

Quotes

- "I hurt myself for different reasons, depending on my state of mind. I do it sometimes as a way to get relief from the pain I am feeling inside. Other times I do because at the time I feel I deserve to be punished, or I am angry at myself, but really, I think someone else. Other times I do it to 'shout out' to the world that I need help, and here is the proof. I am an incest survivor, so I think that it's some of the pain that I have had to live with trying to escape my body." (Diane, age 30, Canada)
- "I cut myself because I feel so much pain inside that I need a way to release it all. So by cutting myself, it acts as an outlet for that pain. I guess, somehow, it feels like it's all running out of me when I see myself bleeding. I know that probably sounds gross to most people who don't do this. Yes, I am in group therapy for people who self-injure." (Chrissy, age 17, USA)

Quoted from: "I Keep Cutting Myself and I Can't Stop!" accessed January, 30, 2020, http://teen.health-secrets.net/self-injury.html

Introductory Thoughts

- There are an estimated 2-3 million Americans who have this serious problem.
- The majority of those involved in self-injury are women between the ages of 13 and 30.
- Those involved in self-injury, usually, are not wanting to kill themselves.
- It is usually in response to stress or trauma.
- It is known in the psychological world as "Deliberate Self-Harm Syndrome."
- Usually indicates a lack of coping skills

Introductory Thoughts (cont.)

- Cutting is the most common type of self-injury.
- Most agree that it is triggered by stress or anxiety.
- It is usually kept secret.
- Cutters often feel shame and guilt because of their ritual.
- They are at risk for infections and permanent scarring.
- They will tend to wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and turtlenecks even in warmer weather to cover up the marks on their bodies.
- It is a behavior that becomes compulsive and addictive.

Why?

- Many say that they do it because they feel "numb" and want to "feel alive."
- It seems to be most common among those who have been sexually abused as children.
- It is soothing to them.
- It is their way of communicating in a non-verbal way.
- It is an attempt to draw a reaction from people.



Statements

- "I am guilty. I must be punished."
- "I am not perfect."
- "They are right; I deserve this."
- "I am angry."
- "I can't feel this way any longer; hurting myself is the only way to stop my feelings."
- "I feel out of control (and other people have been in control). This way I can gain control
 (and no one can stop me)."
- "Words cannot express my pain."
- "Help!"



Common Factors

- The age of onset is between 10-16 years old.
- There was a major change in the teen's life—parent's divorce or death.
- There is a history of family violence, abuse, or sexual abuse.
- There are intense feelings of fear, hurt, anger, rejections or abandonment.
- There are feelings of loss and/or need for control.

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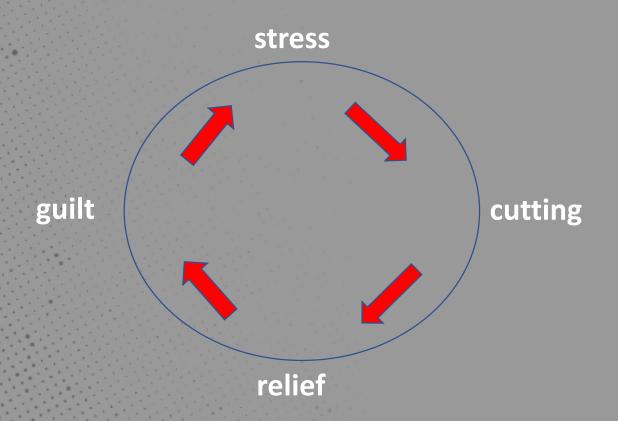


Triggering Events

- She is rejected by someone who is important to her.
- She is blamed for something over which she had no control.
- She feels inadequate.
- She has been "wronged" in some way.



Cycle of Self-Injury



Quoted from: Edward T. Welch, Self-Injury: When Pain Feels Good, (Phillipsburg, NJ: 2004), 6.



How to Help

- Be caring and compassionate. Do not overreact.
- Identify "triggers."
- Bring God into the picture.
- Share biblical principles.
- Assign homework that will include the counselee reading and interacting with the Psalms.



