I'm not a bot



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Source: Isabella Gallino/FlickrToday, people stand proudly against being fat-shamed or slut-shamed or slut-shamed or slut-shamed or slut-shamed or slut-shamed of the last things people feel ashamed ofdespite it being far more widespread than you might suspect. A 2012 review of 52 self-injury.
studies from around the world found that approximately 18 percent of individuals had cut or otherwise deliberately injured themselves in their lifetime. Thats almost one in five. Cutting often begins during the teenage yearson average, between the ages of 12 and 14. Its surprisingly common during this period in particular: Studies show that between
13 and 23 percent of teenagers have cut, burned, or otherwise deliberately injured themselves. The technical term for cutting is non-suicidal self-injury, and its defined as the deliberate, self-inflicted destruction of body tissue. But keep in mind two important facts: First, cutters arent trying to kill themselves. By contrast, they often self-harm to feel
alive, rather than numb. Second, self-injury must, by definition, be for purposes not socially sanctioned. So, no matter how you feel about your daughters nose or belly button piercing, it doesn't count as self-harm. But cutting, burning, carving words or symbols into ones skin, painful hair-pulling, or literally banging ones head against the wall certainly
do count. So whats going on? To an outsider, self-harm may seem incomprehensibleeven crazybut if you go with the truism that each person copes as best as they can with the resources they have at the time, it might be a little easier to understand. With that, here are four reasons individuals self-injure: Reason #1: Physical pain can take away
emotional pain. The physical pain of cutting not only diffuses negative emotion, but it can also create a sense of calm and relief. Because it works almost instantly, cutting is highly reinforcingsome even say addictive. Individuals who cut describe
purging. Eventually, the brain starts to connect the relief from emotional pain with cutting. This creates a strong association, or even a craving, that can be difficult to resist. And while most people who self-injury also varies; some do
it daily, while others can go weeks, months, or even years between episodes. Reason #2: People who cut are their own harshest critics. A 2014 study asked college students who cut themselves, plus a control group of non-cutters, to keep a daily diary of their emotions for two weeks. The biggest difference between those who cut and those who didnt?
People who cut reported feeling dissatisfied with themselves much more often than non-cutters. This dissatisfied with themselves, and they sometimes carve their criticisms into their skin: fat, stupid, failure. Interestingly, a 2012 study showed that harsh self-criticism is
most strongly related to self-harm, rather than other, more indirect forms of self-injury, like eating disorders, drinking, or drug abuse. Reason #4: Its an
alternative outlet for emotional pain. Kids raised in a household where sadness, hurt, or disappointment gets invalidated or mocked start to believe that its not okay to feel bad. They turn to cutting as an acceptable way to feel painif theyre not allowed to feel it emotionally, theyll let it out physically. In short, think of cutting and self-harm as any other
unhealthy coping mechanism like getting drunk, binge eating, or getting high; its a way to feel something other than what youre feeling, or it can be a way to punish yourself for not measuring up. It goes without saying that cutting is dangerous. Even when suicide isnt the intention, its all too easy to cut too deeply. In fact, individuals who cut know its
unhealthy, and they often go to great lengths to hide their behaviornot to mention their scars. How to Prevent Self-HarmIn a 2015 study, researchers asked people who formerly cut themselves why they stopped cutting when they came to realize that they
could handle feeling crappy for a while and that they would probably feel better soon. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) stopped because they felt someone loved or cared for themthey may have entered a loving relationship or their friends made them feel worthy and cared for themthey may have entered a loving relationship or their friends made them feel worthy and cared for themthey may have entered a loving relationship or their friends made them feel worthy and cared for themthey may have entered a loving relationship or their friends made them feel worthy and cared for themthey may have entered a loving relationship or their friends made them feel worthy and cared for themthey may have entered a loving relationship or their friends made them feel worthy and cared for themthey may have entered a loving relationship or their friends made them feel worthy and cared for themthey may have entered a loving relationship or their friends made them feel worthy and cared for the feel worthy and cared for them feel worthy and cared for the fe
come into your life, what are some concrete methods to stop? First, its important to match the solution with the reason for cutting. If cutting is a way to feel deep dark emotions, experiment with ways to feel those emotions and experiment with ways to feel those emotions.
page after page of profanity in big black letters. If cutting is a way to release tension, move your bodyvisit a boxing gym or go for a long, pounding run. If channeling your pain into another activity doesnt work, simulating cutting might help. It wont be as satisfying, but its safer. Squeeze ice until your hands hurt or draw on your skin with a red marker
instead of cutting it. Finally, you can try to wait it out. It will be excruciating, especially at first, but the urge to cut will eventually pass. Promise yourself (or someone who loves you) that yould put at least 10 or 20 minutes, or however long you agree on, between the urge to cut and actually doing it. Cutting can be notoriously difficult to stop on your
own. If youre struggling with self-injury, it's important to reach out to a mental health professional for support, help, and accountability. No one should suffer such emotional pain they feel the need to self-injure; a good therapist can help you get back on track. To wrap up, cutting can be a hard habit to breakthat harsh inner critic is a voice not easily
silenced. It will take time and courage, but know that that inner critic can slowly be edged out by something you didnt even know you had: inner strength. A version of this piece also appeared on Quick and Dirty Tips. Disclaimer: All content is strictly for informational purposes only. This content does not substitute for mental health care from a
licensed professional. To find a therapist, please visit the Psychology Today Therapy Directory. Self-harm involves self-inflicted, non-suicidal bodily harm that is severe enough to either cause tissue damage or to leave marks that last several hours. Cutting is the most common form of self-injury but burning, head banging, and scratching are also
common. Other forms of self-harm include biting, skin picking, hair pulling, hitting the body with objects with the body. Self-harm is not always easy to detect because people often try to hide it. Some signs that a person might be self-injuring include: Scars that occur in a pattern, sometimes restricted to one area of the body. Self-harm is not always easy to detect because people often try to hide it.
sharp objects, such as knives, needles, or razor blades, on handFresh scars, scratches, bite marks, or bruisesRepeatedly rubbing one area of the bodyWearing long sleeves and pants even in very hot weatherLow self-esteemNegative self-talk, statements of hopelessnessFeelings of worthlessnessUnpredictable, impulsive behaviorMaking excuses to
explain away visible injuriesPeople who self-injure become very adept at hiding scars or explaining them away. Look for signs such as a preference for wearing clothing at all times (e.g., long sleeves in hot weather), an avoidance of situations where more revealing clothing might be expected (e.g., unexplained refusal to go to a party), or
unusually frequent complaints of accidental injury (e.g., a cat owner who frequently has scratches on her arms). Methods of self-injury can include: CuttingBurningScratchingSelf-hittingPinchingHead-bangingPiercing skin with needles or sharp objects under the skin People sometimes only engage in one form of self-injury,
but it is not uncommon for multiple methods to be used. The arms are one of the areas that people self-harm most frequently, but other areas of the body including the legs and torso are also common targets. Self-harm is a complex condition that has no simple explanation. Although suicidal feelings may accompany self-injury, it does not necessarily
indicate a suicide attempt. Most often self-harm is simply a mechanism for coping with emotional distress. People who select this emotional outlet may use it to express feelings, deal with feelings of unreality or numbness, stop flashbacks, punish themselves, or relieve tension. Self-harm is not recognized as a mental illness, but the Diagnostic and
Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) lists non-suicidal self-injury is also associated with certain conditions including: Risk factors for self-injury include: Sex: Females are thought to self-injury is also associated with certain conditions including: Risk factors for self-injury is also associated with certain conditions including: Risk factors for self-injury is also associated with certain conditions including: Risk factors for self-injury is also associated with certain conditions in need of further study.
are more likely to self-harmMental disorders: Having another mental health condition can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self-injuryTrauma: Past stress and trauma during childhood can increase the risk of self
Self-injury indicates a lack of coping skills for dealing with severe emotional distress. People who self-harm may struggle to understand and manage their emotions. They also may not have the necessary skills to cope with stress and trauma in healthy ways. Although self-injury such as cutting is recognized as a common problem among the teenage
population, it is not limited to adolescents. People of all sexes, nationalities, socio-economic groups, and ages can self-injury went on to attempt suicide before the age of 21.
Self-injury is not a recognized disorder, but it is a sign that a person needs help coping. A doctor will start by evaluating whether or not the individual is suicidal and treating any physical injuries that are present. A doctor will start by evaluating whether or not the individual is suicidal and treating any physical injuries that are present. A doctor will start by evaluating whether or not the individual is suicidal and treating any physical injuries that are present.
the self-injury has been taking placeThe severity and types of injuries that have taken place The next step is to determine if the individual has a coexisting psychiatric condition and to evaluate if the person is at risk for suicide. Once these assessments have been made, the doctor can make recommendations for treatment. Medications such as
antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and anxiolytics may alleviate the underlying feelings that the patient is attempting to cope with through self-injury. In addition to treating any coexisting psychiatric conditions, cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT) can be an effective treatment for non-suicidal self-injury. This type of therapy addresses underlying
negative thought patterns as well as the harmful behaviors. Another important aspect of treatment is learning better coping mechanisms to replace the self-harm behaviors. Once the person is stable, therapeutic work should be done to help cope with the underlying problems that are causing their distress. Some experts say that
hospitalization or forced stopping of the self-injury is not a helpful treatment. It may make the doctor and involved friends and family feel more comfortable, but does nothing to help the underlying problems. Further, the person is generally neither psychotic nor actively suicidal and will benefit more from working with a doctor who is compassionate
to the reasons that they are hurting themselves. A desire to cooperate and get well is a major factor in recovery. If someone you know is engaging in cutting or some other form of self-injury, there are things that you can do to offer support and assistance. Offer non-judgmental support. People who engage in self-harm tend to be self-critical and
struggle with feelings of worthlessness. Show that you care and are concerned and encourage the individual to reach out to a parent, counselor, or doctor. You might not understand the behavior, but it is important not to dismiss their emotions. Don't threaten. If it is a child or teen who is engaging in self-harm, avoid making accusations or threats.
Talk to your child's pediatrician or a mental health professional about what steps you should take next. Encourage them to seek help. Offer to help them find a doctor or mental health professional. In addition to the risk of accidental life-threatening injuries, self-harm behaviors such as cutting also present a risk of scarring and infection. If you are
engaging in self-injury, no matter how minor or infrequent, you should talk to your doctor. Such actions are a sign of a larger problem that needs to be addressed, so the sooner you get help, the better the outcome. Cutting is a form of intentional self-harm used to cope with stress or trauma or to process feelings and should always be taken seriously.
Self-harm often indicates a mental health condition, such as a mood or personality disorder. Though most people who cut do not intend suicide, repeated cutting is associated with an increased risk of suicide. This article will explain why people self-harm by cutting, provide information on signs and risk factors, discuss alternative ways to cope, and
discuss strategies to support someone struggling with self-harm. SDI Productions / Getty ImagesIf you are having suicidal thoughts, contact the 988 Crisis & Suicide Lifeline at 988 for support and assistance from a trained counselor. If you or a loved one is in immediate danger, call 911. It may be difficult to understand why someone would
intentionally hurt themselves. People who cause self-harm are usually trying to escape psychological or emotional pain. Self-harm can bring a sense of control and relief. Self-harm is also associated with several mental illnesses, including personality disorders (e.g., borderline personality disorder), eating disorders, depressive and anxiety disorders.
According to one review, reasons for nonsuicidal self-harm, in order of most to least common, are: Managing distress and emotional pain. It can also help people calm down when feeling out of control. A means of trying to exert an influence on other people: For some people, it's a way to demonstrate
their commitment or love for another person. For others, self-harm can be a form of self-punishment or serve as a way to punish others. Dissociation: Self-harm can help people escape from numbness or to become numb when their emotions are too
overwhelming. For a rush of emotion: Cutting and self-harm can bring a rush of excitement or exhilaration that help people feel more alive. As a suicide-prevention method: Some people cut or harm themselves to avoid suicide. For maintaining boundaries of their bodies. As a
means of expressing or coping with sexuality: Some people describe cutting as a release or feeling of relief, similar to a sexual release. Self-harm through cutting is most common in adolescents and young adults, and some people who cut will show signs that they are in distress and at risk for cutting or that they are in distress and at risk for cutting is most common in adolescents and young adults, and some people who cut will show signs that they are in distress and at risk for cutting is most common in adolescents and young adults, and some people who cut will show signs that they are in distress and at risk for cutting is most common in adolescents and young adults, and some people who cut will show signs that they are in distress and at risk for cutting is most common in adolescents and young adults, and some people who cut will show signs that they are in distress and at risk for cutting is most common in adolescents and young adults, and some people who cut will show signs that they are in distress and at risk for cutting is most common in adolescents and young adults, and some people who cut will show signs that they are in distress and at risk for cutting as a release or feeling of relief, similar to a sexual release.
include: School distressHistory of abuseBad relationships with one's bodyBeing socially withdrawnUsing or abusing substancesPoor family support Signs of cutting behavior include: Scars or marks on the skinUnexplained injuriesKeeping sharp objects around, like razors or pocketknivesBloodied cloths or tissuesAttempts to keep certain areas of the
body coveredThose who cut usually do so to relieve psychological pain, not to attempt suicide. However, people who cutespecially repeatedly rep
reduce the cutting behavior and treat any underlying mental illness are provided. There are several evidence-based therapeutic approaches to treating a person who cuts, including: Cutting and other self-harming behaviors should always be taken seriously, but panicking and jumping to conclusions or rushing to judgment will likely shut the person
down and prevent them from wanting to talk further. The best way to approach someone who might be cutting is with calmness and empathy. Talking to the person without judgment, listening to their concerns, and offering trust and support can open up the opportunity for a conversation about treatment. People who cut or intentionally hurt
themselves in other ways are at higher risk of suicide, especially when the behaviors occur repeatedly. Though all self-harm is dangerous, those who cut tend to do so more repeatedly than other forms of self-harm, putting them at higher risk. Cutting is a dangerous way of coping with emotional distress and mental health conditions. Without
appropriate treatment, these conditions will continue and may worsen. Since those who cut may not seek professional support, family and friends are often an important means of intervention. All acts of self-harm, including cutting, should be taken seriously and warrant a mental health evaluation. For many people, cutting is a way to relieve
psychological pain. Consider the underlying cause for the urge to cut and try one of these strategies instead. If you're feeling angry, try the following: Hitting a punching bagCrushing aluminum cansRipping up an old newspaperCleaning If you're feeling sad and depressed, you might be craving comfort. Try to comfort yourself by: Taking a warm
punished, try to rewrite your internal dialogue by: Making a list of your best qualities about a time that you did something good and how it made you feel People use cutting and other forms of self-harm to relieve emotional pain. There are often signs that
 someone is cutting or is at risk of self-harm, and they should always be taken seriously. Though self-harming and attempting suicide differ, people who cut are at increased risk for suicide. If someone you care about is cutting, approach them with calmness and empathy when discussing their cutting behavior and treatment options. The most effective
treatments for cutting involve certain types of psychotherapy. The notion that hurting yourself can make you feel better seems like a contradiction. But that's exactly what drives skin cutting and similar forms of self-harm among adolescents, says Matthew Nock, chair of the department of psychology at Harvard University. If you're a parent, you may
have heard about cutting or be wondering about red flags. Here are the basics on what to know, and how you can respond if you're concerned about this form of self-harm. What is self-harm? "Self-harm is the intentional destruction of body tissue in the absence of any intent to die," explains Nock, who specializes in treating self-injury behaviors in
childhood to young adulthood. "Most often it happens on the arms and takes the form of cutting with some type of sharp object, such as a razor blade, pencil, or pocket knife. It might also include burning the skin, such as paper clips." How many teens engage in self-harm? About 17% of teenagers engage in self-harm?
at least once, according to the American Psychological Association. Many who do so begin between ages 12 and 14, when adolescence can deliver a one-two punch: combining a new mental health disorder with greater risk-taking behaviors, explains Nock. What leads some teens to engage in cutting? Cutting appears to affect all genders of
adolescents equally, Nock notes. But what factors make teens more likely to do it? In addition to experiencing depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues, teens who cut themselves may be more apt to use drugs or alcohol. A 2022 study in Child and Adolescent Mental Health suggests additional contributing factors, including family problems
school or job challenges, and struggling relationships with friends. Ultimately, cutting appears to have three contributing components, Nock says: psychological, and social. "Kids who engage in self-injury have difficulty tolerating emotional distress and are more likely to try to escape from those feelings," he says. "It might be that their pair
demands attention, and when they're really upset, cutting themselves focuses on their physical pain. "An adult who's feeling upset may have a drink, go for a run, or engage in yoga to decrease their psychological pain." The sense of relief or release after cutting reinforces the behavior, leading teens to cut themselves again and again. "An adult who's feeling upset may have a drink, go for a run, or engage in yoga to decrease their psychological pain." The sense of relief or release after cutting reinforces the behavior, leading teens to cut themselves again and again. "An adult who's feeling upset, cutting themselves after cutting reinforces the behavior, leading teens to cut themselves again and again." The sense of relief or release after cutting reinforces the behavior, leading teens to cut themselves again and again. "An adult who's feeling upset may have a drink, go for a run, or engage in yoga to decrease their psychological pain." The sense of relief or release after cutting reinforces the behavior, leading teens to cut themselves again and again. "An adult who's feeling upset may have a drink, go for a run, or engage in yoga to decrease their psychological pain." The sense of relief or release after cutting reinforces the behavior and again. "An adult who's feeling upset may have a drink again." The sense of relief or release after cutting reinforces the psychological pain. "An adult who's feeling upset may have a drink again." The sense of relief or release after cutting reinforces after cutting reinforces after the psychological pain.
distress. When they feel better afterward, that behavior gets reinforced," Nock says. "We think the same is true with self-injury: if you feel really bad and cut yourself, the feeling goes away." Will asking about cutting put ideas in a teenager's head? Parents often worry about this. But it's safe to assume kids in middle school and high school are well
aware of what self-harm involves, from social media and interactions with peers and others. "Asking kids about it isn't going to give them the idea to do it all of the data we have suggests that's not the case," Nock says. What are key signs of cutting in teenagers? Be alert for fresh cuts on a teen's skin, or evidence that skin has been cut, burned, or had
objects placed under it covering body areas whether arms or legs they didn't tend to cover before. Is there a connection between cutting and suicide? While teens who engage in cutting don't intend to end their lives that way, their willingness to hurt themselves might indicate a greater risk that they may attempt suicide. More than 50% of children
and adolescents who die by suicide have previously self-harmed, according to the 2022 study described above. "The more you intentionally hurt your body when in
distress rather than do something productive like go for a run. There's a sort of self-criticism that leads people to hurt themselves and ultimately try to kill themselves." How can parents respond if they notice signs of cutting? If they confide in anyone at all, teens who self-harm tend to tell their friends, not their parents or other adults. But parents can
break through the secrecy and offer support with a calm, steadfast approach. "Encourage them to talk to you about what they're experiencing, knowing that you're an open ear and will be as nonjudgmental as possible," Nock says. "It's not realistic that we're going to root out all risky behaviors that kids engage in. But when death is a potential
outcome, encourage friends and family not to honor that secrecy and to try to intervene to keep the person safe." Seeking appropriate resources can help: Take your child to a primary care doctor who can refer to a mental health professional, or go directly to a psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker for evaluation. Ask your doctor or a mental
health professional about local or telehealth options for cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Both approaches can help teens learn healthier strategies to cope with emotional distress. If your child's self-injury seems severe or you're concerned about the possibility of suicide, go to a hospital emergency room. "If our
kids fall and suffer a break or accidental injury that needs medical attention, we go to the ER and the same should happen for injuries that are self-inflicted," Nock says. Cutting is the most common form of self-injury more than 80% of people who self-injury more than 80% of people who self-inflicted," Nock says. Cutting is the most common form of self-injury more than 80% of people who self-injury mor
head, scratch yourself, pick scabs or interfere with wound healing, infect yourself, embed objects in your skin, bruise yourself, break your own bones, or pull out your hair. Why would anyone do that to themselves? Because their emotions feel too big to process. Self-injury is not the problem, it is a symptom of something else, says Michelle M. Seliner,
owner and clinical director of S.A.F.E. (Self Abuse Finally Ends) Alternatives in St. Louis, MO. This could be anxiety, depression, trauma, grief/loss, disordered eating, and poor impulse control. Self-harm in tweens or teens may look familiar
at first. Look for symptoms of depression like staying in the bedroom a lot, crying spells, pulling away from friends and family, and more reactive patterns of behavior, says Hillary VandeLinde, a therapist with Symmetry Counseling in Nashville, TN. Self-harm is always paired with low self-worth, core beliefs of Im bad; I deserve bad things; I deserve
to be punished for being bad. This leads to hopelessness. Other emotional signs of self-harm include: Overwhelmed by feelings Inability to function or decline in functioning at school or homeInability to maintain stable relationships There are physical signs, too, like unexplained injuries, cuts and burns, or wearing long-sleeve shirts and long pants even
when its hot outside. A lot of teenagers self-harm in places you wont be able to see, like their thighs, waistline, creases of their legs, and upper arms so T-shirts cover it, VandeLinde says. You can do all the right things as a parent and still miss it. There are as many paths to self-harm as people who do it. It often starts with an impulsive scratch
triggered by strong feelings. Physiologically when were exposed to pain or shocking stimuli, its a really quick way to reset our nervous system and it either stops negative emotions or leads to more positive ones, VandeLinde says. The pain hurts, but theres a brief sense of euphoria you get with that stimuli. Its called pain offset relief. Over time
people react more favorably to the pain because its paired with this brief euphoria with the pain I feel better. Self-harm [can be] effective at thought stopping, but its not the most effective coping skill. This behavior is just too risky, with significant emotional, physical, and social consequences, to ignore. Michelle Seliner Its not always happening the
 way you might think. VandeLinde says some of her clients use a dermablading tool or remove the blade from a pencil sharpener something small and easy to hide, not your kitchen knives or scissors. Self-harm can escalate if the original issue anxiety, depression, trauma, etc. gets worse, or because the individual finds they need to increase the
intensity and frequency [of self-harm] to get the same effect, Seliner says. Though adults and children can engage in self-harm, the reported numbers of cases are much lower than in teens and young adults. My clients who self-harm, the reported numbers of cases are much lower than in teens and young adults. My clients who self-harm range from 13 to 23, VandeLinde says. Its younger than we think it is, but for sure its middle school, high school, and
college students. And its not just young, white females. Studies are inconclusive on the ratio of males to females, but there are clearly many more males injuring [themselves] than previously believed, Seliner says. However, more females than males seek treatment. Studies show that young people who experience race-based harassment or bullying are
more likely to injure themselves. In fact, one small study in Mississippi found that African American boys were the group most likely to self-harm. Self-harm. Self-harm, also called nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI), is not the same thing as a suicide attempt. Suicide is a way to end your life. Self-injury is a coping strategy, Seliner says. However, individuals who self-harm.
injure are nine times more likely to attempt suicide, and many of our clients describe chronic suicidal thoughts at the time of injury. If your child self-harms, it doesnt mean theyre going to commit suicide. But they should be assessed for what mental health professionals call suicidality, or the risk of suicide. Self-harm is a sign of emotional distress, not
a stage kids go through or drop on their own as they get older. Of course there are cases where an individual outgrows the behavior without clinical intervention. However, those are few and far between, Seliner says. Because this is a symptom of something else depression, anxiety, trauma, disordered eating, etc. coupled with the increased rate of
suicide attempts, this behavior is just too risky, with significant emotional physical and social consequences, to ignore. The best way to treat self-harm is the one tailored to the form of self-harm you use and the mental health issues behaviors
and racing thoughts Cognitive-behavioral therapy to help you understand and manage destructive thoughts and behavior logs to regain self-controlInterpersonal therapy to gain insight and skills to develop and maintain relationships These methods may be overseen with a mental health professional on an outpatient
basis or with residential or inpatient hospitalization. When the behaviors interfere with daily living, such as school, employment, and relationships, and are health- orlife-threatening, a higher level of care with specialized services and an experienced staff is recommended, Seliner says. Services for eating disorders, alcohol or substance abuse, trauma
abuse, and family therapy should be readily available and integrated into treatment, depending on individual needs. The most important part of treatment is your motivation to work hard on yourself and learn new ways to manage your emotions. VandeLindes clients have had success with dialectical behavior therapy, a type of cognitive behavior
therapy that teaches skills to help you manage stress and emotions. Clients learn how to sit and navigate through tough emotions with new coping skills like mindfulness and trusting that process. Call it out calmly and respectfully. If you notice
cuts or anything that could be self-harm, bring it up in a calm, nonchalant way, and dont make your child show you any cuts or marks. VandeLinde suggests these phrases: I noticed you had some cuts on your arm. Im worried about you. How are you doing? Youve seemed like youre not yourself. Do you ever have thoughts of not wanting to be alive?
Have a compassionate lens. The most important thing is to avoid shaming and remember no one asks for these emotions, she says. If theyre nonsuicidal, we need to focus on self-esteem and mental health. If theres suicidal intent, they need a more intense treatment plan. Find a qualified professional. If you notice any signs of self-harm or just have a
gut feeling about it, seek out a qualified mental health professional who has experience with self-harm. Theres not a certification for self-harm, so its important to find someone whos successfully worked clients through this issue in the past. I typically see teens after they een two or three other therapists who don't know what to do or use antiquated
methods, VandeLinde says. We dont snap your wrist to create pain. We dont take a red marker and draw a line on your wrist. To screen a therapist, ask these questions: How do you treat self-harm? Know your resources. Dial or text 988 for the 988 Suicide and Crisis
Lifeline. It's available nationwide, 24-7. To connect with a crisis counselor via a national Crisis Text Line, text HOME to 741741 for 24/7 support. Under their resources tab, The S.A.F.E. Alternative website has informational self-injury videos and a 32-minute video for parents called How to Understand and Help My Child Who is Self-Injuring. Most of use the counselor video for parents called How to Understand and Help My Child Who is Self-Injuring. Most of use the counselor video for parents called How to Understand and Help My Child Who is Self-Injuring. Most of use the counselor video for parents called How to Understand and Help My Child Who is Self-Injuring. Most of use the counselor video for parents called How to Understand and Help My Child Who is Self-Injuring. Most of use the counselor video for parents called How to Understand and Help My Child Who is Self-Injuring. Most of use the counselor video for parents called How to Understand and Help My Child Who is Self-Injuring. Most of use the counselor video for parents called How to Understand and Help My Child Who is Self-Injuring. Most of use the counselor video for parents called How to Understand And Help My Child Who is Self-Injuring.
know about cutting using a sharp object like a razorblade, knife, or scissors to make marks, cuts, or scratches on one's own body. But cutting is just one form of self-injury. People who self-injury also might burn, scratch, or hit themselves; bang their head; pull their hair; pinch their skin; pierce their skin with needles or sharp objects; or insert objects
under their skin. People who cut or self-injure often start doing it as young teens. Some continue to do it into adulthood. Why Do People Hurt Themselves? It can be hard to understand why people harm themselves on purpose. But it's a way some people try to cope with the pain of strong emotions, intense pressure, or upsetting relationship problems
They may be dealing with feelings that seem too difficult to bear or bad situations they think can't change. Some people do it because they feel desperate for relief from bad feelings like rage, sorrow, rejection, desperation,
longing, or emptiness. There are other ways to cope with difficulties, even big problems and terrible emotions. For other tough situations or strong emotions, it can help put things in perspective to talk problems over with parents, other
adults, or friends. Getting plenty of exercise also can help put problems in perspective and help balance emotions. But people who self-harm may not have developed ways to cope. Or their coping skills may be overpowered by emotions that are too intense. When emotions don't get expressed in a healthy way, tension can build up sometimes to a point
where it seems almost unbearable. Cutting or another self-injury may be an attempt to relieve that extreme tension. For some, it seems like a way of feeling in control. The urge to cut might be triggered by strong feelings the person can't express such as anger, hurt, shame, frustration, or alienation. People sometimes say they feel they don't fit in or
that no one understands them. A person might self-harm because of losing someone close or to escape a sense of emptiness. It might seem like the only way to find relief or express personal pain over relationships or rejection. People who cut or self-injure sometimes have other mental health problems that contribute to their emotional tension
Cutting is sometimes (but not always) associated with depression, bipolar disorders, obsessive thinking, or compulsive behaviors. It can also be a sign of mental health problems that cause people to have trouble controlling their impulses or to take unnecessary risks. Some people who self-harm have problems with drug or alcohol
abuse. Cutting and other types of self-harm often begin on an impulse. It's not something the person thinks about ahead of time. Some people who cut have had a traumatic experience, such as living through abuse, violence, or a disaster. Self-injury may feel like a way of "waking up" from a sense of numbness after a traumatic experience. Or it may be
a way of reliving the pain they went through, expressing anger over it, or trying to get control of it. What Can Happen to People Who Self-Injure? Although it may provide some temporary relief from a terrible feeling, people who self-Injure? Although it may provide some temporary relief from a terrible feeling, people who self-Injure? Although it may provide some temporary relief from a terrible feeling, people who self-Injure?
triggered it remain they're just masked over. People don't usually intend to hurt themselves permanently. And they don't usually mean to keep cutting or doing another type of self-harm once they start. But both can happen. It's possible to misjudge the depth of a cut, for example, making it so deep that it requires stitches (or, in extreme cases
hospitalization). Cuts can become infected if a person uses nonsterile or dirty cutting instruments razors, scissors, pins, or even the sharp edge of the tab on a can of soda. Most people who self-injure do attempt suicide, it's usually a person's attempt at feeling better, not ending it all. Although some people who self-injure do attempt suicide, it's usually a person's attempt at feeling better, not ending it all.
usually because of the emotional problems and pain that lie behind their desire to self-harm, not the behavior itself. Self-injury can be habit forming. It can become a compulsive behavior meaning that the more a person does it, the more they feel the need to do it. The brain starts to connect the injury to the false sense of relief from bad feelings, and
it craves this relief the next time tension builds. When self-harm becomes a compulsive behavior, it can seem impossible to stop. So it can seem impossible to stop. So it can seem too hard to resist. A behavior that starts as an attempt to feel more in control can end up controlling you. Getting Help There are better ways to deal
with troubles than cutting or other self-harm healthier, long-lasting ways that don't leave a person with emotional and physical scars. The first step is to get help with the troubles that led to the behavior in the first step is to get help with the troubles that led to the behavior in the first step is the hardest
admitting to or talking about it. But they also say that after they open up about it, they often feel a great sense of relief. Choose someone you trust to talk to at first (a parent, school counselor, teacher, coach, doctor, or nurse). If it's too hard to bring up the topic in person, write a note. Identify the trouble that's triggering it. Cutting and other types of
self-harm are ways to react to emotional tension or pain. Try to figure out what feelings or situations are causing you to do it. Is it anger? Pressure to be perfect? Relationship trouble? A painful loss or trauma? Mean criticism or mistreatment? Identify the trouble you're having, then tell someone about it. Many people have trouble figuring this part out
on their own. This is where a mental health professional can really help. Ask for help you get the help you get the help you get the help you get the help you get the
feeling this is happening to you, find another adult (such as a school counselor or nurse) who can make your case for you. Work on it. Most people with deep emotional pain or distress need to work with a counselor or mental health professional to sort through strong feelings, heal past hurts, and learn better ways to cope with life's stresses. One way
to find a therapist or counselor is to ask at your doctor's office, at school, or at a mental health clinic in your community. It can take time to overcome cutting or other kinds of self-injury. But therapists and counselors are trained to help people get through it and find inner strengths that help them heal. Then they can use those strengths to cope with
life's problems in a healthy way. Self-harm can be a way of dealing with deep distress and emotional pain. It may help you express feelings you cant put into words, distract you from your life, or release emotional pain. It may help you express feelings you cant put into words, distract you from your life, or release emotional pain. It may help you express feelings you cant put into words, distract you from your life, or release emotional pain. Afterwards, you probably feel better at least for a little while. But then the painful feelings return, and you feel the urge to hurt
yourself again. Self-harm includes anything you do to intentionally injure yourself. Some of the more common ways include: Cutting or severely scratching your bedy against walls and hard objects Sticking objects into your skin Intentionally
preventing wounds from healing Swallowing poisonous substances or inappropriate objects Self-harm can also include less obvious ways of hurting yourself in danger, such as driving recklessly, binge drinking, taking too many drugs, or having unsafe sex. Injuring yourself is often the only way you know how to: Cope with feelings
 like sadness, self-loathing, emptiness, guilt, and rage Express feelings you cant put into words or release the pain and tension you feel inside Feel in control, relieve guilt, or punish yourself Distract yourself from overwhelming emotions or difficult life circumstances Make you feel alive, or simply feel something, instead of feeling numb Whatever the
reasons for self-harming, its important to know that there is help available if you want to stop. You can learn other ways to cope with everything thats going on inside without having to hurt yourself. It puts a punctuation mark on what Im feeling on the inside! Its a way to have control over my body because I cant control anything else in my life.
usually feel like I have a black hole in the pit of my stomach, at least if I feel pain its better than feeling nothing. I feel relieved and less anxious after I cut. The emotional pain slowly slips away into the physical pain. Consequences of cutting and self-harm The relief that comes from cutting or self-harming is only temporary and creates far more
problems than it solves. Relief from cutting or self-harm is short lived, and is quickly followed by other feelings like shame and quilt. Meanwhile, it keeps you from learning more effective strategies for feeling better. Keeping the secret of self-harm is difficult and lonely. Maybe you feel ashamed or maybe you just think that no one would understand
But hiding who you are and what you feel is a heavy burden. Ultimately, the secrecy and guilt affects your relationships with friends and family members and how you feel about yourself. You can hurt yourself badly, even if you dont mean to. Its easy to end up with an infected wound or misjudge the depth of a cut, especially if youre also using drugssian to the continuous and family members and how you feel about yourself.
or alcohol. Youre at risk for bigger problems down the line. If you dont learn other ways to deal with emotional pain, you increase your risk of major depression, drug and alcohol addiction, and suicide. Self-harm can become addictive. It may start off as an impulse or something you do to feel more in control, but soon it feels like the cutting or self-
harming is controlling you. It often turns into a compulsive behavior that seems impossible to stop. The bottom line is that cutting and self-harm wont help you with the issues that made you want to hurt yourself in the first place. No matter how lonely, worthless, or trapped you may be feeling right now, there are many other, more effective ways to
overcome the underlying issues that drive your self-harm. BetterHelp is an online therapy service that matches you to licensed, accredited therapists who can help with depression, anxiety, relationships, and more. Take the assessment and get matched with a therapist in as little as 48 hours. Take Assessment HelpGuide is user supported. We earn a
commission if you sign up for BetterHelps services after clicking through from this site. Learn more How to stop cutting or self-harm, the first step is to confide in another person. It can be scary to talk about the very thing you have worked so hard to hide, but it can also be
leader, counselor, or relative. But you dont necessarily have to choose someone you are close to. Sometimes its easier to start by talking to someone you respectsuch as a teacher, religious leader, or counselorwho has a little more distance from the situation and wont find it as difficult to be objective. When talking about cutting or self-harming: Focus
on your feelings. Instead of sharing detailed accounts of your self-harm behavior focus on the feelings or situations that lead to it. This can help the person know why youre telling them. Do you want help or advice from them? Do you simply want another
talk about. You dont have to show the person your injuries or answer any questions you dont feel comfortable answering. Give the person you tell-especially if its a close friend or family member. Sometimes, you may not like the way the
person reacts. Try to remember that reactions such as shock, anger, and fear come out of concern for you. It may help to print out this article for the people you choose to tell. The better able they understand cutting and self-harm, the better able they understand cutting and self-harm can be very stressful and bring up a lot of emotions. Don't be
discouraged if the situation feels worse for a short time right after sharing your secret. Its uncomfortable to confront and change long-standing habits. But once you get past these initial challenges, youll start to feel better. Tip 2: Identify your self-harm or cutting triggers Understanding what triggers you to cut or self-harm is a vital step towards
recovery. If you can figure out what function your self-injury serves, you can learn other ways to get those needs met-which in turn can reduce your desire to hurt yourself? Sadness? Anxiety? Anger? Loneliness? Shame? Emptiness? If
 youre having a hard time pinpointing the feelings that trigger your urge to cut, you may need to work on your emotional awareness. Emotional awareness means knowing what you are feeling from moment to moment and to understand the connection between your feelings and you
actions. Feelings are important pieces of information that our bodies give to us, but they do not have to result in actions like cutting or self-harmmay sound frightening to you. You may be afraid that youll get overwhelmed or be stuck with
the pain. But the truth is that emotions quickly come and go if you let them. If you don't try to fight, judge, or beat yourself up over the feeling, youll find that it persists. Self-harm is your way of dealing with unpleasant feelings and difficult situations. If your
going to stop, you need to have alternative ways of coping so you can respond differently when you feel like cutting or hurting yourself. If you self-harm to express pain and intense emotions, you could: Paint, draw, or scribble on a big piece of paper with red ink or paint Start a journal in which to express your feelings Compose a poem or song to say
what you feel Write down any negative feelings and then rip the paper up Listen to music that expresses what yourself in a warm blanket Massage your neck, hands, and feet Listen to calming music If you self-harm
because you feel disconnected or numb, you could: Call a friend (you dont have to talk about self-harm) Take a cold shower Hold an ice cube in the crook of your arm or leg Chew something with a very strong taste, like chili peppers, peppermint, or a grapefruit peel Go online to a self-help website, chat room, or message board If you self-harm to
release tension or vent anger, you could: Exercise vigorouslyrun, dance, jump rope, or hit a punching bag Punch a cushion or mattress or scream into your pillow Squeeze a stress ball or squish Play-Doh or clay Rip something up (sheets of paper, a magazine) Make some noise (play an instrument, bang on pots and pans)Use a red marker pen to draw
on your skin where you might usually cut. Rub ice cubes over your skin where you might usually cut. Place rubber bands on your wrists, arms, or legs, and snap them instead of cutting. Professional treatment for cutting and self-harming habit, so
consider talking to a therapist. A therapist can help you develop new coping techniques and strategies to stop self-harm doesnt occur in a vacuum. It exists in real life. Its an outward expression of inner pain-pain that often has its roots in early life. There is often
a connection between self-harm and childhood trauma. Self-harm may be your way of coping with feelings related to past abuse, flashbacks, negative feelings about your body, or other traumatic memories-even if youre not consciously aware of the connection. Finding the right therapist may take some time. Its very important that the therapist you
choose has experience treating both trauma and self-injury. But the quality of the relationship with your therapist is equally important. Trust your instincts. Your therapist should be someone who accepts self-harm without condoning it, and who is willing to help you work toward stopping it at your own pace. You should feel at ease, even while talking
through your most personal issues. Warning signs that a loved one is cutting or self-harming While cutting and self-harming occurs most frequently in adolescents and young adults, it can happen at any age. Because clothing can hide physical injuries, and inner turmoil can be covered up by a seemingly calm disposition, self-injury in a friend or family
member can be hard to detect. In any situation, you dont have to be sure that you know whats going on in order to reach out to someone youre worried about. However, there are red flags you can look for: Unexplained wounds or scars from cuts, bruises, or burns, usually on the wrists, arms, thighs, or chest. Blood stains on clothing, towels, or
bedding; blood-soaked tissues. Sharp objects or cutting instruments, such as razors, knives, needles, glass shards, or bottle caps, in the persons belongings. Frequent accidents. Someone who self-injures may insist on wearing long
sleeves or long pants, even in hot weather. Needing to be alone for long periods of time, especially in the bedroom or bathroom. Isolation and irritability. Your loved one is experiencing a great deal of inner painas well as guilt at how theyre trying to cope with it. This can cause them to withdraw and isolate themselves. Understanding why your loved
one cuts or self-harms Because cutting and self-harm tend to be taboo subjects, many people harbor serious misunderstandings about their friend or family members motivation or state of mind. Dont let these common myths get in the way of helping someone you care about. People who cut and self-injure are trying to get attention. The painful truth
is that people who self-harm generally hurt themselves in secret. They arent trying to manipulate others or draw attention to themselves. In fact, shame and fear can make it very difficult to come forward and ask for help. People who self-injure are crazy and/or dangerous. It is true that many people who self-harm suffer from anxiety, depression,
eating disorders, or a previous traumajust like millions of others in the general population. But that doesn't make them crazy or dangerous. Self-injury is how they cope. Sticking a label like crazy or dangerous on a person isn't accurate or helpful. People who self-injury want to die. When people self-harm, they are usually not trying to kill
themselves they are trying to cope with their problems and pain. In fact, self-injury may be a way of helping themselves go on living. However, there is always the risk of suicide, which is why its so important to seek help. If the wounds arent
bad, its not that serious. The severity of a persons wounds has very little to do with how much they may be suffering. Dont assume that because the wounds or injuries are minor, theres nothing to worry about. Helping someone who cuts or self-harms Perhaps youve noticed suspicious injuries on someone close to you, or that person has admitted to
you that theyre cutting. Whatever the case, you may be feeling unsure of yourself. What should you say? How can you help? Deal with your own feelings. You may feel shocked, confused, or even disgusted by self-harming behaviors and guilty about admitting these feelings. Acknowledging your feelings is an important first step toward helping your
loved one. Learn about the problem. The best way to overcome any discomfort or distaste you feel about self-harm is by learning about it. Understanding why your loved one is self-injuring can help you see the world through their eyes. Dont judge. Avoid judgmental comments and criticismtheyll only make things worse. Remember, the self-harming
person already feels distressed, ashamed and alone. Offer support, not ultimatums. Its only natural to want to help, but threats, punishments, and ultimatums are counterproductive. Express your concern and let the person know that youre available whenever they want to talk or need support. Encourage communication. Encourage your loved one to
express whatever theyre feeling, even if its something you might be uncomfortable with. If the person hasnt told you about the self-harm, bring up the subject in a caring, non-confrontational way: Ive noticed injuries on your body, and I want to understand what youre going through. If the self-harmer is a family member, prepare yourself to address
difficulties in the family. This is not about blame, but rather about communicating and dealing with problems in better ways that can benefit the whole family. In the U.S. S.A.F.E. Alternatives (Self-Abuse Finally Ends) Organization dedicated to helping people who self-harm, with a helpline at 1-800-366-8288. UK Mind Infoline Information on self-harm
and a helpline to call at 0300 123 3393 or text 86463. Canada Kids Help Phone A helpline for kids and teens to call for help with issues including cutting and self-harm. Call 1800 55 1800. India Helpline (India)
Provides information and support to those with mental health concerns in India. Call 1860 2662 345 or 1800 2333 330. Last updated or reviewed on August 21, 2024 Cutting is a type of self-harm, cutting is often used as a coping mechanism for
pain, discomfort, and other distressing emotions. Therapy provides a safe space to build self-harm or nonsuicidal self-harm or nonsuicidal self-harm or nonsuicidal self-harm. Self-harm or nonsuicidal self-harm or nonsuicidal self-harm.
person makes cuts on certain body parts, such as their arms, wrists, thighs, or stomach. Similar to other types of self-harm, people often use cutting? Most people who cut are dealing with upsetting or overwhelming emotions. Cutting may help them block
distressing memories, feel more in control of their emotions, or serve as a type of self-punishment. While cutting may provide some temporary satisfaction and relief, those feelings are typically followed by shame and guilt. In some cases, compulsive cutting can lead to a dangerous cycle of self-harm and even run the risk of accidental suicide. Long-
term effects of cuttingSelf-harm isnt a diagnosable condition, but it can be a sign or symptom of one. Cutting is associated with mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and bipolar disorders, and behaviors.*
Notably, your risk of moving from self-harm to suicide may be greater if you have a history of unhealthy substance use or emotional or sexual trauma. Your risk also increases if youve self-harm to suicide may be greater if you have a history of unhealthy substance use or emotional or sexual trauma. Your risk also increases if youve self-harm to suicide may be greater if you have a history of unhealthy substance use or emotional or sexual trauma. Your risk also increases if youve self-harm to suicide may be greater if you have a history of unhealthy substance use or emotional or sexual trauma.
isolationPermanent scarringInfected woundsIncreased risk of other self-harming behaviorsIncreased risk of accidental suicide*The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides 24/7, confidential support with trained crisis counselors. If you or a loved one is in emotional distress or a suicidal crisis, please call or text 988. If youre experiencing a life-
threatening emergency or you need immediate help, please call 911. Six ways to cope with the urge to cut. Remove all cutting tools. Start by getting rid of anything
you use to self-harm, like knives, razor blades, or safety pins. By removing these items from your drawers, bags, and other hiding spots, youre distancing yourself from the means to cut. Confide in someone you trust. Cutting is often done in secret, but confiding in a trusted friend may help you find the strength to stop. If youre not sure how to start the
conversation, keep it simple: Im having a tough time right now, and Id really appreciate your support. Distract yourself in the present moment. Sit outside, and feel the warmth of the sun on your face, listen to the birds chirping, smell the freshly cut grass, and
look at the trees blowing in the wind. Create a self-care box. Self-care box should include comforting items, like photos of loved ones, cozy socks, a nice candle, and activities like puzzles or coloring books. Focus on the positives. Show yourself some compassion by starting the day with
a positive thought, like, Im worthy of love and compassion. Its also helpful to celebrate your achievements, like going a certain number of days without cutting. Find healthier coping mechanisms, like exercising, meditating, or spending time with
friends. Treatment for self-injury and cutting Cutting is often a sign that someone is struggling with their mental health. If you or someone you know is engaging in cutting or other self-harming behaviors, consider speaking with a mental health professional. Therapy offers a safe and confidential space to understand whats driving your behavior, such as
being lonely or dealing with the aftermath of a traumatic event. Once you identify the source of your pain, you can be better prepared to challenge unhelpful thought patterns and replace them with healthier alternatives. Change wont happen overnight and relapses are possible but self-awareness is an important part of healing. Talk therapy can also
help people increase self-compassion, cope with stress, and better manage their emotions. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavioral therapy (CBT), and interpersonal therapy are all considered effective for helping people manage cutting and other self-harming behaviors. If your cutting behavior is associated with an underlying
mental health condition, like depression or anxiety, your provider may also suggest medication to help manage your symptoms. Your emotions and emotions. They can also teach you new coping skills to help you feel more equipped to handle distressing emotions
Find care with RulaEveryone has their own way of dealing with difficult emotions. But if your way of coping involves cutting or other self-harming behaviors, Rula can help you find a healthier alternative. At Rula, were committed to delivering a comprehensive behavioral health experience that helps people feel seen and understood so
they can get back to feeling their best. Rula makes it easier to find a licensed therapist or psychiatric provider who accepts your insurance so you don't have to choose between affordable care and excellent care. With a diverse network of more than 15,000 providers, 24/7 crisis support, and appointments available as soon as tomorrow, were here to
help you make progress wherever you are on your mental health journey. Get started with Rula today Cutting is when a person deliberately hurts themselves by scratching or cutting their body with a sharp object. The reasons someone might do this are complicated. People who cut themselves might be trying to cope with frustration, anger, or
emotional turmoil. It might be an attempt to relieve pressure. But any such relief is short-lived and may be followed by feelings of shame or quilt. There are people who cut once or twice and never do it again. For others, it becomes a habitual, unhealthy coping mechanism. Cutting is a form self-injury not typically associated with suicide. But it can lead
to severe, even fatal, injury. Continue reading to learn more about the signs that someone may be cutting and what you can do to help. There are no easy answers as to why a person turns to cutting, though there are some general causes. A person who self-harms may: have difficulty understanding or expressing emotions not know how to cope with
trauma, pressure, or psychological pain in a healthy mannerhave unresolved feelings of rejection, loneliness, self-hatred, anger, or confusionwant to feel alivePeople who self-injure may be desperate to break the tension or rid themselves of negative feelings. It could be an attempt to feel in control or to distract from something unpleasant. It can even
be a means of self-punishment for perceived shortcomings. Its certainly not always the case, but self-injuring behavior can be associated with other conditions such as: In time, the act of cutting are: Age. People of all ages self-injure, but it tends to occur more in teenagers and young
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adults. Adolescence is a time of life when emotions and conflicts, and how to deal with them, can be confusing. Sex. Both males and females cut themselves, but its believed that girls do so more often than boys. Trauma. People who self-harm may have been abused, neglected, or raised in an unstable environment. Identity. Teens who cut may be questioning who they are or confused about their sexuality. Social circle. People who have friends who self-injury sometimes goes along with other mental health issues such as depression, anxiety disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Drug or alcohol misuse. Those who tend to cut themselves are more likely to do so if they re under the influence of alcohol or drugs. There are exceptions, but people who cut generally go through a lot of trouble to hide that fact.

People who self-harm may:frequently criticize themselveshave troubled relationshipsquestion their personal identity or sexualitylive with emotional instabilityhave an impulsive naturehave feelings of guilt, hopelessness, or worthlessnessUpsetting events can trigger the impulse to cut. If someone is cutting, they might:frequently have fresh cuts, particularly on the arms and legshave scars from previous cutskeep sharp objects like razor blades and knives on handcover up their skin even who cuts may also engage in other self-harm behaviors such as:scratching or picking at woundsburning themselves with cigarettes, candles, matches, or lighterspulling out their hairIf you discover that a loved one is cutting, reach out to them. If you find out your friend is cutting, remember that you might be able to help. What your friend needs right now is understanding, so let them know youre there for them. Its important that you talk to them without any judgement. Suggest that they talk to their parents about cutting. If they arent comfortable with that, suggest that they trust. If your every worried and dont know what to do, tell your own parents or a trusted adult. If your child is cutting, they need compassion and guidance. And they need to know that you love them no matter what. Punishing them or purposely embarrassing them will be counterproductive. Make an appointment to see your pediatrician or family doctor right away. Have your child examined to make sure there are no serious wounds or infections. Ask for a referral to a qualified mental health professional. You can also do some research on your own to learn more about self-injury, strategies for overcoming it, and how to avoid relapse. Once a therapist sets a treatment plan, support group for parents of people who self-injure. If you have a friend who is self-injuring, urge them to see their doctor or mental health specialist. They have enough on their plate, so try not to pile on with disapproval or ultimatums. Dont imply that theyre wont change until theyre ready to do so. Until then, continue spending time with them and ask how theyre doing. Let them know that you're ready to listen if they want to talk and youll support them in their recovery when they do seek help. Cutting isnt usually an attempt at suicide, but an accidental injury can quickly become life-threatening. If someone you know is bleeding heavily or appears to be in immediate danger, call 911. Cutting can exacerbate negative emotions. It can also lead to worsening mental and physical problems such as:increased feelings of guilt and shamebecoming addicted to cuttinginfection of the woundspermanent scarringsevere injury requiring medical treatmentaccidental fatal injuryincreased risk of suicideSelf-harm can turn into a vicious cycle seemingly without end but it doesnt have to be that way. Help is available. Self-harming behaviors can be successfully treated. The first step is to speak to a doctor. A mental health evaluation will determine if there are contributing conditions such as depression, anxiety, or personality disorders. Theres no drug treatment specifically for self-harming behaviors. But if there is a coexisting mental health disorder, medication may be appropriate. The treatment plan will take all this into consideration. The main treatment is talk therapy (psychotherapy). The goals are as follows: Identify triggers. Learn methods of managing emotions and tolerating stress. Learn how to replace unhealthy behaviors with positive ones. Work on relationship skills. Develop problem-solving skills. Boost self-image. Deal with traumatic events in your past. Along with individual therapy, the doctor may recommend group or family therapy. For those who have severely injured themselves or have had suicidal thoughts, short-term hospitalization may be helpful. Here are some ways people can support their own treatment: Stick to the treatment plan. Ask for help when you need it. Avoid alcohol. Dont take any drugs that havent been prescribed by your doctor. Exercise every day to help boost your mood. Eat well and dont skimp on sleep. Keep in touch with friends and family. Make time for social activities and hobbies. If someone you know is cutting, theres help available. Ask your family doctor, therapist, or local hospital for information about support groups in your area. Other resources include:

How to cut down on prednisone. How quickly can you decrease prednisone. Prednisone cutting back. How to cut prednisone in half. Cutting down prednisolone.

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