



# SCOTTISH SELF HARM FORUM E-NEWSLETTER

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## INTERNATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK 10th–16th September



• Suicide is a very difficult and painful subject for people to talk about. As part of the national campaign to prevent suicide in Scotland, a number of public awareness raising events were planned for the week beginning 10th September. The emphasis of the week was on 'TALK.LISTEN.SAVE A LIFE' and how crucial talking is in preventing suicide. As part of the Western Isles campaign, Carla Fine and Dr. Michael Meyers, keynote speakers from New York, delivered

enlightening lectures on how to cope with suicide. During this week meetings were held with key stakeholders in Western Isles to raise awareness around self harm issues. There was the opportunity to spread the word about the Scottish Self Harm Forum in order to support the development of a local Self Harm Forum. This idea was welcomed with great enthusiasm. It was agreed to proceed with a further meeting to set up the forum.

## Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival

The first ever **Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival** took place at various well-known venues in Glasgow and Lanarkshire from the 4th - 19th October, 2007 "ARTS WORDS" was an event organised to illustrate how the arts work in promoting mental wellbeing for young people. Visible Fictions Theatre Company, LGBT Youth, Penumbra, 7:84 Theatre company and Positive Mental Attitudes led a series of workshops and discussions exploring the challenges and rewards of using the arts in this context. As one example there is this poem written and read by a 14 year old girl.

### Why me?

We go to school everyday,  
To try and get ahead,  
But nobody really sees,  
The things some people dread.  
She's sitting in the corner,  
Quiet and all alone,  
No one ever notices her,  
Or that she's always on her own.  
Of all the different cliques at school,  
She belongs to none,

She sits alone at break times,  
Just watches the world go by,  
When she goes home at night,

No one sees her cry.  
She has the courage to do it,  
And take her own life now,  
Only the questions stop her,  
When and where and how?  
Perhaps she should just go now,

And leave. Forever. Today.  
Then, people might take notice,  
Of her somehow...someday...  
She places her head in her hands,  
And sighs an anguished sigh,  
Why does no one notice her?  
Why, why, oh why?  
She has the courage to do it,  
And take her own life now,  
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Of her somehow...someday...  
She places her head in her hands,  
And sighs an anguished sigh,  
Why does no one notice her?

Why, why, oh why?  
Sarah Kelly

## News & Events

- *Limiting the Damage:* Practical harm minimisation for self harm. Thursday, 18th October 2007. Adelphi Centre, Glasgow. [www.pavpub.com](http://www.pavpub.com)
- 12th European Symposium on Suicide and Suicidal Behaviour. 27-30 August 2008, Glasgow, Scotland. To register interest [organising@esssb12.org](mailto:organising@esssb12.org)
- Next Scottish Self Harm Forum at Norton Park. 7th November 07 at 1pm. (See the back for directions).

## PENUMBRA CORNER

CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup>



### PENUMBRA SELF HARM SERVICES & PARENTLINE SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF THOSE WHO SELF HARM

Scottish mental health charity Penumbra and CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup>'s national helpline ParentLine Scotland are launching a new monthly support group for anyone living with a child or young person who self-harms.

The group has been set up in response to an identified lack of support for parents.

ParentLine Scotland (0808 800 2222) has reported an increase in calls from parents concerned about children who

self-harm, which last year made up 3% of all calls taken.

Currently one in ten teenagers in the UK self-harms. This is likely to be an underestimate however, as fear of how adults will react prevents many young people from coming forward for help. Moreover, according to research released by "See Me" 56% of Scottish adults would not know how to help someone who is self harming.

The group, which will run for six months, will offer a safe place to talk

and the opportunity to receive support from others in a similar situation. The first meeting will take place on Wednesday 19 September from 6-8pm at the CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup> head office at 83 Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh.

Following meetings:

Wednesday, 31st October from 6-8 pm  
Wednesday, 21st November from 6-8 pm  
Wednesday, 23rd January from 6-8 pm  
Wednesday, 20th February from 6-8 pm  
Wednesday, 19th March from 6-8 pm  
If you would like to be part of the group, please contact **Maria Naranjo from Penumbra on 0131 475 2380** or **Aileen Kenny at ParentLine Scotland on 0131**

### Self-Harm Workshops

WHERE? Craigellachie Hotel, Speyside

WHEN? Wednesday, 31st October 2007

Registration 9.30-10.00 am. Day closes 4.00 pm

COST? £100 per person (lunch and refreshments provided)

### LOCAL FORUMS MEETINGS & EVENTS

PERTH & KINROSS SELF HARM NETWORK Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 'Peer Support' from 4pm – 5.50pm at **McDairmid Park**.

ANGUS OPEN EVENT Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January at **Augment, 24** Strathairlie Avenue, Arbroath from 9:30 to 12:30

### SIREN CONFERENCE 25TH SEPTEMBER 2007

**Using the best available evidence on how suicide can be prevented is crucial to our approach in Scotland. A new network is being developed to bring research, practice and experience together to improve understanding of this complex issue.** SIREN (Suicide Information, Research and Evidence Network) aims to increase understanding of suicide prevention through information sharing and networking, which will ultimately lead to the creation of a Scottish body for the study of suicide.

Through its conferences and seminar events SIREN aims to:

- Provide opportunities to meet others with a shared interest in the study of suicide and its prevention
- Minimise duplication of research effort, promoting collaboration where appropriate

- Build research capacity in Scotland
- Disseminate and discuss the best available research findings and activity
- Help engender evidence-based policy and practice.

This year's Conference was extremely successful and there were innovative research presented, including **Do schools differ in suicide risk?** Robert Young; **Deliberate self-harm in adolescents in Scotland: What are the psychosocial risk and protective factors?** Rory O'connor et al.; **Suicide and anti-depressant prescribing**, Dr. John Eagles; **Supporting those touched by suicide**, Sandra de Munoz; to name but a few of the very interesting and thought provoking presentations and workshops on offer.

For more information: [www.chooselife.net/siren](http://www.chooselife.net/siren)

### PENUMBRA NEWS

- Penumbra Hawthorn Self Harm Project in West Lothian has expanded its age range to support anyone over 16.
- Welcome to Alison McLennan, Development Worker for the new Penumbra Self Harm Project in Moray. Launch on 22nd November 07'
- Welcome to Julia Ritchie, new Development Worker in Penumbra Mental Health and Participation Project in North Ayrshire.
- More info at [www.penumbra.org.uk](http://www.penumbra.org.uk)

## LINKS BETWEEN SELF HARM AND SUICIDE. Dawn Griesbach

The purpose of this study was to explore the links between non-suicidal self-harm and attempted suicide in young people, and in so doing, to identify possible ways of reducing the risk of suicide among young people who self-harm.

In general, young people made a very clear distinction between their self-harm and the times when they had attempted suicide. This was the case even if they used the same methods for both self-harm and attempted suicide.

However, there was disagreement about whether self-harm and attempted suicide were *linked* or completely *different*. Those who saw them as linked tended to see self-harm on a continuum with suicide at one end. Those who saw them as different felt they were different simply because the individual's intention was different. For those in this group, suicide became an option when self-harm "didn't work" or when they no longer got any satis-

faction from it.

Young people said that their self-harming often changed in significant ways just before a suicide attempt. Some said that it became more frequent. Others said it stopped altogether, usually because "it wasn't working anymore". It was also common for young people to say that they stopped self-harming for a period of time immediately after a suicide attempt. In general, young people who self-harm see self-harm and attempted suicide as two different things. However, the findings of this study suggest that they are linked.

Self-harm is a symptom of something wrong. The "something wrong" may relate to the young person's external circumstance, but more importantly, it is an outward manifestation of the young person's internal response to their circumstances. This internal response may include self-hatred, rage, depression, severe anxiety and despair. All of the young people in this study had had sui-

cidal feelings over a long period of time. Many said that it was their self-harming that kept them alive. However, when life became too difficult to deal with, and self harm no longer seemed to work, then suicide became an option. Moreover, it seems that there is a gap of several years between people starting self harming and attempting suicide for the first time.

The findings of this study have implications for services, policy and public health.

For more information and full report you can refer to:

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[www.chooselife.net](http://www.chooselife.net)

## FEEDBACK FROM PEOPLE OVER 25 WHO SELF HARM

Penumbra Self harm Services is currently working with people who self harm and are over 25 in two localities (Fife and West Lothian). In order to inform our practice and to explore issues around self harm for older people, several focus groups have been held. Some of the emerging issues are summarised as it follows:

- Existing services do not explore the self harm behaviour in depth.
- There is an expectation on older people to "cope and get on with it".
- Sometimes trauma lived when younger arises when children grow and leave the home.
- Mental Health services are not flexible and/or accessible for people who are working.
- There is not consistency regarding the way NHS treats people who self harm. "It is down to luck whether you get an understanding GP"
- Work at the Self harm Service is very similar to therapy, but not as scary or

exhausting.

- NHS staff do not explain what happens and why, neither what does it mean to be diagnosed with a mental illness.
- GPs and psychiatrist often give different diagnosis, which make people feel confused.
- People who self harm are stigmatised wherever they go.
- More stigma because it seems that there are services and information only geared to young people.
- Medication and side effect.

If you would like to give your opinion, please e-mail: [maria.naranjo@penumbra.org.uk](mailto:maria.naranjo@penumbra.org.uk)

### WHO CARES?

It is an online survey for people aged over 25, who have knowledge or experience of self harm.

**Outside the Box** has been speaking to some people over the past year who have had experience of self harm. In order to find out more, we have designed this online survey so that other people can take part.

We want to know what people think about the services they get.

If you would like to take part in this survey the link is

[www.otbds.org/care](http://www.otbds.org/care)

Out of the Box will be reporting their Results back on the 16th October, There will be further information in November's newsletter or check Penumbra's website [www.penumbra.org.uk](http://www.penumbra.org.uk)

## PENUMBRA

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SUPPORTING  
MENTAL HEALTH

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## Directions to Norton Park

### From West (M8)

Continue along M8 to City ByPass South sign at Hermiston Gait roundabout  
Take 3<sup>rd</sup> Exit – City Centre, turn left at roundabout  
Follow signs to City Centre, straight road along Calder Road and through Gorgie to Haymarket  
Turn right continuing towards City Centre  
You will be directed up on to Queen Street (Princes St closed to cars from West)

### From West (M9)

From M9 follow signs to Edinburgh, then city centre  
You will end up at Hermiston Gait roundabout  
Follow directions as above

### From North (M90)

2 routes are possible  
1 – Cross bridge take 1<sup>st</sup> junction, A8000 to Edinburgh  
This will take you on to M9, follow directions above  
2 – Head straight into Edinburgh along A90  
Follow signs to City Centre, turning right at Kwik Fit garage at Blackhall  
Continue along Queensferry Road, you will be directed on to Queen Street  
Follow directions in bold above.

### Within Edinburgh

At the end of Queen Street turn left at roundabout  
Turn right at next Roundabout  
Head along London Road, turn left at Easter Road junction  
Head down Easter Road  
Turn right at traffic lights onto Albion Road  
Follow Albion Road round the corner  
Norton Park is on the left (large red sandstone building)  
There is a car park at the rear. (If the car park is full there is Free Parking in the surrounding streets e.g Albion Road & Bothwell Street among others)