

Help for Parents Learning about Adolescent Self-Injury



Loma Linda University

Behavioral Medicine Center

Shield Intensive Outpatient Program

Your Thoughts on Self-Injury

- The behavior of self-injury?
- The kids who self-injure?
- Are you willing to examine your own beliefs ?



Non-suicidal self-injury

- We refer to it as “NSSI” or Non-Suicidal Self-Injury
- Defined as, “a deliberate injury inflicted to one’s own body that causes tissue damage, without the intent to die.”
- Important distinction ----- deliberate, without conscious suicidal intent.

Some Statistics on NSSI

- According to an international meta-analysis of 52 studies, done at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, **17 percent of adolescents** had engaged in NSSI at least once.
- A 2015 study in the Journal of Child and Family Studies found that young people who are **bullied** or otherwise rejected by peers are **more likely to self-injure** than others.

More Statistics on NSSI

- Research also finds that NSSI is a strong predictor of later suicide attempts. In a 2013 study reported in the Journal of Adolescent Health.
- Reported across a diversity of cultures
- Typically begins in early adolescence

Types of Self-Injurious Behavior

- Cutting
- Scratching
- Carving
- Picking at healing scars
- Burning
- Hair pulling
- Picking skin
- Hitting Oneself
- Head Banging
- Breaking Bones

Reasons for Self-Injury

- To sooth or calm oneself
- To release tension
- To communicate distress/ a cry for help
- To transfer emotional pain into physical pain
- To escape from feeling “numb” and empty
- An unhealthy way of coping with intense emotions



Myths about Self-Injury

- Self-injury is a failed suicide attempt
- It is done for attention or to manipulate others
- It is not a serious problem if the wounds are “not that bad”
- People who self-injure are “crazy”
- Self-injury cannot be treated

Before we go on . . .



- Let's discuss the differences between:
- Suicidal Behavior
and
- Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

Suicidal Behavior

- Viewed as an “exit strategy”
- Most often done with pre-meditated planning
- Usually involves a means of high-lethality
- Includes state of extreme helplessness & hopelessness (giving up)
- Done to “terminate” intolerable & inexpressible feeling
- Is a final solution to “end pain”

Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

- Regarded as a “coping strategy”
- Usually done very impulsively (thought about for less than an hour)
- Usually involves a means of low lethality
- Relieves and interrupts intolerable and inexpressible feelings
- Is a temporary solution to “modify pain”
- Person may get angry if viewed as “suicidal”

What can you do to help?

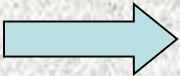
- DO NOT PANIC - - remain calm
- Don't be negative or accuse them of "just wanting attention".
- LISTEN patiently. . . don't push them to talk
- Don't tell other family members else unless your teen asks you to
- Focus on what's bothering them, *not on their cuts*



More that you can do. . .

- Do not tell them to stop
- Don't get angry and/or yell at them for it
- Don't punish them for self-injuring
- Don't continually ask to see their wounds or scars
- Treat your teen as usual. . . they are still the same person
- Seek treatment with a therapist or our Shield Program for Adolescent Self-Injury
- Remember to the entire family will need support

When to seek immediate help

- **Emotional stress**  **thoughts of suicide**
- **Always take any threats of suicide seriously**
- **Call 911 or go to the nearest ER**



We are here to help!

- Remember---if your teen had a serious medical problem such as cancer or diabetes--- ***YOU WOULD SEEK HELP***
- You cannot handle this without help either
- Remember . . . “There is no shame in getting help . . . The shame is in not getting help if your child needs it.”

Shield Program for Adolescent Self-Injury

- **LLU Behavioral Medicine Center in Redlands**
- **The program includes group therapy, individual therapy, parent education classes, multi-family therapy & medication management**
- **Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 4 – 7 PM**
- **Parents are required to attend each evening with their adolescent**

There is HOPE!!

***For information or
a free assessment,
please call:***

909-558-9113

