

Resources

For more information, call 1-800-DONT-CUT (366-8288)

Columbia College

Counseling Services - 573.875.7423

www.ccis.edu/counselingservices

Drury University

Counseling Services - 417.873.7419

www.drury.edu/counseling

Evangel University

Counseling Services/Wellness Center - 417.865.2815, ext. 7222

www.evangel.edu/offices/student-development/counseling-center

Harris-Stowe State University

Office of Counseling Services and Prevention- 314.340.5112

Lincoln University

Student Health Services - 573.681.5476

Maryville University of Saint Louis

Health & Wellness Services - 314.529.9520

www.maryville.edu/studentlife-health.htm

Missouri Southern State University

MSSU Wellness 417.625.9533

www.mssu.edu/wellness

Missouri State University

Taylor Health and Wellness Center - 417.836.4045

Missouri University of Science & Technology

Counseling, Disability Support, and Student Wellness - 573.341.4211

counsel.mst.edu

Missouri Western State University

Counseling Center - 816.271.4327

Northwest Missouri State University

University Wellness Services - 660.562.1348

www.nwmissouri.edu/wellness

Rockhurst University

Counseling Center - 816.501.4275

Saint Louis University

Student Health and Counseling Services - 314.977.2323

Southeast Missouri State University

Counseling and Disability - 573.986.6191

www.semo.edu/SAPE

State Technical College of Missouri

Student Services - 573.897.5110

Truman State University

University Counseling Services - 660.785.4014

ucs.truman.edu

University of Central Missouri

Office of Violence and Substance Abuse Prevention - 660.543.8338

www.ucmo.edu/VSAP

University of Missouri

Wellness Resource Center - 573.882.4634

wellness.missouri.edu

University of Missouri-Kansas City

Counseling, Health and Testing - 816.235.1635

www.umkc.edu/chtc

University of Missouri-St. Louis

Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Coordinator - 314.516.6369

www.umsl.edu/swbs

Westminster College

Counseling & Health Services - 573.592.5361

www.westminster-mo.edu/studentlife/chs

Information adapted from the Cornell Research Program on Self-Injurious Behavior in Adolescents and Young Adults and Helpguide.org.

Self Injury

How to Help Yourself

How to Help a Friend Who Self-Injures

This publication is brought to you by Partners in Prevention, a coalition of universities in Missouri.

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What is self-injury?

Self-injury, self-harm and self-mutilation all refer to a variety of behaviors in which an individual intentionally inflicts harm on his or her body. Self-injury is typically not undertaken with suicidal intent, rather to relieve pain or feel something in the presence of emotional numbness. While cutting is one of the most common forms, over 16 forms have been documented among the college student population.

The most common self-injury behaviors include:

- Intentional cutting of the skin
- Subdermal tissue scratching
- Burning
- Ripping or pulling skin or hair
- Swallowing toxic substances
- Self bruising
- Breaking bones

Why do people self-injure?

When emotions feel out of hand and you can't cope with your pain, you may turn to cutting yourself or other self-injury. Self-injury may be how you:

- Regulate strong emotions
- Distract from emotional pain
- Express things that cannot be put into words
- Exert a sense of control over the body
- Self-punish or express self-hate
- Self-soothe

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Helping Yourself

Self-injury may make you feel better at first, but the pain returns without any permanent recovery. You can end this dangerous cycle by learning safer, more healing ways to deal with your problems. There are professionals who can provide treatment, and ways you can help yourself. You have the power to find healthier ways to manage your pain.

Ask yourself why you want to stop. Examine your motivation for stopping so that you will be able to remember why you stopped as you go through the healing process.

Identify your self-injury triggers. Understanding why you self-injure can be a vital step toward your 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 injure yourself.

Talk to someone you trust. This could be a friend, teacher, religious leader, counselor, or relative. Support from others can help you change your situation and learn new ways to cope.

Seek professional help. Although anyone who self-injures can benefit from the help of a professional, it is especially important to seek help if your own work to stop isn't helping your behavior. A therapist can help you get to the root of why you self-injure and help you work toward stopping it.

Helping a Friend

Ask and listen. Ignoring a friend or family member's cutting and self-injury may help reinforce the feeling of shame surrounding the behavior. A lack of communication can also increase their feelings of isolation and alienation. You can help create change just by talking.

Don't judge. Avoid judgmental comments and don't dismiss the self-harm behavior as a way to get attention. Try to understand why the self-injury is taking place.

Be genuine. Let your friend or family member know that you care and understand that he or she is feeling pain. If professional help is indicated, a person is more apt to follow such a recommendation if you have genuinely listened to him or her.

Refer person to seek professional help. Be actively involved in encouraging the person to see a physician or mental health professional. 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 to learn better ways to cope with life's stresses.