

## Cutting – Self Harm

People who cut or injure themselves are often seeking relief from psychological pain, unbearable tension, loneliness, depression, anger, an absence of feeling, or numbness. Some people self harm to feel emotions more intensely; others do it to punish themselves for being “bad”.

People who self injure go to great lengths to hide the behaviour. But there are warning signs:

- Y unexplained frequent injuries, such as **cuts and burns**
- Y wearing **long pants and long sleeved shirts** in warm weather
- Y low self esteem
- Y problems **handling emotions**
- Y problems with **relationships**
- Y hiding razor blades, smoking in their room, taking ice cubes, burnt knives
- Y participating in chat rooms with other who cut or self harm
- Y depressive behavior
- Y isolating

None of the above behaviours alone mean someone is self harming for sure but might indicate that more investigation is warranted.

**If you are self harming:**

- Y If you are hurting yourself, it is important to **begin talking** to someone you trust.
- Y People **who love you** will be concerned but they will not punish or judge you as they want you to be safe and happy.
- Y Keep a **journal** where you vent your feelings and include some positive things like things you appreciate.
- Y **Remove the objects** you use to self harm from your environment
- Y **Identify your triggers.** When you have an urge ask yourself what is going on
- Y If you cannot stop **then do something that is less harmful**, snap a rubber band or rub an ice cube on your wrist
- Y Recognize that you probably need **professional help**.

**If someone you know is self harming here is what you can do:**

- Y If you are concerned about a friend or family member, **it's okay to ask**. Just talking about self injury won't cause someone to begin hurting themselves.
- Y Offer **support** without judging or criticizing. Try not to blame, or give a negative reaction that implies their behaviour is impossible to understand.
- Y The path to **good mental health** may be a long one. Having realistic expectations can help both you and your loved one manage what may be a slow pace of change.
- Y Contact a **professional**

**Contact Family TLC as we have specialist who have worked with hundreds of people who self harm and their families.**

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