Summary: The prison population is extremely vulnerable to committing acts of self-harm and female prisoners are more likely to self-harm than their male counterparts. The National Suicide Research Foundation (2004) recorded that 22.2% of the cases of self-harm that occurred in Irish prisons in 2002 involved females, even though women comprised only 3.1% of the total prison population. This article examines international research and trends to consider why self-harm is so prevalent amongst female prisoners, how self-harm can be prevented and what the best response is to those who self-harm.