

How can you help a friend who is hurting him or herself?

- ✓ Talk to your friend and let him or her know that you care. People who self-harm often feel guilty about what they are doing. Knowing that someone cares can make a difference.
- ✓ Make sure a family member, doctor or therapist is aware of what is going on. You may need to tell someone what your friend is doing.
- ✓ Offer to be a safe person to talk to when your friend is thinking about hurting himself or herself.



If you or someone you know is doing self-injury, it is important to get help. Talk with a counselor, therapist or other health care provider.

This pamphlet is not a substitute for medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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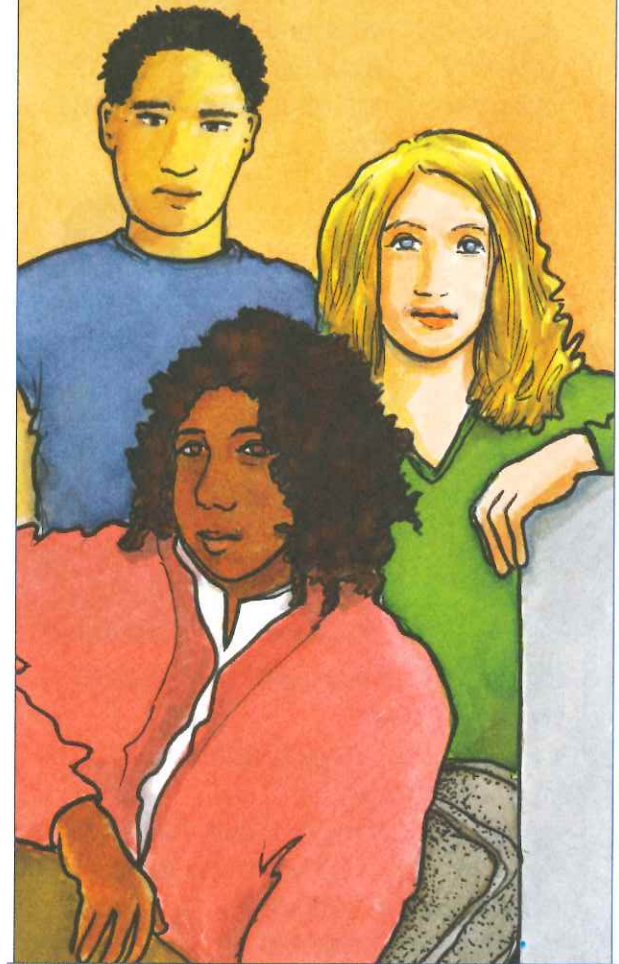
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SELF-INJURY

Self-harm and Cutting



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

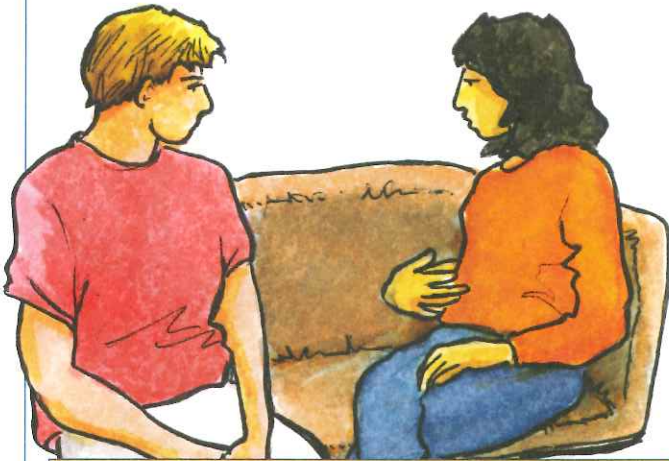
SELF-HARM AND CUTTING

What is self-harm?

- ✓ Self-harm is when people hurt their bodies on purpose as a way of dealing with painful feelings and emotions.
- ✓ It is also called self-injury.

Why do people hurt themselves?

- ✓ There are many reasons. Some people hurt themselves to relieve emotional pain or stress.
- ✓ Emotional pain can be caused by fights with parents or friends, physical or sexual abuse, eating disorders, work or school problems, and loneliness.

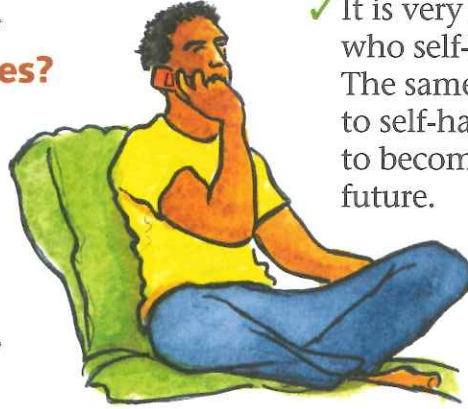


Different ways people harm themselves:

- cutting, burning, scratching
- hitting themselves
- punching walls or other hard surfaces
- preventing wounds from healing
- banging their heads
- choking themselves

Are people who self-harm trying to kill themselves?

- ✓ No, people who self-harm are trying to relieve emotional pain, not kill themselves.
- ✓ It is very important for people who self-harm to get help. The same feelings that lead to self-harm can cause people to become suicidal in the future.



What are the risks of self-harm?

- ✓ Self-harm may lead to infections or permanent scars. In some cases, people may accidentally kill themselves.
- ✓ Some people also become dependent on self-harm. They cannot stop even when they really want to.

Why do people keep self-harm a secret?

- ✓ A person may hide self-harm for many reasons. Some people feel guilty and ashamed about what they have done to their bodies. Others fear they will be labeled "crazy" or sent away for treatment.
- ✓ Most people who hurt themselves are just struggling with tough feelings and situations. Some people are also dealing with depression or anxiety. It is important for them to talk with a doctor or a therapist before things get worse.

How does someone stop hurting him or herself?

- ✓ The best way to stop is to tell someone and ask for help.
- ✓ You can get help from a professional such as a therapist. If you do not have a therapist, ask a parent, teacher, coach, counselor, doctor or nurse to help you find one.
- ✓ Talk to others when you are in pain. No one can handle all of life's problems on his or her own.
- ✓ Find other ways to deal with pain besides hurting yourself. Here are examples of things to do instead:
 - Call a friend and talk about your feelings.
 - Distract yourself by going for a walk.
 - Exercise to relieve stress.
 - Draw or write in a journal to express your strong emotions.
 - Listen to or play music that makes you happy. This can help change your mood.

