When the self harm occurs alongside substance and alcohol misuse or violence, specific treatments for these conditions may be indicated. For older adolescents, referral to a self help agency or walk-in counselling service may be appropriate—and more readily accepted.

Further reading

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- Gould M, Greenberg T, Velting DM, Shaffer D. Youth suicide risk and preventive interventions: a review of the past ten years. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 2003;42:386-405.
- Hawton K, Hall S, Simkin S, Bale L, Bond A, Codd S, et al. Deliberate self-harm in adolescents: a study of characteristics and trends in Oxford, 1999-2000. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry* 2003;44:1191-8.
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- Wood A, Trainor G, Rothwell J, Moore A, Harrington R. Randomized trial of group therapy for repeated deliberate self-harm in adolescents. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 2001;40:1246-53.

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Information resources

For young people

- *Depression in children and young people*. Factsheet 21. From Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych), tel 020 7235 2351; www.rcpsych.ac.uk

For parents and teachers

- *Suicide and self-harm in people*. Factsheet 15. From RCPsych (as above).
- Graham P, Hughes C. *So young, so sad, so listen*. London: Gaskell, 1995.
- www.youngminds.org.uk (YoungMinds is a national charity working to improve the mental health of all children and young people).
- www.euteach.com (for information on teaching about mental health issues in young people).

For parents and others bereaved by suicide

- Hill K, Hawton K, Malmberg A, Simkin S. *Bereavement information pack: for those bereaved by suicide or other sudden death*. London: Gaskell, 1997. Available via RCPsych (as above) and at www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/gaskell/bereav/index.htm
- Wertheimer A. *A special scar: the experiences of people bereaved by suicide*. 2nd ed. London: Brunner-Routledge, 2001.

The two photographs are reproduced with permission from Tor Richard Simonsen/Rex (self cutting) and BSIP/Chassenet/SPL (self poisoning).

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An unusual interview

While working as a surgical registrar in Australia, I was applying for specialist registrar posts in the United Kingdom. I eventually received an email from a prestigious unit inviting me for interview, but, as I scrolled down the message, I was horrified to discover that the interviews were in six days' time. This would be a short time to arrange cover and transport had I been in the UK, but I was 10 500 miles away. Despite starting a week of leave on the day of the interview, I was on call for the preceding three days, and, with no cover available, it proved impossible for me to fly to the UK in time. I therefore asked for a telephone interview but was told that a telephone interview would not be possible because of the hospital's equal opportunities policy. I appealed to the postgraduate dean and waited.

I heard nothing more until I was checking my email at the airport before going on holiday. Having forgotten about the interviews, I was amazed to find an email telling me that I had been granted a telephone interview and that it would be that very evening. I realised that, at the time of the interview, I would be in the middle of a two hour bus transfer from the airport to our hotel, which we could not miss. I was told that the interview time could not be changed and I would be telephoned on my mobile phone for a conference call. Mobile reception can be patchy in Australia between metropolitan areas: the thought of what a conference call from overseas would be like was interesting.

I spent the flight reading anything useful that I could find saved on my laptop. I was trying to do the preparation work of several weeks in a few hours. At our destination I just took a seat at the back of a packed minibus and waited. Eventually my mobile rang:

I answered but could not hear anything. "Just great," I thought, "I can't even hear them." The phone rang again, and this time I was patched into the conference call.

I immediately forgot about the noisy, bumpy minibus journey. I could hear the interviewers perfectly, and the interview went well. When we arrived at our hotel my poor fiancée had to carry all our bags while I stalked around the car park answering questions about the research paper I was most proud of. The hotel staff must have thought me incredibly rude as I waltzed into the foyer with my wee Sherpa in tow, ignored them, and sat in the lounge to talk about laboratory research. When the interview ended the chairman of the interview panel said he would email the results of the interview the next day, and, other than a comment about the sound of a party in the background, I think he was unaware of my unconventional environment.

The next day, my fiancée and I were sitting in a café when a stranger came over and said, "Well, did you get the job, mate?" Apparently he had been a fellow passenger on the minibus.

I found out later in the day that I had been unsuccessful, but I received positive feedback. I was disappointed, but also grateful to the deanery for being bold enough to grant me their first telephone interview. The chairman of the committee told me that they were delighted with the telephone interview and would consider them in the future.

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