

Safety Kits by Marc Hallsworth



I have been involved in the ward visits made by Mental Health Together over the past few months and on one particular visit I had a conversation with a young man who really made me think. The young man who I'll call John (not his real name) was a very clear self-harmer due to the scarring he had on his body. John said that the one thing he would like to see introduced into the discharge routine for people who self-harm is some type of basic, minimal first aid training and a simple kit for them to take home including pressure bandages, alcohol wipes, plasters etc.

Having the knowledge and equipment of a basic first aid kit could firstly, save a trip to A&E because you could clean the wound yourself and secondly, if necessary, you could use the kit until help arrives via paramedics or family.

Since speaking to John, I have thought to myself if not for MHT this subject may have never come to light, also IT COULD SAVE A LIFE. You can get free stop-smoking kits, needles, chlamydia kits so when I went to the Suicide Prevention Strategy Group and self-harm was on the agenda I mentioned this idea. Everyone was extremely positive about it and a sub-group has been set up to co-produce a 'Safety Kit'. The intention now is to include not only basic first aid equipment but also advice on emotional 'first aid' when people feel the urge to self-harm.

"The concept of a 'safety kit' for people who self-harm, proposed by an inpatient during discussion with an expert member of the Suicide Prevention Strategy Group represents a wonderful example of an idea realised in practice, which is truly service-receiver led."

Sam Kelly - Chair of Derbyshire Healthcare Foundation Trust's Suicide Prevention Strategy Group