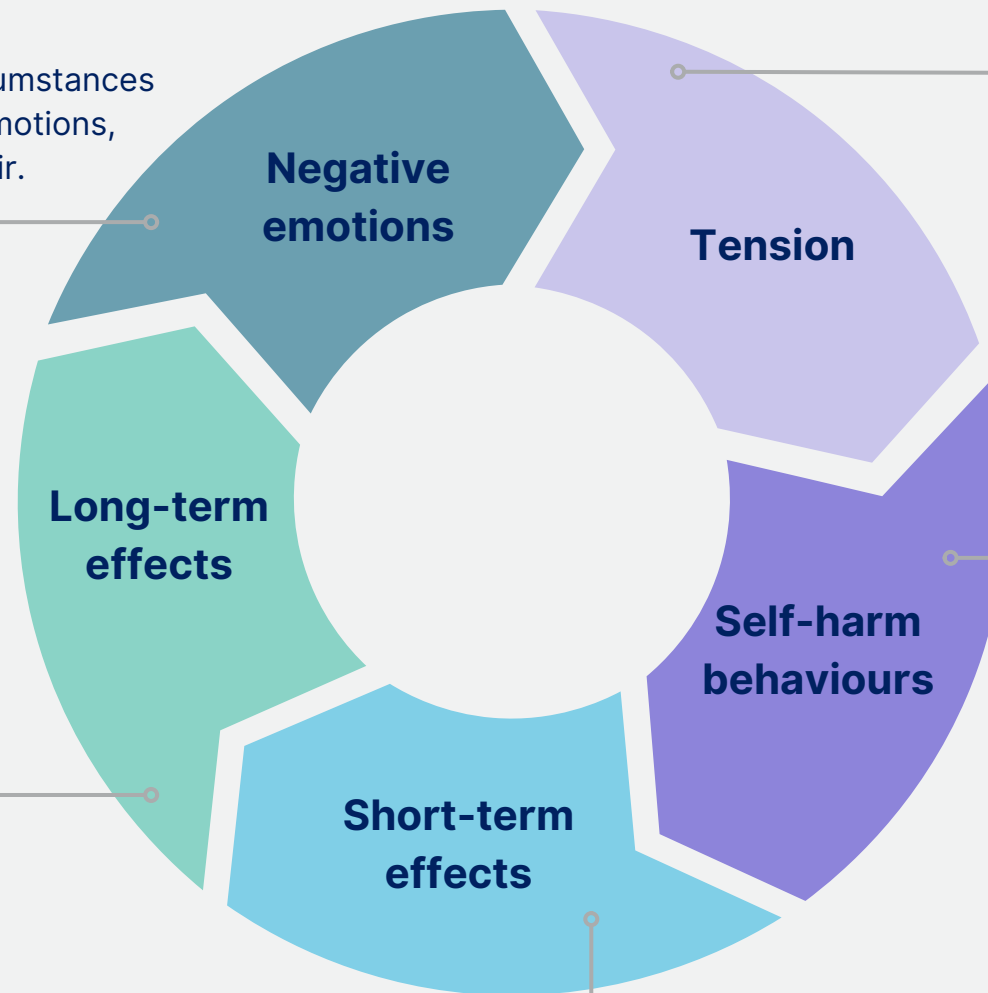


The cycle of self-harm

Challenging life events and circumstances can make a person feel strong emotions, such as anger, sadness or despair.

In the long term, self-harm behaviours lead to feelings of **shame or guilt** about the act of self-harm; the reoccurrence of negative emotions and tensions that haven't been averted by the act of self-harm. It **leads a person back to negative emotions**.

In the short term, self-harm behaviours can provide **comfort**, **distraction**, a way to **avert suicidal thoughts**, a sense of **belonging** and a way to **communicate** or gain a sense of **control**.



Negative emotions can feel uncomfortable. A person may find it **difficult to recognise and regulate negative emotions**, which can lead to tension building up.

To release tension, a person may harm themselves. There are many ways this can happen, such as cuts to the skin, banging the head or body, scratching, burning the skin or swallowing objects.