

## Donuts

Outcome of this task -

1. For parents or professionals to understand how difficult it is to maintain a normal conversation while being pre-occupied with thoughts that their child might be harming themselves.
2. For parents and professionals to have empathy for how difficult it may be for a young person to have a normal conversation while having impulsive self-harming thoughts.

Items required –

Jam donuts full of sugar, wet wipes, napkins and paper plates.

Set up –

Put all attendees into pairs. In each pair give one of the pair a donut with a paper plate and napkin.

Both pairs have to have a normal, general conversation with each other for example: about holidays they may desire this year, what they would do if they were going to decorate their house or if they were to win the pools etc. While they have this conversation, the person holding the donut must eat the donut but not lick their lips. The opposite of the pair continues with the normal conversation but has to watch and make sure that the person eating the donut does not lick their lips. Set only a couple of minutes for this exercise.

Start all couples in the task at the same time, group leaders and co-leaders go around and check that a normal conversation is happening and that they are observing their partner not licking their lips.

At the end of the exercise the person eating the donut can throw away the remaining donut, wipe their hands etc. and then they swap over so the other person experiences the exercise.

At the end of the exercise, a large group discussion on 'how did it feel' what got in the way of trying to maintain the normal conversation whilst 1. Checking the person hadn't licked their lips and 2. having the conversation whilst resisting the temptation to lick their lips.

This conversation is to then progress into 1. 'what is it like as a parent when you're trying to have a general conversation about school or various activities yet you're conscious thoughts are 'has this child self-harmed', 'have they hurt themselves' and watching their arms, looking at their legs etc. and then 2. What's it like for a young person who is self-harming that has these impulsive thoughts to hurt themselves whilst trying to maintain a conversation.

If a parent or a professional in the group for either medical or uncomfortable reasons does not wish to take part in the exercise then they become the third person in the pair where they can become an observer and then they can feed back on what it was like to observe the task and activity.