

Bristol Crisis Service for Women

23 years of women listening to women

Who we are...

**Bristol Crisis Service for
Women**

- Grass roots organisation
- Management group structure
- 5 part time paid staff/50 volunteers
- Small voluntary sector organisation
- Various funding strands

Bristol Crisis Service for Women

- To offer support to women & girls in emotional distress and particularly to those who self injure
- To develop services and raise awareness of self injury through training and info
- Services which are non-judgemental, accepting, empowering
- Individuals to be treated with equal respect
- Feminist approach

Aims and Objectives

- Developing and sharing information resources for people about self-injury
- Developing and sharing good practice with workers, through research, training and consultancy
- Offering support services to women & girls in distress, and particularly to those who self-injure

Services

The Helpline

**Bristol Crisis Service for
Women**

- National service for girls & women
- Open Friday and Saturday 9pm – 12.30am, and Sundays 6 – 9pm
- Non directive listening ear for any woman in distress. Specialism around self injury.
- Calls up to an hour long
- Totally confidential, including harm to self or others, suicide, child protection
- Ethos that women calling are their own best experts

The Helpline

- Women & girls call to talk about all kinds of self injury, including; cutting, burning, overdosing and many others
- They also call to talk about many forms of other types of self-harming behaviours, such as issues with food, destructive relationships, addictions etc
- They may or may not be in contact with other mental health services
- They may or may not be actively self-injuring at point of contact

Women and self-injury

- Childhood experiences
- Adult experiences
- Current experiences

- As a coping strategy
- As a way of managing overwhelming feelings
- To stay alive

Why are the women who call self-injuring?

- We listen to the caller, whatever she needs to talk about.
- We will not judge her for her self injury
- We will empathise with her need to self injure, and not try to stop the behaviour
- We will let her know that we cannot call ambulances or take any action on her behalf
- We will respect her efforts to survive

Our approach

Over the last year on the helpline:

- Between 50% - 70% of calls each month have been recorded as being about self injury
- Between 7% - 20% have been recorded each month as being about a caller expressing suicidal thoughts, feelings or actions
- Last month 4.4% of calls featured both self injury and suicidal thoughts or feelings

Suicide & Self Injury

Q: What was the main reason for your latest contact?

A: *As a way off putting off hurting myself*

"It was really good to be able to talk to someone honestly about how I was feeling, to talk about the urges I was experiencing"

Q: How did you feel after you last contacted us?

A: Heard, calmer, safer, relieved

"I feel a lot calmer and safer and feel I am now able to get through tonight without cutting. Calling BCSW has helped me many times & when I have called I have never cut or self harmed afterwards so it is a really effective way of preventing my self harm"

Q: Thinking about your self injury, what is the main thing you want support with?

A: *A place to share my confusing thoughts and feelings*

Helpful Response?