



How to find us

Outside the Box is the host for Shared Strengths. This is an independent voluntary organisation based in Scotland. We help people who are marginalised have a voice and influence or create the supports they need for the longer-term.

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Materials from Shared Strengths are on the website – look under Self Harm.
www.otbds.org

“We need something that will help change people’s attitudes, to make it easier to explain to people what is happening and for them to understand, not overreact or be afraid.” (Adults’ experiences of self-harm, Outside the Box, 2008)



shared strengths

Shared Strengths is an informal network of people who recognise that some adults use self harm as a means of coping.

The group is open to people and organisations who share and respect this starting point. The network is led by people who use self harm as a coping strategy: workers and groups led by families and friends are welcome to take part too.

What we do

- We bring together resources and information about self harm as a coping strategy. This makes it easier for groups and people across Scotland to refer to the policy documents and find out about examples of good practice.
- We work together to develop resources that can help people and groups. Examples will include sharing tips on ways to cope through difficult times and minimising harm.
- We meet every 6 weeks or so. The people who come along include people with lived experience of using self harm, workers who support groups led by people who use self harm, people who provide training, staff in support and care services, and people with a policy interest. The aim is to share information, exchange ideas and contacts, and to give each other encouragement and support for the work we each do.
- People can get involved in the group discussions through email and the website instead of coming to the meetings.
- We find ways to raise awareness about adults' use of self harm as a way of coping.
- We try to influence other organisations' policies and practice.
- We remind people and groups who have an interest in raising understanding about self harm as a way of coping that there are other people who work and think in this way.
- We encourage the development of more direct support for people who use self harm as a coping strategy, including peer support groups.



How to get involved

- You can feed in your suggestions and comments on what the group does, or what it should be doing.
- You can come along to the meetings.
- You can contribute your examples of what helps people cope and of how services provide good, caring responses.
- You can use the material we produce to help your work.
- You can share information about the group with other people.
- You can have a discussion with people you know about ways to raise awareness of self harm as a coping strategy and of ways to improve the support and services that are provided.

"Our central theme is that the needs, care, well-being and individual human dilemma of the person who harms themselves should be at the heart of what we as clinicians do." (Self-harm, suicide and risk: helping people who self-harm. Royal College of Psychiatrists report, 2010)