

Do	Don't
Do take a deep breath.	Don't panic or overreact. Remember that offering a supportive conversation is the correct first step.
Do choose a quiet, private space to talk.	Don't allow yourself to rush into a conversation at the end of a class or a public space.
Do remain calm, non-judgemental and adopt a warm air of caring, curiosity and wondering.	Don't show strong emotional responses such as anger, fear, revulsion or frustration.
Do acknowledge their pain and ask the C/YP what they need.	Don't avoid talking about the self-harm. It won't go away because you pretend it doesn't exist. Not talking about it can reinforce shame and secrecy.
Do gently encourage them to talk about what has been happening, how they are feeling and what they might need in that moment.	Don't ask lots of questions about why they are self-harming or overly focus on the physical.
Do let them know you understand they must be feeling some very big emotions.	Don't minimise or dismiss situations and problems that are raised or the feelings they have brought about.
Do show your genuine concern, care and support.	Don't dismiss behaviours and feelings as manipulative or attention seeking.
Do focus on exploring with C/YP what can be done to make current circumstances more manageable and less distressing.	Don't ask them to make promises and don't give ultimatums.
Do directly discuss confidentiality and your duty of care.	Don't promise to keep information around self-harm confidential.
Do encourage them to think about the benefits of involving their family and how they might tell them.	Don't promise to be able to keep information about their self-harming behaviours confidential
Do give carefully selected information, ensuring that suggestions and resources are appropriate to age.	Don't overwhelm with information e.g. lists of strategies or websites.
Do support them in finding helpful ways to express emotions or relieve distress. Keep strategies as simple as possible. Depending on your role and responsibility consider writing a plan with the young person. (See Section 5).	Don't try to solve the child or young person's problems for them or focus on stopping the self-harm or expect them to be able to stop self-harming.