

Self-Harm



Self-harm is the deliberate act that causes harm to one's own body (ex: cutting, burning, hitting, sticking objects in/under skin, or swallowing poisonous substances to harm yourself) without suicidal intent.

Warning Signs

- Unexplained wounds & scars
 - Isolation/irritability & low self-esteem
 - Frequent 'accidents' (ex: person claims to be clumsy)
 - Blood stains on clothing, towels, & blankets
 - Covering up by wearing long sleeves or pants
 - Having sharp objects or cutting instruments (ex: razor blades, glass, knives)
- Tell someone you trust.
 - Ask yourself why you self-injure.
 - Find new ways of coping (ex: journal writing, exercise).
 - Seek professional support.

Help a Friend

- Deal with your own feelings about the situation.
- Learn about the problem.
- Don't judge.
- Offer support, not threats or punishments.
- Encourage communication.

Reasons for Self-Harm?

- To cope with intense emotional pain.
- To ease feelings of tension & anxiety.
- To relieve anger & aggression.
- To escape feelings of depression, emptiness or numbness.
- To regain control over one's body & gain a sense of security.
- To punish self as a reaction to self hatred or guilt.



Self-harm is an unhealthy way of coping & people need support to learn healthy ways to deal with difficult feelings.

Self-Harm & Suicide. It can be difficult for friends, family & professionals to decide between self-harm & suicide attempt – both are self directed & dangerous – the difference is the intent.

Tell a Friend



Myths vs. Facts



“People who self-harm are looking for attention.”

FALSE. Most people do it alone, not for attention. Fear & shame makes it difficult to ask for help.

“People who self-harm are crazy or dangerous.”

FALSE. Most people who self-injure suffer from depression &/or anxiety, like millions of other people. Calling them 'crazy' or 'dangerous' is inaccurate, hurtful & damaging.

“People who self-harm want to die.”

FALSE. Most people do not want to die—they are simply trying to cope with the pain. However, they are at a higher risk for future suicide attempts, so seeking help is important.

“If the wounds aren't bad, there's no reason to worry”

FALSE. The severity of a person's wounds has little to do with how much he/she is suffering. Minor injuries **does not mean** there is nothing to worry about.

For support, contact your local **Mental Health & Addiction Services Office or Family Doctor.**

For immediate help, contact your local **Emergency Department or Police.**

Mental Health Crisis Line 1-888-737-4668
Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
NL Health Line 1-888-709-2929

