

A blueprint for providing resources to parents of adolescents who self-harm



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Research team



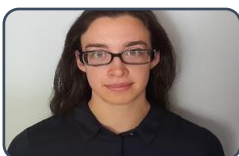
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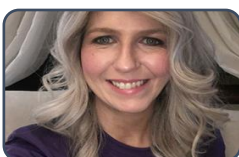
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Introduction

Background literature

The term self-harm is used to describe an act in which an individual deliberately initiates behaviour with the intention of causing harm to themselves (e.g. self-cutting), with or without suicidal intent (Madge et al., 2008; Moriarty et al., 2019). Engaging in self-harm is common in adolescents in Ireland with 23% of 12–19-year-olds reporting a lifetime prevalence (Dooley et al., 2019). Yet international research across 7 countries, including Ireland, found that less than 20% of those who self-harmed received professional help (Ystgaard et al., 2009).

Parents are a necessary part of the support system and road to recovery for most adolescents. For example, adolescents often access mental health services because of arrangements made by their parents (Coyne et al., 2015). Therefore, parents must have access to information on identifying self-harm and what to do if they discover their child has engaged in self-harm. Additionally, research that has engaged with parents of adolescents who self-harm has identified parental need for more support, and a need for more accessible information (Byrne et al., 2008; Raphael et al., 2005).

It is important to note that parents' information needs may differ depending on the stage of engagement, such as the information needs of a parent who has just discovered that their adolescent has engaged in self-harm will be different from a parent who is supporting their adolescent in recovery from self-harm (Dempsey et al., 2019; Krysinska et al., 2020). Previous research with parents has typically gathered data from small samples through qualitative methods and with parents already engaged in services (e.g. Byrne et al., 2008), making it impossible to determine the extent to which parents may differ in their information needs especially those that do not engage with services.

Internationally there has been relatively little research on the information needs of parents of adolescents who self-harm or attempt suicide (Krysinska et al., 2020). This, despite the fact that it is now easier than ever to provide information to parents online in a relatively cost-effective way. For example, Wozney et al., (2018) highlighted the important role of search engines in accessing information regarding services and information on self-harm.

Research aims

The main aim of this research was to explore the information and support needs of parents of adolescents who self-harm. The research also aimed to gather data on parental preferences for accessing this information (e.g. online, via SMS message, leaflets) using the methods outlined in Figure 1 below.

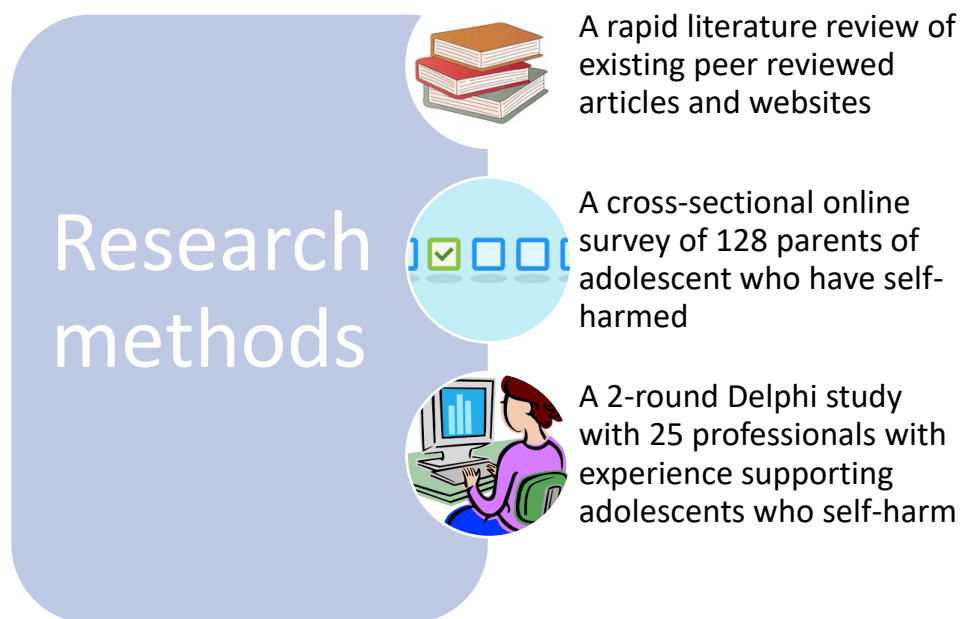


Figure 1 The three research studies¹

The first study undertaken was the rapid literature review of published research as well as the search and review of websites for parents. Based on the findings of that review a parent survey and Delphi study for professionals were designed. Drawing on the findings of the survey and the Delphi study, this document describes what the parents told us they needed and wanted to know, as well as what the professionals thought it was important for parents to know. All of the information needs outlined below were endorsed as ‘important’ or ‘essential’ to know by at least 80% of parents and by at least 60% of professionals. In most cases there was significant agreement between parents and professionals regarding the information that was needed.

We have also distinguished between information that parents want when they first discover that an adolescent is self-harming and information that parents want over the longer-term of

¹ Full details of the methods can be found in the appendices

treatment and recovery. This distinction was based on discussion and feedback from our advisory group.

In this report we do not specify the nature of the information that should be provided, only the topics that emerged as important for parents. The nature of the information provided will need to be tailored to the target group of parents, taking into account, for example, their cultural context, their language needs and levels of literacy etc. When designing and compiling an information resource will be important to get input from these different groups of parents to ensure that the information provided meets their needs.

Blueprint for providing information to parents

General recommendations:

- Parents reported they would benefit from hearing some of this information from other parents who have lived experience of supporting a young person engaged in self-harm. This could be through testimonials on a website, peer support online forums or groups, or inclusion of this perspective in talks.
- Parents reported wanting information on what to avoid doing or saying (e.g. diminishing the adolescents' problems or feelings).
- Parents felt it was essential that services and information were tailored towards specific groups of parents including but not limited to:
 - Travellers (with information based on understanding and respect for their culture)
 - minority groups such as those in the LGBTQI+ community
 - adolescents who have co-morbidities such as eating dysregulation

Immediate Information needs

The items in this section were considered 'important' or 'essential' by over 80% of parents and professionals. Details and guidance on providing information in relation to each of these items were generated through a combination of the open-ended questions of the surveys, data extracted from relevant articles identified through the rapid literature review, and the feedback from members of the advisory board. See Appendix 1 on further details.

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| Item 1 | My adolescent has told me, or I have discovered (e.g. observed or been told by someone other than my adolescent) that my adolescent is self-harming or suicidal. What should I say to my adolescent? |
| Guidance/details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to have an initial conversation with an adolescent on initial discovery of self-harm (advice on what to say and what not to say). • How to respond if the adolescent begs their parent not to tell anyone else. |

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| Item 2 | What signs might indicate self-harm? |
| Guidance/details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of signs that might indicate self-harm. This was noted as being particularly important in relation to having the initial conversation with adolescents and getting them support as soon as possible. • It was also noted that self-harm is not always easy for parents to identify |

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| Item 3 | If I know my adolescent self-harms, should I ask them whether they are thinking about suicide? |
| Guidance/details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to discover an adolescent's reasons for self-harming • How to ask about suicidal thoughts or intentions. • How to address thoughts of suicide with an adolescent and how keep them safe if suicidality is a concern. |

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| Item 4 | How can parents manage their own emotional response to the discovery of self-harm? |
| Guidance/details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What parents can expect from their own response to their adolescent's self-harm and how to cope with the discovery. • The main emotions parents reported wanting information on how to manage were: panic, shock, or anger on initial discovery. |

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| Item 5 | How to support a young person to use alternative emotional regulation strategies. Should I put away anything my adolescent could use to hurt themselves (eg. sharp objects or should I lock away anything that might be used in a suicide attempt)? |
| Guidance/details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to work collaboratively with an adolescent to consider emotion regulation strategies. • Where possible, provide a list of alternative coping strategies, for example Soothing/Stress Relief/Distraction strategies listed on page 7 of: https://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/files/news/copy_of_coping-with-self-harm-brochure_final_copyright.pdf. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If information regarding means restriction is included, it should be coupled with information that discusses supporting alternative coping strategies and information on how to use safety plans. |
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| Item 6 | Where do I go for medical attention for my adolescent, when is it needed? What do I do if they refuse medical attention? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided in relation to this question should refer to parents needing to make a decision as the young person might not be thinking clearly. • Some other aspects of keeping adolescents safe, such as wound care and preventing infection, should be included for situations where an adolescent refuses to attend for medical care. |

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| Item 7 | Where do I go for psychological support for my adolescent, when is it needed? What do I do if they refuse psychological support? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and where to access appropriate services and information on whether psychological support will cost money. • How to access free services and private services. • How to encourage the young person to seek psychological support if self-harm is ongoing and advice on overcoming barriers to support. • Recommend that services are contacted as soon as possible because many parents with experience supporting adolescents reported that they did not feel they have contacted services early enough |

Information needs for ongoing self-harm

This section addresses needs that were considered ‘important’ or ‘essential’ by over 80% of parents or professionals and are relevant to providing ongoing support instead of immediately after discovery. Details and guidance on providing information in relation to each of these items were again generated through a combination of the open-ended questions included in the surveys, data extracted from relevant articles identified through the rapid literature review, and the feedback from members of the advisory board. The information is not any more or less necessary than detailed above for immediate needs but relates to the context of on-going support.

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| Item 1 | Why do adolescents self-harm and how common is self-harm or suicide in adolescents? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on why adolescents (in general) engage in self-harm. • What constitutes self-harm. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether friends of the adolescent are likely to be a risk or protective factor. • General information on self-harm including statistics, warning signs that indicate self-harm, taking self-harm seriously, and the relationship between self-harm and suicide. |
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| Item 2 | What parenting strategies can I use to help (e.g. how set boundaries?) and are there things I should avoid doing? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General advice on practical actions parents can do on a day-to-day basis to support an adolescent. • Information on ‘vigilant care’ and monitoring and how this can be achieved in collaboration with the adolescent. • How to set and enforce boundaries for an adolescent’s behaviour, and how to manage threats of self-harm and increased monitoring. • How to support an adolescent’s continued use of alternative coping strategies. • How to respond if an adolescent threatens to self-harm or attempt suicide in order to ensure adolescent safety? • Emphasise the importance of maintaining these strategies and support after cessation of self-harm. |

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| Item 3 | What treatment options might be offered and what do they involve (e.g., cognitive behavioural therapy, family therapy, medication, etc.)? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include some general information about engagement with support services including what will happen if they go to the GP or to Accident and Emergency? • Information on if and when medication is an option. • How to get involved and support the professional support an adolescent is receiving. • Advice on collaborating with the professional treatment the adolescent is receiving and on how to keep communication open. • Information around practical expectations such as whether parents will they need to take time off from work, how to get to appointments, or how to arrange appointments. |

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| Item 4 | How do I manage my own feelings such as worry or the feeling of constantly ‘walking on eggshells’ and why would self-care (doing things to take care of your own mental health like things you enjoy) be important for me too? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on self-care, dealing with guilt or self-blame, and encouraging positive coping skills for parents such as how to make use of their social support network. • Report on the findings of research which emphasised the importance of parents having their own coping strategies, finding time for self- |

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| | <p>care, that parents need to be aware that providing support can be hard, and that it's an ongoing process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasise the importance of parent self-care following cessation of self-harm. |
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| Item 5 | Is there something I could do to strengthen my relationship with my adolescent? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should include how to build and maintain open and supportive communication with the adolescent and helping them learn other emotional regulation skills in general. • This includes enhancing parent-child relationships through supportive parenting strategies, helping the adolescent cope, and guidance on spending more time together . |

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| Item 6 | How can I understand my adolescent's individual triggers for self-harm and what can I do to help my adolescent with the feelings of needing to self-harm? (e.g., helping distract them) |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is related to item 5 in the immediate needs section. • Ideally this should also address whether the adolescent should be encouraged to tell their parent or someone they trust when they have the urge to self-harm. • This also includes guidance on management of self-harm episodes and how to prevent further episodes of self-harm. • How to set limits on behaviour in a way that does not trigger self-harm for their adolescent. |

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| Item 7 | Is there something I can do to make it better and how do I manage this feeling that I should 'fix' it? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide reassurance that sometimes parents are doing enough and that there is no 'quick fix' and also acknowledgement that the course of self-harm varies per person and might be a once off or might be ongoing. • Indicate that although parents may feel a responsibility to 'fix' it (i.e. the issue for the adolescent) that this isn't necessarily possible. |

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| Item 8 | Should I tell my other children what is happening? And how? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on managing self-harm within the family environment and how an adolescent's self-harm might impact the family as a unit. • How parents can manage worries about the impact of self-harm on the family. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and guidance on how parents can talk to other children in the family, where appropriate, in a way that is developmentally appropriate. • Guidance on balancing the needs of an adolescent who is self-harming with the needs of other children in the family. • Information on whether family therapy would be useful or necessary. |
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| Item 9 | How can I tell if my adolescent is continuing to self-harm? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to recognize that an adolescent may have resumed self-harming. |

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| Item 10 | What should I do if my adolescent doesn't connect with the person who is helping them (e.g. the therapist)? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to do if an adolescent is not connecting with the professional who is working with them. • How to encourage an adolescent to access and engage in intervention when they are reluctant. |

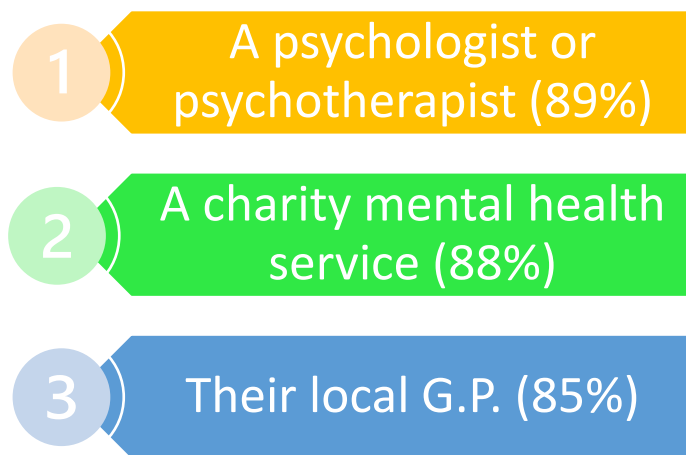
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| Item 11 | What kind of ongoing formal or informal supports might my adolescent need? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This item is related to treatment options and the role of parents in supporting formal interventions. • It is also related to items 6 and 7 in immediate needs on how to initially access supports but distinct as this was identified as an ongoing need as well as an initial need as on discharge parents would also appreciate more information on how to get back in touch with services if needed. • Information on the likely course of intervention and how long they will have to support their adolescent and in what way. |

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| Item 12 | How can parents access professional supports for themselves if necessary? |
| Guidance/ details: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance on where and how parents can get additional support for themselves should they need it. • Parents need to know the financial impact of getting support for self-harm (if any) on the family. |

How parents would like to receive information and support

Parents recommended that information is provided in one of three ways: a charity or government website, a helpline, or a leaflet. These items were rated as media by which the majority of parents would like to receive information with 90% reporting that they would prefer to receive information from a charity or government website, 73% from a helpline, and 61% from leaflets.

Parents were asked to indicate what sources of information that they would trust. Parents would like receive information from:



- In the open-ended question parents reported they would also like to receive information from the school where possible. This item was added to the second round of the Delphi study and rated by >80% of professionals as ‘important’ or ‘essential’.
- Parents also noted that they would like to receive information from other parents with experience of supporting adolescents engaged in self-harm. This might include a small vignette from parents on a website of their experience or a quote.

Comparison of parents’ needs with available information on self-harm

The findings of our research with parents and professionals, as outlined above, highlight a wide range of topics that they regard as important or essential to help them support an adolescent who is self-harming or who has attempted suicide. We also undertook a comparison between our research findings and the information available for parents on 56 websites were included in the rapid review (study 1).

The websites were predominantly provided by charities, national governments, hospitals, and private companies. Most websites were based in the USA (54%) with only 2 websites (8%) from Ireland. Figure 2 displays the eight most commonly presented topics on the websites for parents of adolescents engaged in self-harm. A comparison between the findings of our study and the available information shows multiple gaps including, for example, parents' desire for information on parenting strategies. This is a topic that is rarely addressed on websites with only 34% giving information.

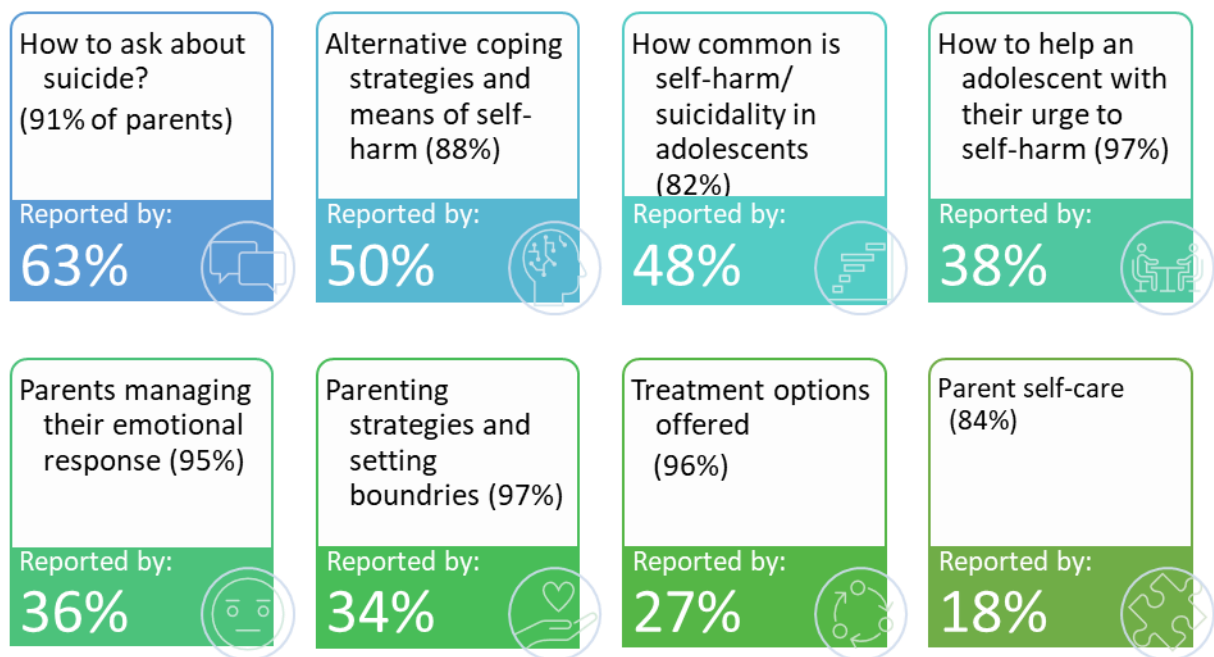


Figure 2: A comparison between the percentage of websites that reported the items and the percentage of parents that rated that item as important or essential (rating in brackets following item)

Gaps in the available information are not the only concern that has been raised about websites providing information on self-harm. Lewis et al., (2014) found that the quality of information provided on these websites is not all consistent and is not necessarily evidence based. In the current study we did not review the quality of the information on the websites we reviewed.

Conclusions

When we undertook this project we decided to gather data from parents of adolescents who self-harm as well as from professionals who work with adolescents. We did this because we

expected that there might be some differences between what parents wanted to know and what professionals thought it was important for parents to know. In fact, our findings demonstrate that there is considerable agreement between these two groups in relation to information needs. Exceptions included: ‘Will my adolescent need long-term support?’ which was rated ‘essential’ or ‘important’ by 91% of parents but by only 60% of professionals. After consultation with the research team and advisory board we decided to include this item but reworded to ‘What kind of ongoing formal or informal supports might my adolescent need?’ to reflect the discussion.

Our findings indicate the importance of providing parents with information, not just on self-harm and how to manage it, but also on the implications of self-harm for other members of the family. Thus parents indicated that they wanted to know how they could manage their own emotional responses, and if/how they should talk to the siblings of an adolescent who self-harms. This finding emphasises the way in which adolescent self-harm can impact on all family members and their relationships with one another (Ferrey et al., 2016).

A comparison of the information currently available on websites, with parents’ reports of their information needs shows that there is a considerable gap and that readily accessible information is needed for parents. Almost all parents (90%) reported that they would like to get information from a trustworthy website, and over half also wanted information leaflets and helplines. It is also important to note that many parents reported that they would find it helpful to hear from other parents who shared their experiences of adolescent self-harm. This was also mentioned by parents in previous studies (Byrne et al., 2008; Flynn et al., 2020; Krysinska et al., 2020; Stewart et al., 2018).

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Appendix 1: the rapid literature review

Study 1: A rapid literature review

We conducted a rapid literature review in the summer of 2021 to: 1) identify information and support already available for parents; 2) identify parents' information and support needs previously identified by other studies; 3) generate items for the survey for parents and professionals. Searches for peer reviewed articles were conducted in accordance with the Cochrane guidelines for rapid literature reviews:

(https://methods.cochrane.org/rapidreviews/sites/methods.cochrane.org.rapidreviews/files/public/uploads/cochrane_rr_-_guidance-23mar2020-v1.pdf). Websites delivering information for parents were searched in line with the Cochrane Handbook Technical Supplement (Lefebvre et al., 2011). This was limited to the first 10 pages (100 results) which is considered an acceptable limit (Godin et al., 2015; Briscoe et al., 2018) and the location remained enabled to capture Irish based results (Dublin South).

There were 17 articles that reported what information parents needed to know and they were predominantly based on data gathered in qualitative interviews (76%). Information parents reported they needed to know fell into 4 themes outlined in Figure A1.

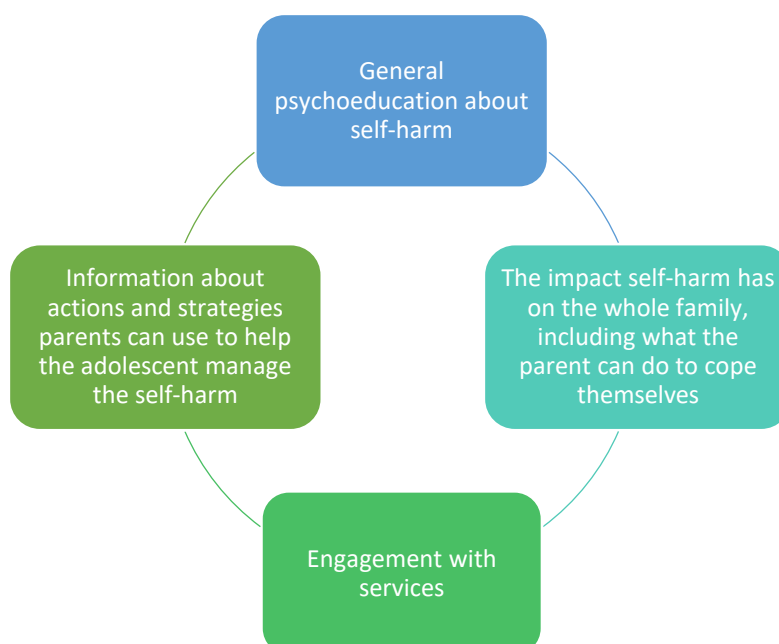


Figure A1 Themes from rapid literature review

Articles investigating parents' information needs typically gathered this data in the context of research on interventions for adolescents. In these studies the role of parents and their needs

are addressed in relation to an intervention for adolescents (Asarnow et al., 2015, Asarnow et al., 2017). Information provided in these studies included: 1) parenting strategies; 2) actions to support a young person such as alternative coping strategies and restricting access to means of self-harm; and 3) self-care including mindfulness skills; 4) options for treatment and supporting formal intervention. A full list of articles identified can be found in Table A1.

Table A1. Articles Identified in Rapid Literature Review

| Type | Reference |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Information provided to parents | Parast, L., Bardach, N. S., Burkhart, Q., Richardson, L. P., Murphy, J. M., Gidengil, C. A., Britto, M. T., Elliott, M. N., & Mangione-Smith, R. (2018). Development of new quality measures for hospital-based care of suicidal youth. <i>Academic Pediatrics</i> , 18(3), 248-255. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2017.09.017 |
| Information provided to parents | Berk, M. S., Rathus, J., Kessler, M., Clarke, S., Chick, C., Shen, H., & Llewellyn, T. (2020). Pilot test of a DBT-based parenting intervention for parents of youth with recent self-harm. <i>Cognitive and Behavioral Practice</i> , https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpra.2020.10.001 |
| Information provided to parents | Yen, S., Spirito, A., Weinstock, L. M., Tezanos, K., Kolobaric, A., & Miller, I. (2019). Coping long term with active suicide in adolescents: Results from a pilot randomized controlled trial. <i>Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry</i> , 24(4), 847-859. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104519843956 |
| Information provided to parents | Cyz, E. K., King, C. A., & Biermann, B. J. (2019). Motivational interviewing-enhanced safety planning for adolescents at high suicide risk: A pilot randomized controlled trial. <i>Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology</i> , 48(2), 250-262. https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2018.1496442 |
| Information provided to parents | Asarnow, J. R., PhD, Hughes, J. L., PhD, Babeva, K. N., PhD, & Sugar, C. A., PhD. (2017). Cognitive-behavioral family treatment for suicide attempt prevention: A randomized controlled trial. <i>Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry</i> , 56(6), 506-514. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2017.03.015 |
| Information provided to parents | Asarnow, J. R., Berk, M., Hughes, J. L., & Anderson, N. L. (2015;2014;). The SAFETY program: A treatment-development trial of a cognitive-behavioral family treatment for adolescent suicide attempters. <i>Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology</i> , 44(1), 194-203. https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2014.940624 |
| Information provided to parents | Bjureberg, J., Sahlin, H., Hedman-Lagerlöf, E., Gratz, K. L., Tull, M. T., Jokinen, J., Hellner, C., & Ljótsson, B. (2018). Extending research on emotion regulation individual therapy for adolescents (ERITA) with nonsuicidal self-injury disorder: Open pilot trial and mediation analysis of a novel online version. <i>BMC Psychiatry</i> , 18(1), 326-326. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-018-1885-6 |
| Information needed by parents | Ferrey, A. E., Hughes, N. D., Simkin, S., Locock, L., Stewart, A., Kapur, N., Gunnell, D., & Hawton, K. (2016). The impact of self-harm by young people on parents and families: A qualitative study. |

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| | BMJ Open, 6(1), e009631-e009631. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2015-009631 |
| Information needed by parents | Slovak, K. (2012). Clinical concepts in messaging strategies to parents of depressed and suicidal adolescents. <i>Social Work in Mental Health</i> , 10(1), 72-88. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332985.2011.625299 |
| Information needed by parents | Nadeem, E., Santiago, C. D., Kataoka, S. H., Chang, V. Y., & Stein, B. D. (2016). School personnel experiences in notifying parents about their child's risk for suicide: Lessons learned. <i>The Journal of School Health</i> , 86(1), 3-10. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12346 |
| Information needed by parents | Rissanen, M., Kylmä, J., & Laukkanen, E. (2009). Helping adolescents who self-mutilate: Parental descriptions. <i>Journal of Clinical Nursing</i> , 18(12), 1711-1721. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2702.2008.02672.x |
| Information needed by parents | Kelada, L., Hasking, P., & Melvin, G. A. (2017). School response to self-injury: Concerns of mental health staff and parents. <i>School Psychology Quarterly</i> , 32(2), 173-187. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000194 |
| Information needed by parents | Kelada, L., Whitlock, J., Hasking, P., & Melvin, G. (2016). Parents' experiences of nonsuicidal self-injury among adolescents and young adults. <i>Journal of Child and Family Studies</i> , 25(11), 3403-3416. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0496-4 |
| Information needed by parents | Krysinska, K., Curtis, S., Lamblin, M., Stefanac, N., Gibson, K., Byrne, S., Thorn, P., Rice, S. M., McRoberts, A., Ferrey, A., Perry, Y., Lin, A., Hetrick, S., Hawton, K., & Robinson, J. (2020). Parents' experience and psychoeducation needs when supporting a young person who self-harms. <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i> , 17(10), 3662. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17103662 |
| Information needed by parents | Byrne, S., Morgan, S., Fitzpatrick, C., Boylan, C., Crowley, S., Gahan, H., Howley, J., Staunton, D., & Guerin, S. (2008). Deliberate self-harm in children and adolescents: A qualitative study exploring the needs of parents and carers. <i>Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry</i> , 13(4), 493-504. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104508096765 |
| Information needed by parents | Ngwane, V. E., & van der Wath, Anna E. (2019). The psychosocial needs of parents of adolescents who attempt suicide. <i>Journal of Psychology in Africa</i> , 29(4), 375-382. https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2019.1647494 |
| Information needed by parents | Fu, X., Yang, J., Liao, X., Lin, J., Peng, Y., Shen, Y., Ou, J., Li, Y., & Chen, R. (2020). Parents' attitudes toward and experience of non-suicidal self-injury in adolescents: A qualitative study. <i>Frontiers in Psychiatry</i> , 11, 651-651. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2020.00651 |
| Information needed by parents | Stewart, A., Hughes, N. D., Simkin, S., Locock, L., Ferrey, A., Kapur, N., Gunnell, D., & Hawton, K. (2018). Navigating an unfamiliar world: How parents of young people who self-harm experience support and treatment. <i>Child and Adolescent Mental Health</i> , 23(2), 78-84. https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12205 |
| Information needed by parents | Slovak, K., & Singer, J. B. (2012). Engaging parents of suicidal youth in a rural environment: Engaging parents of suicidal youth. |

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| | Child & Family Social Work, 17(2), 212-221. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2206.2012.00826.x |
| Information needed by parents | Ferrey, A. E., Hughes, N. D., Simkin, S., Locock, L., Stewart, A., Kapur, N., Gunnell, D., & Hawton, K. (2016). Changes in parenting strategies after a young person's self-harm: A qualitative study. <i>Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health</i> , 10(1), 20-20. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-016-0110-y |
| Information needed by parents | Oldershaw, A., Richards, C., Simic, M., & Schmidt, U. (2008). Parents' perspectives on adolescent self-harm: Qualitative study. <i>British Journal of Psychiatry</i> , 193(2), 140-144. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.107.045930 |
| Information needed by parents | Hickey, K., Rossetti, J., & Musker, K. (2019). Concerns most important to parents after their child's suicide attempt: A pilot study and collaboration with a rural mental health facility. <i>Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing</i> , 32(2), 61-67. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcap.12234 |
| Information needed by parents and provided for parents | Flynn D, Gillespie C, Joyce M, Spillane A. An evaluation of the skills group component of DBT-A for parent/guardians: a mixed methods study. <i>Ir J Psychol Med</i> . 2020 Jan 24:1-9. doi: 10.1017/ipm.2019.62 . |
| Information needed by parents and provided for parents | Hickey, K., Rossetti, J., Strom, J., & Bryant, K. (2015). Issues most important to parents after their children's suicide attempt: A pilot delphi study. <i>Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing</i> , 28(4), 157-164. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcap.12124 |

Table A2 – List of websites identified in search

| Website provider | URL |
|---|---|
| Pieta Preventing Suicide and Self Harm | https://www.pieta.ie/ |
| Parents Guide To Support - Self-harm - Young Minds | https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-self-harm/ |
| 10 Things Parents Can Do to Prevent Suicide ... 17 | https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Ten-Things-Parents-Can-Do-to-Prevent-Suicide.aspx |
| About Teen Suicide (for Parents) - Nemours KidsHealth | https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/suicide.html |
| Preventing Child Self-Harm & Keep Them Safe NSPCC | https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/self-harm/ |
| SELF HARM - HSE | https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/nosp/resources/selfharmparents.pdf |
| How to Parent a Teen That Self Harms - Psycom | https://www.psycom.net/parent-a-teen-that-self-harms/ |
| Self-harm & teens: signs, causes, help Raising Children ... | https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/mental-health-physical-health/mental-health-disorders-concerns/self-harm |
| Self HarmTusla - Child and Family Agency | https://www.tusla.ie/parenting-24-seven/12-years/child-safety-practices-reduce-injury/self-harm/ |

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| Teens and suicide: What parents should know AFSP | https://afsp.org/teens-and-suicide-what-parents-should-know/ |
| Self harm - Family Lives | https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/health-wellbeing/self-harm/ |
| Adolescent Self-Harm - A Parent's Guide — Dr Amanda Hale | http://www.dramandahale.com/blog/2020/7/10/adolescent-self-harm-a-parents-guide |
| Information for parents - The Cornell Research Program on ... | http://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/parenting-2.pdf |
| How to Help Someone who is Suicidal Suicide Prevention ... | https://childmind.org/article/youre-worried-suicide/ |
| How to cope if your child is self harming Support, advice and ... | https://patient.info/news-and-features/how-to-cope-if-your-teen-is-self-harming |
| Ten ways a parent can help a child avoid self-harming - Priory ... | https://www.priorygroup.com/media-centre/ten-ways-a-parent-can-help-a-child-avoid-self-harming |
| A Parent's Guide to Teen Depression and Suicide Quality ... | https://qbhri.com/a-parents-guide-to-teen-depression-and-suicide/ |
| Children at Risk for Self-Harm or Harm to Others: Home Safety ... | https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/health-wellness-and-safety-resources/helping-hands/children-at-risk-for-self-harm-or-harm-to-others-home-safety-guidelines-for-families |
| Deliberate Self Harm - - Lucena Clinic | http://www.lucenaclinic.ie/adolescence-teenagers-self-harm |
| 6 Things Your Teen Needs From You to Stop Cutting Behaviors | https://www.newhavenrtc.com/self-harm-help/effective-therapies-for-adolescent-cutting/ |
| Teen Suicide - Stanford Children's Health | https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=teen-suicide-90-P02584 |
| Self-Harm: The Parent's View – ACAMH | https://www.acamh.org/research-digest/self-harm-parents-view/ |
| How to Help Teens Who Cut Themselves - Verywell Mind | https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-help-your-teen-if-they-are-cutting-2610925 |
| Supporting a child who is thinking of suicide Kids Helpline | https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/supporting-child-who-thinking-suicide |
| A Parent's Guide to Self-Harm - Best Day Psychiatry ... | https://bestdaypsych.com/a-parents-guide-to-self-harm/ |
| Supporting clinicians to work with parents of young ... - Orygen | https://www.orygen.org.au/Education-Training/Resources-Training/Resources/Free/Clinical-Practice/self-harm-and-parents/Orygen-CPP-SelfHarm_and_Parents.aspx?ext=. |
| Signs of Suicidal Ideation and Behavior in Teens | https://evolvreatment.com/parent-guides/suicide-ideation/ |
| Why do young people self-harm? - Beyond Blue Healthy ... | https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/age-13/mental-health-conditions-in-young-people/self-harm |
| Research: Parent therapy may help teens at risk of self-harm ... | https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-30979523.html |
| 6 Ways Parents Can Help Prevent Teen Suicide UNC Health ... | https://healthtalk.unchealthcare.org/6-ways-parents-can-help-prevent-teen-suicide/ |

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| Supporting your child - Papyrus | https://www.papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Supporting-Your-Child-A-Guide-for-Parents.pdf |
| How Can I help my child who is Self Harming? | https://www.adolescentselfinjuryfoundation.com/how-parents-can-help |
| What to do if your child is self-harming Parent Info | https://parentinfo.org/article/what-to-do-if-your-child-is-self-harming |
| Parent involvement key to child suicide prevention LLUH News | https://news.llu.edu/patient-care/parent-involvement-key-child-suicide-prevention |
| Suicidal Behavior Ages 13-18 - Teen Suicide & Depression ... | https://www.thewholechild.org/parent-resources/age-13-18/suicidal-behavior-ages-13-18/ |
| My Child Is Self-Harming - ISPCC | https://www.ispcc.ie/my-child-is-self-harming/ |
| What to do if Your Teenager Self-Harms - Immediate ... | https://www.melbournechildpsychology.com.au/blog/helping-teenagers-who-self-harm/ |
| Self-harm and teenagers - ReachOut Parents | https://parents.au.reachout.com/common-concerns/mental-health/self-harm-and-teenagers |
| Blog: A Parent's Guide to Suicide - Northeast Wisconsin ... | https://www.uwgb.edu/suicide-prevention-summit/blog-a-parent-s-guide-to-suicide/ |
| How To Help A Suicidal Teen Or Child : Shots - Health News ... | https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/02/02/962185779/make-space-listen-offer-hope-how-to-help-a-child-at-risk-of-suicide |
| Preventing Youth Suicide | https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/preventing-youth-suicide |
| What Is Teen Cutting and Self-Injury? McLean Hospital | https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/what-teen-cutting-and-self-injury |
| Self-harm in young people - for parents and carers Royal ... | https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/information-for-parents-and-carers/self-harm-in-young-people-for-parents-and-carers |
| Self-harm: a guide for parents Free resources for parents ... | https://www.thespark.org.uk/relationship-support-parents-families/free-parenting-resources/self-harm-guide-parents/ |
| How to Talk with Your Teen About Self-Harm | https://www.childandfamilymentalhealth.com/managing-moods-and-regulating-emotions/how-to-talk-with-your-teen-about-self-harm/ |
| ADHD, Self-Harm, and Suicide – CHADD | https://chadd.org/attention-article/adhd-self-harm-and-suicide/ |
| Self Harm KidsHealth NZ | https://www.kidshealth.org.nz/self-harm |
| What to do if my child is suicidal: 8 tips for parents | https://blog.chocchildrens.org/suicide-prevention-what-parents-need-to-know/ |
| Helping children and youth with thoughts of suicide - CHEO | https://www.cheo.on.ca/en/resources-and-support/resources/P5012E.pdf |
| A Parents' Guide to Suicide Prevention Accredited Schools ... | https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/suicide-prevention/ |

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| How to Seek Help for my Teenager Who is Cutting ... | https://www.arch.org/self-harm-treatment/ |
| Teens and Self-Cutting (Self-Harm): Information for ... - NMSU | https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_i/I104/ |
| Suicide Safety: Precautions at Home | https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/suicide-safety-130.aspx |
| Teen Suicide Prevention - YouTube | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BByqa7bhto |
| Where to get help for self-harm – NHS | https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/self-harm/getting-help/ |
| Teen Suicide: What Parents Should Know About Warning ... | https://health.clevelandclinic.org/teen-suicide-what-parents-should-know-about-warning-signs-and-prevention/ |

Appendix 1 – Additional references

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- Briscoe, S. (2018). A review of the reporting of web searching to identify studies for Cochrane systematic reviews. *Research Synthesis Methods*, 9(1), 89-99. DOI: 10.1002/jrsm.1275
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Appendix 2: The parent survey

Study 2: Online parent survey

We invited parents of adolescents who have a history of self-harm to complete our survey. Data was collected online using the Qualtrics platform between October 2021 and January 2022. Parents were asked demographic questions and were then asked to rate a series of items in terms of their importance for another parent of an adolescent who had self-harmed. The survey was distributed: i) through the support of Pieta's social media accounts; ii) through advertising the study in different media e.g. the volunteer Ireland network (<https://www.volunteer.ie/>), social media; iii) through directly contacting parent groups including online groups such as Boards.ie and Rollercoaster.ie; iv) through local youth services that include services for parents e.g. Children and Young People's Services Committees -<https://www.cypsc.ie/>; v) through direct requests to attendees of parent informational talks on self-harm organised by the authors in November 2021.

In total, 128 parents completed the online survey. The age of the parents ranged from 32-69 years of age with an average mean age of 49 years. The majority (91%) were female, 91% had completed tertiary education, and 60% lived in an urban area. Parents were also asked demographic questions regarding their adolescent. The age their adolescent first engaged in self-harm ranged from 6-19 year of age with a mean age of 14 years. The majority of the adolescents (72%) identified as female, 24% male, 2.4% non-binary, and 0.8% as transgender male. They were predominantly white Irish (85%) and just over half had no diagnosed mental disorder (53%). The most common services engaged with were: primary care (e.g., GP, primary care psychology services - 76%), secondary care (e.g., CAMHS, hospital A & E departments - 49%), and/or a private psychiatrist/psychologist/ counsellor/psychotherapist (49%).

Full details of the items included in the survey are available from the research team.

Appendix 3: The Delphi study with professionals

Study 3: Online two round Delphi study with professionals

The Delphi study required a panel of experts to rate a number of items/statements across two timepoints to achieve consensus. Experts were all professionals with at least 2 years' experience working with adolescents (between 10 and 19 years old) who engage in self-harm and their families. Professionals were asked demographic questions and were then asked to rate the same items presented to the parents in terms of importance on the eDelphi platform (www.edelphi.com). The first round took place between November 2021 and January 2022 and the second round took place from January to February 2022. Experts were also given the opportunity to suggest items during the first data collection round which were then included in the second round. Items rated 'important' or 'essential' by >80 % of professionals after round 2 were included.

In total, 25 professionals responded to both rounds of the survey and consisted of psychotherapists, clinical and counselling psychologists, counsellors, psychiatrists, a doctor, a research psychologist, and a student. They had an average of 9 years of experience, mostly in a voluntary organisation (e.g. Pieta) or as a private psychiatrist/psychologist/counsellor/psychotherapist (32% each). They had an average mean age of 46 years and were predominantly female (73%).

They were recruited through: i) the support of Pieta's contacts and staff; ii) advertising the study in different media e.g. the volunteer Ireland network (<https://www.volunteer.ie/>), social media, etc.; iii) directly contacting organisations that provide local youth services that include services for parents or suicide prevention organisations e.g. Children and Young People's Services Committees -<https://www.cypsc.ie/> and jigsaw - <https://jigsaw.ie/>; iv) invitations to attendees of a half-day continuous professional development event on self-harm organised by the applicants in November 2021; v) emails to psychologists and psychotherapists listed on the Psychological Society of Ireland and the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapists websites.

The second section of the questionnaire asked in what form would a parent or guardian like to seek ongoing help and support. A list of media was provided based on the literature review and input from the research team and advisory board. Each medium was rated on a 5-item scale with 1= No, 2= Probably not, 3=Not sure, 4=Probably, 5= Yes. This section ended with an open-ended question asking participants to identify any other medium of information in which parents would like to receive information.

The third section addressed who parents would like to get help and support from. A list of people and places that a parent might access help and support was generated from the rapid literature review and input from the research team and advisory board. This was rated on the same 5-item scale with 1= No, 2= Probably not, 3=Not sure, 4=Probably, 5= Yes. This section ended with an open-ended question asking participants to identify any other items for who and where parents would like to get help and support from.

Appendix 4: Videos for parents and professionals

Recordings of all these videos are available on the UCD Youth Mental Health Lab website: <https://www.ucd.ie/psychology/research/researchcentresandlaboratories/youthmentalhealthlaboratory/youthmentalhealthlabstories/>

Videos for professionals:

['Self-harm and suicide prevention in young people: The role of primary care'](#) Dr Maria Michail, University of Birmingham

['Self-harm in children and its implications'](#) Dr Galit Geulayov and Professor Keith Hawton, University of Oxford

['The fertile ground in which it grows: understanding the role of stigma, discrimination and harassment as contributors to suicidal distress amongst LGBT+ young people and how to intervene in it.'](#) Dr Hazel Marzetti, University of Edinburgh

Videos for parents:

['What is self-harm, why is my child doing it and what can I do about it?'](#) Madeleine Connolly and Katie Murphy, Lucena Clinic,

['Understanding Self Harm'](#) Sinead Raftery and Leigh Kenny, Pieta,

Videos with details of the findings of this project:

[5 things parents need to know about adolescent self-harm](#) Sinead Raftery, Pieta and Dr Keith Gaynor UCD School of Psychology

[What parents want to know about adolescent self-harm](#) Aine French, and Professor Eilis Hennessy UCD School of Psychology