

Self-harm alternatives



Self-harm is often a way to cope with intense emotions, numbness, or overwhelming situations. Alternatives don't "fix" everything, but they can give your mind and body space to process feelings without causing physical harm.

1. Physical Release (Safe Sensation) - If you want to feel something in your body

- Hold an ice cube until it melts.
- Snap a rubber band on your wrist.
- Take a very cold or very warm shower.
- Do intense exercise - run, punch a pillow, dance fast to loud music.

2. Emotional Expression - If you need to release emotions

- Scribble, paint, or write out what you're feeling.
- Scream or sing into a pillow.
- Record a voice note telling your feelings (you don't have to share it).
- Make a playlist that matches your mood and listen until it shifts.

3. Grounding and Distraction - If you feel overwhelmed

- Try the 5-4-3-2-1 method: notice 5 things you see, 4 feel, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste.
- Play a game or do a puzzle that needs focus.
- Watch a favourite TV show or read.
- Count backward from 100 in sevens.

4. Comfort and Soothing - If you feel numb, empty, or sad

- Wrap up in a blanket or hold a soft toy.
- Drink a warm beverage slowly.
- Use a scented lotion or light a candle.
- Spend time with a pet.

5. Reach Out - If you're struggling alone

- Call or text a friend or family member.
- Use a crisis line or text service.
- Join an online peer support group.