Why do people self harm

Self harm is common in people who have been abused, who have low self-esteem and those with eating disorders. Its prevalence is higher in young women between the ages of 15 and 19 years.

People with self-harming behaviour often find it easier to deal with physical pain than emotional turmoil and use cutting or burning acts to release tension. People also use it to distract themselves from overwhelming emotions.

People with poor self-image and low self-esteem, use self-harm to empower themselves. They feel in control by enduring the self-inflicted pain. Others use it to re-live their abuse, as they feel responsible and guilty for it.

For some people self-harm is the only way of communicating their distress and is a cry for help. Self-harming can be addictive and difficult to control. Pain releases naturally occurring opiates and can give a buzz.

Organizations:
Basement project
National self-harm network
Self harm alliance
Survivors UK