

S.I.S

SELF INJURY SUPPORT
IN NORTH CUMBRIA

Registered Charity No: 1106750

SIS News

Welcome to SIS News



Happy New Year, and welcome to the first issue of SIS News for 2010. I'd just like to take this opportunity to say that our thoughts are with everyone who has been affected by the terrible November floods.

In this issue we have a focus on our self-harm awareness training, and we're also privileged to be able to share with you some poetry written by people who self-harm.

Seeing that someone you care about is self-harming can be extremely distressing, so on the [back page](#) we share with you some suggestions for how to help them.

March 1st is Self-Injury Awareness Day, and like last year we're having an open day at our office in Lowthians Lane. It would be great if you could pop along and meet us!

Mary Hillery (Chair)

New Counsellor and Trustee!

We are pleased to welcome Alastair Fisher as a new trustee. Alastair has been a bank counsellor with SIS for a long time, and it is great to have his knowledge and experience on the board.

We are also pleased to announce that we have a new bank counsellor, Marita Over who has joined the team.

In the next issue of SIS News we hope to bring news of more new people. Please do get in touch if you'd like to get involved with the charity, particularly if you're interested in becoming a trustee.

Issue 6

Jan-March 2010

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Contact Us:

Self-Injury Support
in North Cumbria
Ruth Lax
(Service Coordinator)
2 Lowthians Lane,
Carlisle,
Cumbria CA3 8JR
Tel:01228
525705/515500
www.sis-cumbria.co.uk
ruth@sis-cumbria.co.uk

With thanks to our funders.

the
Tudortrust



Self-Injury Awareness Day 2010

Self-Injury Awareness Day is on 1st March. Although we can raise awareness about self-harm **every day of the year, it's good to have a dedicated date as well.** Self-Injury Awareness Day (or SIAD as it is known) seemed to come about from like-minded people (with personal experience of self-harm) on the Internet wanting to raise awareness and reduce the stigma of self-harm. Lots of people choose to wear orange ribbons or wristbands on this date to show their support.



Here's some other ideas of what people can do around SIAD (these are particularly things that those with personal experience of self-harm like to do):

- * Write a letter/e-mail to your local politician telling them about SIAD
- * Write a letter/e-mail to your local newspaper.
- * If you're very brave, perhaps see if you can appear on local radio or TV.
- * Hold an event at your school, university or workplace.
- * Show your support by wearing orange clothes (orange is the colour for self-injury awareness), or make a SIAD T-shirt.
- * E-mail all your contacts to let them know about SIAD and where to find out further information about self-harm - or send them this newsletter

Last year SIS held an Open Day, and we're going to do the same again this year, this time actually on 1st March which is a Monday.

From 11am until 3pm our office will be open for you to come along and meet us and find out more **about who we are and what we do.** We'll have a wide variety of our publications available, and nibbles! For those who don't know, Lowthians Lane is the lane behind HSBC (off English Street), and the SIS office is situated above the One World Shop.



Open Day
11am - 3pm
SIS Office

Notice board

Self-Harm Treatment Survey



Recently a report was published which gives insight into the behaviour and medical treatment of people who self-harm, based on a study of 179 service users. Further details can be found here -

www.youthnet.org/mediaandcampaigns/pressreleases/insightintotreatmentofselfharm

Support Groups



The Maryport support group is ongoing 9.30 to 11.30am on Wednesdays.

The Carlisle support group is starting on Monday 25th January 1:00 to 2.30pm.

If any one is interested in attending either of these groups contact Helen 01228 515500

SIS AGM 2008-09




The SIS AGM was held on 20th October 2009 in the Old Town Hall in Carlisle. We were pleased to welcome a number of guests to share our news from the past year with. Our Annual Report can be found on our website—

www.sis-cumbria.co.uk

Book review - Treating Self-Injury - A Practical Guide - Barent Walsh (2005)

Drawing from his own vast experience of working with people who self-injure over more than 30 years, and extensive research into literature about self-injury, Walsh provides a comprehensive resource for professionals who come into contact with self-injury. Walsh takes into account the variety of reasons behind self-injury, and offers a guide to treatment which is suitable for everyone.



I cannot praise this book highly enough. Walsh includes general information about self-injury as well as much needed practical information for professionals. I have not previously come across such a useful tool contained in one book.

This is essential reading for every mental health professional and therapist, but it will also be of use to GPs, those working in educational setting, and anyone with an interest in self-injury.



Training Update!

In October we delivered training in Whitehaven and Carlisle, and in-house training at the Howgill Family Centre in Cleator Moor.



A wide variety of people come to our training sessions, particularly those working in the charity sector and those working for the NHS or in education. The training day consists of a range of presentations and films, and group activities which help to apply the knowledge gained to real-life situations.

Here's some of the comments that we received at our most recent training sessions:

This is a subject that I didn't know a lot about yet face almost weekly at work. I feel a lot more confident in being able to understand self harm and approach the subject with more knowledge.

Group work brill, also case studies challenging.

I feel that having someone who has experienced self-harm is really interesting as they can relate to their past experiences.

I gained more understanding of how to cope with somebody who self harms.

How to access help & sharing good practice was very useful.

Harm minimisation was very useful. Everything I thought was covered.

It's always useful reading the feedback from the courses, and Ruth, Helen and myself have recently met to discuss changes to the programme in the light of what delegates have said, and in particular we intend to make the training days even more interactive.

In addition to the day courses I gave presentations about my personal experience of self-harm to the West Cumbria Samaritans, and also to a small group at a Carlisle Diocese

SAMARITANS

Youth Event (Ablaze) both of which were interesting and worthwhile experiences. Please get in contact if you would like me to come and give a short presentation to your organisation whether it is as part of a training and development day, or as part of an AGM or meeting, and we will try to arrange!

Due to the continued success of the SIS training workshops, we have further dates arranged for 2010. These training days cost just £80 (including 0% VAT) and include comprehensive training materials, refreshments and lunch. Courses run from 10am-4pm (refreshments from 9:45am). The dates for 2010 are as follows:

Thursday 25th February -Workington
Thursday 25th March - Carlisle
Tuesday 25th May - Whitehaven
Wednesday 23rd June - Penrith
Thursday 15th July - Workington
Tuesday 28th September - Carlisle

We are also available to deliver in-house training sessions to groups both large and small which will **be tailored to suit your needs**. Please contact Steve or Ruth on 01228 515500 if you're interested in arranging training, or if you wish to book a place on one of the dates above.

Mary

SIS Referrals

It's simple to refer someone for counselling at SIS. Just call Ruth on 01228 515500, e-mail ruth@sis-cumbria.co.uk or visit the website www.sis-cumbria.co.uk Individuals can refer themselves, or the referral can come from someone else such as a parent, carer or GP (although it is important that the person is willing to accept counselling).

At the moment we are fortunate to not have a waiting list, although obviously this will depend on demand for our services.

We currently have eight bank counsellors who see clients covering all areas with CA postcodes. For those living in the Carlisle area counselling will generally take place in our dedicated counselling room in Lowthians Lane. Otherwise counselling can take place in other **places such as at a GP's surgery or in an organisation's base.**



Creative Expression

For a lot of people who self-harm, writing about feelings can be helpful, and many express themselves through poetry. We're privileged to be able to share with you some poetry relating to these feelings...

I should be different

Is it right to be me?
With my eyes,
My mouth,
My nose,
Should I be different?

My thoughts think I'm wrong,
They're not my eyes,
Not my mouth,
Not my nose
I should be different.

Is it right to be me?
With my thoughts,
My scars,
My lack of lashes,
Should I be different?

My thoughts think I'm right
this time,
These are my thoughts,
My scars
My lack of lashes
I should be different.

People expect too much,
They want this,
They want that,
Tell me this and that,
I can't do it,
But this blade keeps trying,
I should be different.

It's not right,
To just be me,
The me doesn't fit,
This life,
My life's a mess,
I've given up,
Life's no longer fun,
It's not longer me,
It's more a game,
A game to play,
While waiting to die.

These are my
thoughts,
My scars,
My lack of lashes,
I should be different.

- Lisa



Secrets

My mind is filled with dust
From secrets never told.
Secrets that are mine,
Secrets that I hold.

They only leave a shadow,
Murky and bizarre,
Reflected in the blade,
Reflected in the scars.

And they leave me weakened,
Alone and hollow.
My heart screams in anger.
Without hope, I lose myself in the
depths of my sorrow.

-Anon



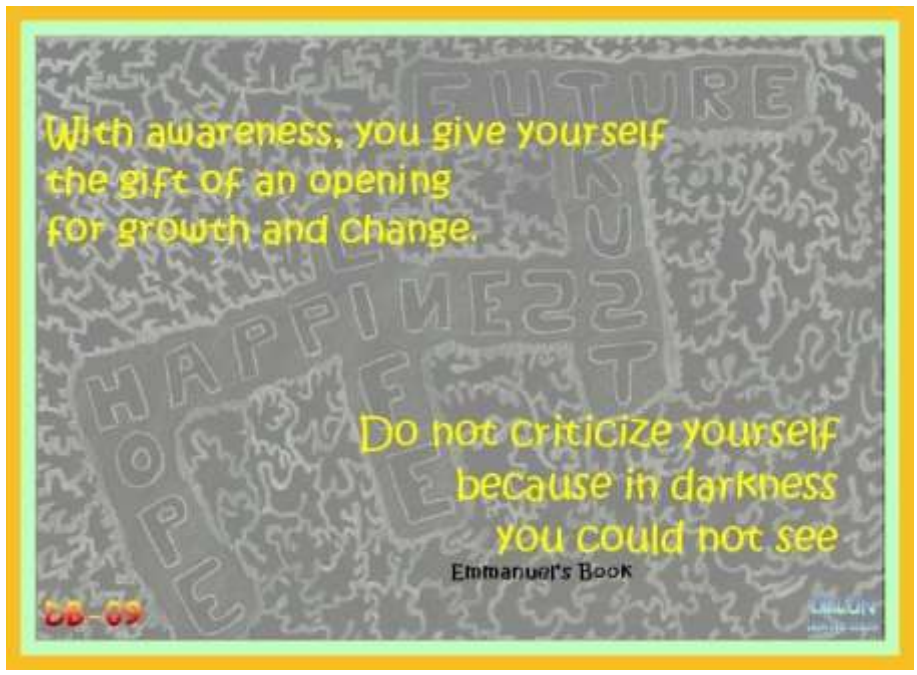
Alone
 Alone in the dark
 I sit on my bed
 Doubts and confusions
 Race through my head

The world is so empty
 My life, such a waste
 I look back on the pain
 And the lies I've embraced

All my mistakes
 Etched into my skin
 Are constant reminders
 Of where I have been

And I'm giving up
For I'd rather be dead
 Than face all the thoughts
 That run through my head
 -Lily

Blade
 I'm trying to heal
 When I'm hurting so much
 The pain intense,
 Strong and immense
 I try to find a way
 To work through the pain
 But I always find myself
 Back to the blade
 I try to cut it away,
 Cut deeply to death
 Blood is bleeding
 Leaving a fine mess,
 Why do I bleed this way?
 Why does it come to this?
 When my heart could be
 full of innocent bliss.
 -Michelle



Artwork with quotes (taken from other sources) on these pages was designed by Debs.

Bend Me Break Me
 bend me break me.
 make me bleed
 make me feel how
 i know I deserve

i'm not great,
 i'm not loved
 i'm not here
 i'm not anything

break my spirit
 break my heart
 show me that i'm nothing
 nothing at all

beat me down
 kick me hard
 shove me over
 slap my face.

I'm nothing
 i've made choices
 that demand
 punishment

i should be
 i have to be
 i need to be
 reminded i'm a sinner

though deep in my heart
 i need to be loved
 i need to be understood
 i have to find love.

bend me break me
 love me
 never let me go.
i'm begging you...

- Nyida Strong

Self-Harm - How to help someone you care about

At SIS we often get contacted by those who care about people who are self-harming - in particular parents, partners and friends. On this page we share with you some suggestions on how to react and help them (which is based on the experiences of those who self-harm and what has been helpful or not helpful for them):

- **Don't take the self-harm personally.** It is not aimed at you, and it is not being done to hurt you.
- Remember that for some people self-harm is a long-term problem, so **don't expect them to give up** just like that.
- **Self-harm is normally a secretive behaviour.** Don't ask them to show you their injuries - it will most likely cause embarrassment.
- **Offer support. Be there for them if they want to talk but don't put pressure on them.**
- **Offer to go with them to see their doctor, or suggest that they contact SIS, but don't force the issue.**
- Let them know that you will be there for them no matter what they do, and whilst you should not condone their self-injury, they need to know that it does not make them a bad person.
- Actions such as removing sharp objects are not helpful and can make the self-harm worse or more secretive.
- It is ok to be angry or upset, but try not to let them see that you are angry as this could increase feelings of guilt.
- **Don't criticise the person you care about and their self-harm.**
- Self-harm is not the only way for people to deal with emotional distress. Try to encourage (but **don't push**) them to find more healthy coping mechanisms.
- **The person you care about might tell you that you must not tell anyone. However, if you're concerned that they are in danger or might be suicidal, then you have to tell someone, such as their GP.**
- **Remind the person you care about that while telling people isn't easy (for instance talking to a medical professional or SIS counsellor), in the long-run it will enable them to get the help they need in order to start feeling better.** After all, no one wants to be unhappy.
- Above all, although you care about them you must remember to take care of yourself first. Unless you do this you will not be a help to anyone!

If you want to find out more about self-harm, please get in touch with SIS. We have a number of booklets and factsheets which we can e-mail you or send. If there is anything that you would like to **see that we aren't currently providing, please do get in touch with your thoughts and suggestions** and we will do our best to work on them!

