

## **C.A.R.E.S.S.**

I agree that when I get the impulse to self-harm, BEFORE I do, I will choose to incorporate one behavior from each category below. (Set and re-set a timer before you begin each section, to have an external boundary to re-ground you after 10-15 minutes.)

### **C.A.- Communicate Alternately (10-15 minutes)**

Hurting the body is a way to communicate feelings, thoughts, needs, and unresolved trauma memories. Clients need other, less destructive modalities to communicate.

- Draw/paint the body part and the injury you'd like to inflict
- Draw the emotions that accompany the urge to self-harm
- Make a collage of words/images that capture thoughts/feelings
- Write a poem about your feelings
- Depict the body part with clay, sculpt the injury
- Write a graphic description of the way you want to hurt yourself
- Write about what was happening when you felt the urge to self-harm

### **R.E.- Release Endorphins (10-15 minutes)**

Clients feel better after they self-harm because the brain releases endorphins, (naturally occurring opiates), in response to pain/body trauma. Clients need other ways to experience the release of endorphins. (Exercise, laughter, hugging)

- Run up/down the stairs or the periphery of your house/march in place
- Do 100 jumping jacks
- Go on a piece of exercise equipment
- Do a part of an at-home exercise tape
- Put on the radio and dance
- Listen to a funny comedian on a CD/video
- Watch a funny movie/TV show
- Read something that tickles you
- Hold/ stroke and hug a stuffed animal or live pet
- Hug a pillow, rag doll, or a tree

### **S.S.-Self-Soothe(10-15 minutes)**

Clients need to learn new strategies that promote self-care and decrease anxiety from future triggering events.

- Wrap in a quilt and rock in rocking chair
- Take a warm shower/bubble bath
- Light scented candles or oil/play soothing music
- Read positive affirmations
- Massage hands with soothing lotion