The Rainbow Journal

this Journal is for you if you are a young person and you sometimes hurt your own body. The most common way people hurt themselves is probably cutting. Other ways include burning, swallowing things, picking at skin.

how can I use this journal?

we often hurt ourselves as a way of coping with painful and upsetting feelings. You can use this Journal as another way of coping with those feelings. You can also use it to explore other underlying problems.

drawing

felt tips can be good for this. Some people like to draw if they're feeling angry or hurt. There are blank pages throughout the Journal for this.

writing

writing about our problems and feelings can help us to sort them out in our heads more.

poems

some people find writing poetry very helpful. They can really express their feelings this way. You'll find some examples in the Journal.

letters

writing a letter to somebody that you're not going to send can be a very good way of getting stuff out of your system. You can then throw the letter away if you want.

when can I use this journal?

you can write or draw in it every day or simply when you feel like it. The more regularly you use it the more helpful it will probably be.

how can I get help?

in the journal you'll find useful helpline telephone numbers, websites and other information. This is on the back of art pages, which can be taken out and stuck on your wall like postcards for quick, easy use.

why is it called The Rainbow Journal?

a rainbow is a spectrum or range of colours. The Journal is based on the idea of self-harm at one end of the scale and self-care at the other. We all self-harm to some extent or another. Ideally, we aim to take better care of ourselves and move along the continuum towards the self-care end of the spectrum. Throughout the journal you'll find Spectrum pages that you can use to work out how well you're taking care of yourself and which areas you're struggling with. This will change a lot from one week to the next.

remember!!

always make looking after yourself and staying safe a priority. Writing or drawing in your Journal may be upsetting at times. Find someone to talk to or come back to it when you feel less upset.

looking after yourself

It's really important to take care of yourself while you're writing or drawing in this Journal. It's a good idea to fill in the details on this page before you start. Think about who you really trust when you're very upset then fill in the details below, so that the information is ready to hand if you need it.

If you find that you're getting distressed one option is to put the Journal down and come back to it later. You may also want to think about hurting yourself more safely, limiting the damage you do to yourself. For helpful ideas and suggestions look on the TESS page of our website www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk.

The person I feel most comfortable talking to is:

……..

Their telephone number is: ……...…..

If I can't get hold of that person, I could talk to:

……..

Their telephone number is: ……...……..

Mark

'Writing things down, that helps, I can write it down, I can put it away and that's it dealt with.'

anonymous

my self-care spectrum

Below is a list of different areas of our lives. We can do all of these in ways which vary from self-caring to self-harming. On the scale mark how you think you're doing this week. Write the date at the bottom so that you can look back and compare.

Self-caring Self-harming

Eating .....

Sleeping .....

Studying/working.....

Exercising .....

Relaxing .....

Boyfriend/girlfriend/ .....
sexual relationships

Friendships .....

Family relationships .....

Alcohol/drugs/smoking .....

One other activity .....
- you choose

today's date _____

Magic Journey

I would like to be the master of fire magic

I could get to where I want when I want

I could be a cloud of fire and move across the sky to where we want to go

The only bad thing is I can't go under water because I'm made of fire

I come across someone called Freezer who tries to freeze the world

Freezer has already frozen half of earth

I know all I have to do is melt the frost with my wall of flames,

but Freezer sees me trying to help everybody,

so he tries to freeze me and I reflect it off of me and fire it back on him.

Daniel, 15

‘I self-harm when I’m feeling very depressed, very low; feeling upset.’

Jenny

‘I began to self-harm as I was hurting on the inside, so I thought I’d show it on the outside’.

Rebecca, 15

‘I don’t know why I did it. I felt better afterwards. I needed help, I needed ‘Steri-strips’.

Richard, 14

all sorts of help

Brook - 0808 802 1234 www.brook.org.uk
Free, confidential sexual health advice and contraception for young people under 25. Network of centres around the country, many of them offer counselling.
Text: 07717 989 023 or Webchat via their website.

Childline - 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
Free and confidential helpline for children and young adults.
You can also email via their website or use their online chat and message boards.

Get Connected - 0808 808 4994 www.getconnected.org.uk
UK-wide helpline and online services for young people.

Rape Crisis - 0808 802 9999 www.rapecrisis.org.uk
Provide a free helpline and you can also phone/check their website for details of your nearest crisis centre. Can offer telephone counselling and 'one to one' counselling, practical and emotional support and information.

Samaritans - 08457 909090 www.samaritans.org
24 hour helpline, 365 days of the year.
Or you can email: jo@samaritans.org

SupportLine - 01708 765200 www.supportline.org.uk
Offer confidential emotional support by telephone, email and post. Email: info@supportline.org.uk

Who Cares Trust? www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk
For children and young people in care. Website, blog for young people and magazines

anonymous

‘It’s a way of getting your anger out. Afterwards I still feel sad, tired and lonely.’

Stephanie, 14

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One other activity .....
- you choose

today's date _____

Jasmine

The G.P.

You don't understand,
Make me feel stupid, small
'Doesn't it hurt?' you say
But don't understand
The hurt it hides,
The relief it brings.

You look at me strangely,
I am lost for words,
There feels no point in trying,
I'll still be odd whatever I say,
I cannot push that away,
As I can't erase the pain.

'You must be so low to do it',
But don't you understand,
It keeps me from sinking,
Saves me from the pit,
Gives visible hurt to inner hurt,
And gives me such relief.

Hannah

Viviene

Viv

‘My advice would be ‘don’t cut’ because people will look at you funny and it’s wrong and you’re gonna hurt yourself.’

Lloyd, 14

my self-care spectrum

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who can I talk to?

At school/college

You can talk to the school nurse or a teacher you like and trust. The school may have a policy that says they have to tell your parents. Find out if this is the case. If you don't want your parents to know choose somebody different to talk to. At college there will probably be a counsellor or personal tutor you can approach.

Helplines, Text and Online Support

There are many different forms of support available including helplines, text support, email support and other online support. Some of these are specifically for people struggling with self-injury. See the 'help with self-injury' page towards the end of the Journal for details.

Information, advice or counselling

Look on Youth Access website: www.youthaccess.org.uk to find a service that is near to you.

Counsellors

Many young people find counselling very helpful to talk through their feelings and the things that are bothering them. Your GP may be able to refer you to a counsellor. If you are having counselling it can be very helpful to use this journal to write about that.

Robert

Birdsong

A&E waiting room,
Been here all night,
Felt bad, cut myself,
Now I have to wait.

Wait, as dawn breaks,
Wait, as the guilt floods,
My soul, with light,
Punish myself, and wait.

Light outside, darkness within,
The birdsong is heard,
Can't fail to reach,
This deathly, guilt ridden soul.

Hannah

Kirsty

Some of the myths about young people and self-injury

myth: 'it's a teenage thing; she'll grow out of it'

the reality: if a young person is hurting themselves it is a sign that something is bothering them, that they need help. If not, over time the self-injury can become more severe and more of a problem.

myth: 'he's only doing it to be cool'

the reality: whilst one-off cutting may be part of being accepted by a group, if someone repeatedly feels the need to hurt themselves then there are very likely to be underlying problems that need sorting out.

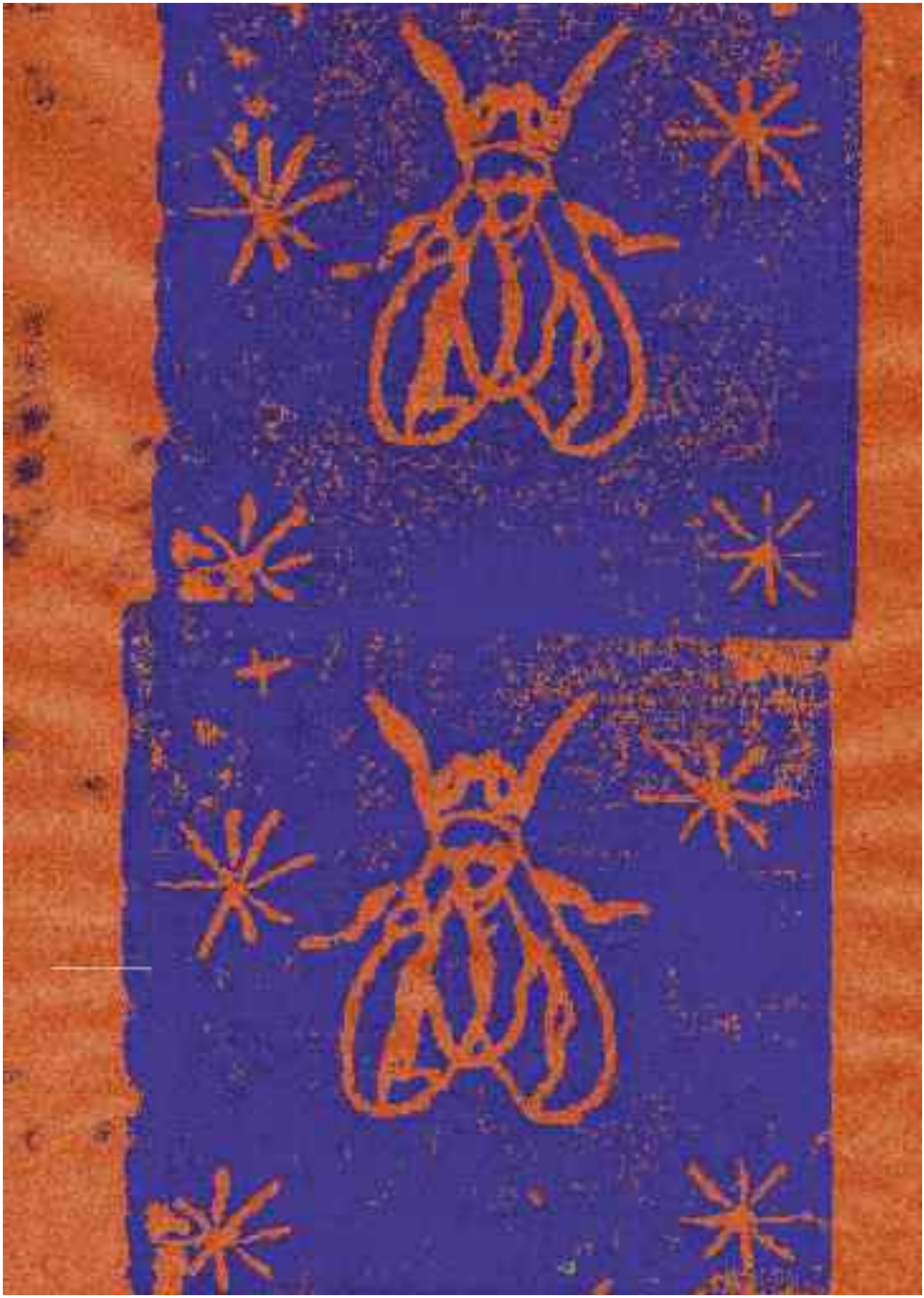
myth: 'she's just copying her mates at school'

the reality: people who self-injure find that it helps them to cope. The only reason why somebody would continue to cut themselves, or hurt themselves in other ways, is because they find that it helps to cope with the emotional pain they feel or with the problems they have in their life.

‘Instead of self harming sometimes I go to my room and cry or run away to my mum, but I don’t really self-harm much.’

Rebecca, 15

Viv



anonymous

‘When I self-harm I feel a release and it helps me to cope. It’s enough to cope.’

Jenny

‘Sometimes, instead of self-harming, I spend time with my friends, have a bath, wash my hair, spend time with my animals, do puzzles, draw how I’m feeling with colours.’

Jenny

my self-care spectrum

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Friendships .....

Family relationships .....

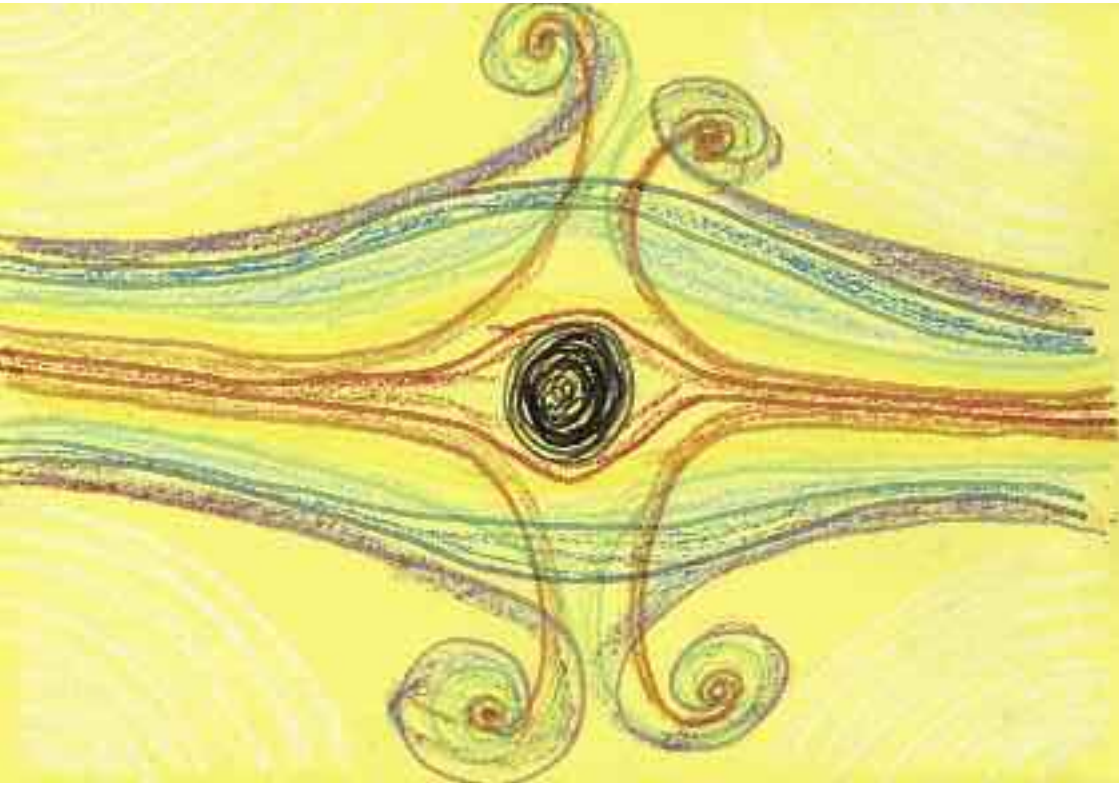
Alcohol/drugs/smoking .....

One other activity .....
- you choose

today's date _____

‘Instead of self harming sometimes I find somebody I trust and who I can talk to about how I am feeling. I sometimes go into a place I feel safe. And sometimes I smash things.

Kirsty, 16



Fiona, 21

‘Like self-harming and stuff, it does not cheer me up, but I feel better if that makes sense.’

anonymous

‘Instead of self-harming sometimes I go to bed and hope I’ll feel better in the morning and if not, at least I’ve delayed it for a night.’

Hannah

Kirsty

‘Self-harming makes me feel better…I know afterwards I feel guilty for having done it again but in the short term it does help. If I am thinking clearly Reiki helps me feel much better.’ (Reiki is a form of alternative therapy.)

anonymous

‘If I am down or feeling upset I will try talking to [name] or my mother but I actually don’t feel like talking to people when I am that upset.’

anonymous

‘What’s the problem with me cutting? I did it because I was pissed off.’

David, 16

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- you choose

today's date _____

Kerry, 19

‘Self harm is not a good idea because it just leaves scars and if I have kids they’ll ask me ‘what’s that on your arm?’

Rebecca, 15

‘I was embarrassed, I think more because you don’t really ask people for help just because you think it’s your own fault, but you end up realising it wasn’t your fault. It was hard first of all to ask for help obviously, it took about a year to ask.’

anonymous

Jenny

‘When I self-harm I feel relief and better for about 5 minutes but then I start to feel angry at myself. I feel guilty because I should feel like that and because of the scars on my arms.’

Kerry, 19

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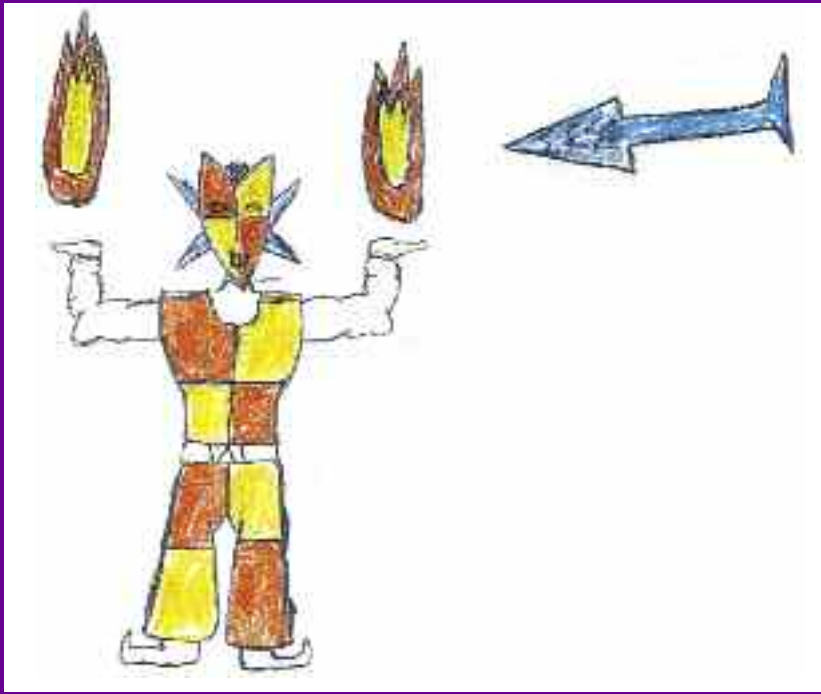
‘I began to self-harm because it gave me a sense of power over my body and control that I didn’t feel I had in other ways, especially over emotions which feel overwhelming and scary.’

Hannah

Ben, 13



Daniel

‘I began to self harm because I thought it would help and I saw it as the only way out of how I was feeling.’

Kirsty, 16

Instead of self-harming sometimes I:

* speak to someone I trust
* tidy my flat
* go to bed and hope to feel better in the morning
* write about how I feel
* list pros/cons of self-harming
* write letters to people even though I probably won't send them
* spend time with other people
* spend time alone
* keep myself busy
* do a jigsaw
* think of the progress I've made and the consequences of self-harming
* ring help lines
* draw how I'm feeling
* punch my punch bag
* wash my hair
* have a bath because it relaxes me

K, H, J

‘Instead of self-harming sometimes I tidy my flat before, so then I have time to calm myself down and it takes me away from how I am feeling. I also do a jigsaw when I feel like self-harming.’

Kerry, 19

'When I self harm I feel angry towards other people and myself. I don't like myself very much. I feel like I want to punish myself. It does help because I'm letting stuff out.'

Kirsty, 16

I wish for one night I can be on my own
and sit in the park
just chill out looking at the sky
looking at the stars just chilling and thinking
trying to sort my life out
I think it would be quite nice

Laura

my self-care spectrum

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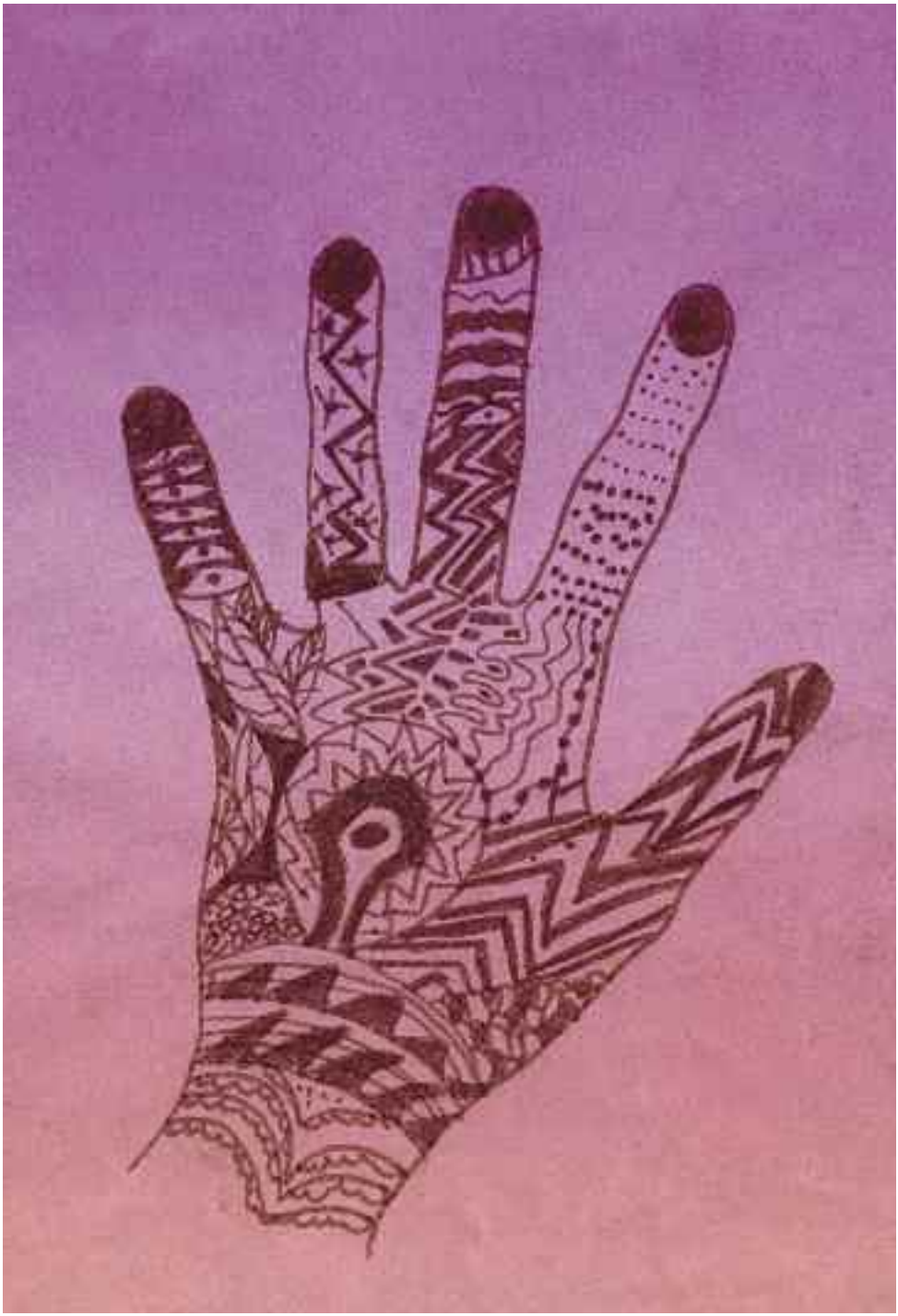
- you choose

today's date _____

‘When I self-harm I feel upset and like there’s no reason to live for.’

Rebecca, 15



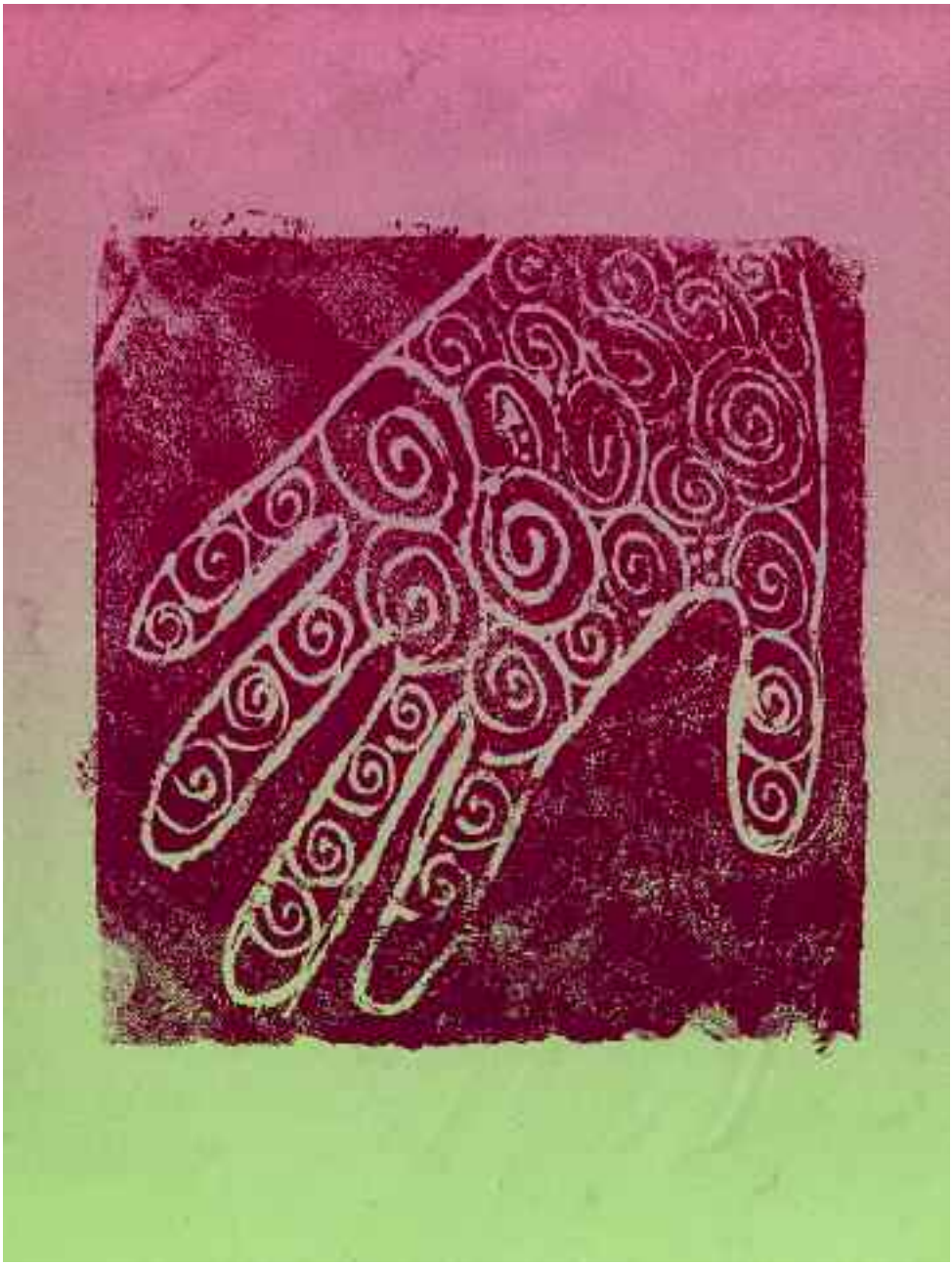
Viviene

‘When I self-harm I feel powerful and in control, although by giving in to self-harm I’m often not very in control. I feel quite numb, and afterwards I feel ashamed and guilty.’

Hannah

‘Self harm is not a good idea because I feel people judge you before they even know you because of the marks. You also Do Not deserve to be punished.’

Kirsty, 16



Kirsty

help with self-injury

Self injury Support

www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk

TESS text and email support service

For girls and young women up to age 24 affected by self-injury.

Text: 07800 472 908

Email: go to our website www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk and click on link to TESS

Helpful resources on our website

Dealing with feelings

Self-harm spectrum

A list of self-injury support groups and resources throughout the country can be found at www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk/resources

Get Connected **www.getconnected.org.uk**

Free UK-wide helpline, text support and online services for young people. Can put calls through to other helplines free of charge.

0808 808 4994

Text: 80849 or live webchat and email via their website.

LifeSIGNS **www.lifesigns.org.uk**

User-led support and information about self-injury, including a support forum.

Recover Your Life **www.recoveryourlife.com**

Self-harm support community. Forums and chat are open 24/7.

The Site **www.thesite.org**

Web-based support and information services for 16-25 year olds. Lots of information on self-harm in the Mental Health section.

we'd like to hear from you...

Tell us what you think of **The Rainbow Journal**
Complete the sentences below, tear this page out along the perforated edge, fold it over, seal it with some sellotape, stick a stamp on and post it to us

What I like about this Journal is ……..

……..

……..

……..

What I don't like about this Journal is ……

……..

……

……..

I think this Journal would be better if ……

……..

……..

……..

I am …….. years old

Thank you!

Please affix Postage Stamp

Self injury Support
PO Box 3240
BRISTOL
BS2 2EF

fold here