SOUTH COAST MEDICAL GROUP

Crescent Providence Surgery
12 Walpole Rd
Bournemouth
Dorset, BH1 4HA

Tel: 01202 395195

Dear Luke,

I wanted to take the time to share some really positive feedback and outcomes from our recent FLASH group (Families Learning About Self-Harm). The programme has had a meaningful and tangible impact on the parents and caregivers who attended, and I think it is important to highlight just how valuable this space has been for families.
From the outset, parents expressed feeling relieved to finally access a service specifically for them. Many shared that prior to FLASH they felt there was "nothing out there" focused on supporting caregivers of young people who self-harm. The group provided a safe, understanding environment where they could openly reflect, learn, and connect with others experiencing similar challenges often for the first time.

One of the strongest themes throughout the programme was increased confidence in parenting. As one parent shared:
"I found today's session really good, confirmation that just being the best parent you can is enough."

This reassurance was incredibly powerful. Many caregivers arrived feeling guilt, self-doubt, or fear that they were somehow "getting it wrong." Through the sessions, they developed a better understanding of self-harm, emotional regulation, and adolescent development, which reduced blame (both toward themselves and their young people) and replaced it with compassion and confidence.

Another parent reflected on how understanding brain development changed their perspective:
"I found this session really useful. I particularly found the information about stages of the brain and the impact that this has for my teenager. I will bring more patience to my parenting."

This insight into adolescent brain development has been transformative. Parents reported that understanding the neurological and emotional changes their teenagers are experiencing helped them respond with greater empathy rather than frustration. Several families shared that things had already started to feel calmer at home because reactions were more measured and less emotionally charged.

Communication was another major area of growth. Caregivers described feeling better equipped to have supportive conversations about self-harm without escalating situations or shutting them down. The shift from fear-driven responses to curiosity and validation has helped young people feel safer opening up.

Crescent Providence Surgery
12 Walpole Rd
Bournemouth
Dorset, BH1 4HA

Tel: 01202 395195

One parent thoughtfully reflected:
"It has made me think how I respond to my children when I am busy or distracted and being able to start thinking about how I respond more effectively."
This awareness of everyday interactions has led to practical changes in family dynamics. Parents spoke about slowing down, being more present, and recognising how small adjustments in tone and timing can make a significant difference. As a result, several families reported that home life feels "easier," with fewer conflicts and more understanding.

Importantly, FLASH is reaching families early. The programme offers timely intervention at a stage when parents are worried but may not yet meet thresholds for crisis services. This early support helps prevent escalation and gives caregivers tools before situations reach breaking point. Parents expressed gratitude that they did not have to sit on a waiting list while struggling alone.

We are incredibly proud of the engagement and openness shown by the parents in this group, and I look forward to building on this success in future cohorts.

Kind regards,

Social Prescribing Team