.uk](http://www.autismhampshire.org.uk)

Koala Community:

Autistic led support for Autistic and Neurodivergent Individuals and Families

[www.moreeducation.co.uk](http://www.moreeducation.co.uk)