



# Physical management of self harm by tying (using ligatures)

## Ligatures/Wound Management

One form of self harm is where parts of the body are tied tightly and blood flow is stopped or impeded. This can be on any part of the body, although it may be considered most dangerous when around the neck, as in hanging, when blood flow to the brain can quickly lead to unconsciousness and death.



### Signs and Symptoms

- Patient may have a history of self-harming behaviours
- Patient may have displayed a deterioration in their mental health state
- The patient may have spent time away from communal areas of the ward, or locked in a bathroom or toilet
- Patient may have self-harmed recently while on the ward



### Causes

- Patient's deteriorating mental health state
- Significant social stressors affecting the patient
- Personal circumstances having an impact on the patient
- Patient commencing or changing medication
- The patient finds it difficult to safely manage trauma or emotional distress, whether recent or over a long period



### Ward Based Management

If a patient is found with a ligature:

- Press alarm/call for help
- Assess the scene for any danger
- Ensure the patient has a clear airway
- Remove the ligature with ligature cutters (use the blade away from yourself)
- Take physical observations, be mindful of higher rates of blood pressure and pulse after the incident
- If patient **has lost consciousness**, then use the crash trolley, commence CPR and utilise the emergency procedure
- If patient **hasn't lost consciousness**, then observe physical observations
- Call the Doctor