

SELF-INJURY

STOP PUNISHING
YOURSELF.
YOU DIDN'T DO
ANYTHING WRONG.

RECOVER/SPRATION

WHAT IS SELF-INJURY?

- ◎ *Self-injury*, also called *self-harm*, is the act of deliberately harming your own body, such as cutting or burning yourself.
- ◎ It's typically not meant as a suicide attempt. Rather, self-injury is an unhealthy way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger and frustration.

and all her feelings
are hidden behind
that smile.

IS IT A SUICIDE ATTEMPT?

- ◉ Self-harm is not a suicide attempt. In fact, it is an unhealthy coping mechanism that may prevent someone from acting on suicidal thoughts.
- ◉ However, self-harm can increase the risk of suicide because of the emotional problems that trigger self-injuring.



FOUR COMMON TYPES OF SELF-INJURY

- ◉ Cutting (knife, glass, etc...)
- ◉ Burning (lighter, hot metal, etc...)
- ◉ Picking (picks at site until a wound is created)
- ◉ Wound interference (not letting a wound heal)

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SELF-INJURER

- ◉ Difficult to identify because seems like “a normal person”
- ◉ Normal appearance, good grades, comes from an “average home”
- ◉ Mostly females



HOW THEY KEEP IT SECRET?

- ◉ No activities requiring changing clothes in front of others (i.e. gym)
- ◉ May not have many close friends
- ◉ Often don't discuss it with anyone



SIX SIGNS OF SELF-INJURY

- ◉ Having a knife or lighter for no reason
- ◉ Do their own laundry
- ◉ Blood or burn stains inside their clothes
- ◉ Locks self in the bathroom with water running
- ◉ Make excuses for injuries
- ◉ Overly defensive when approached about it

THREE SITUATIONS NOT SELF-INJURY

- ◉ Body decorations / piercings
- ◉ Spiritual enlightenment
- ◉ Fitting in or “being cool”



CALM BAD FEELING

- ◉ While self-injury may bring a *momentary sense of calm* and a *release of tension*, it's usually followed by *guilt and shame* and the return of painful emotions.
- ◉ After injuring, they still feel bad, but not the panicky trapped feeling – sometimes described as a “calm bad” feeling



NOT A DIAGNOSIS

- ◉ Self-injury is not a diagnosable condition in and of itself, but it is linked to a variety of mental disorders, such as *depression*, *eating disorders* and *borderline personality disorder*.
- ◉ However, because self-injury is often done impulsively, it can be considered an *impulse-control behavior problem*.



WHAT CAUSES SELF-INJURY?

- ◉ There's *no one single or simple cause* that leads someone to self-injure.
- ◉ In general, self-injury is usually the result of an *inability to cope* in healthy ways with psychological pain.



COMPLEX EMOTIONS

- Self-injurers often have a hard time, expressing or understanding their emotions.
- The mix of emotions that triggers self-injury is *complex*. For instance, there may be feelings of worthlessness, loneliness, panic, anger, guilt, rejection, self-hatred or confused sexuality.



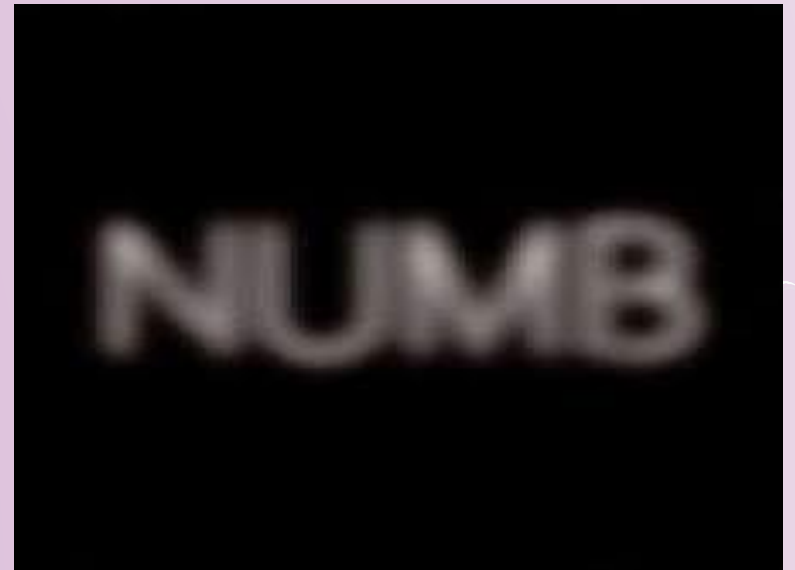
MANY REASONS WHY THEY DO IT

- ◉ To manage or *reduce severe distress* or anxiety and provide a sense of relief
- ◉ To provide a *distraction from painful emotions* through physical pain
- ◉ To feel a *sense of control* over his or her body, feelings or life situations



WHY ELSE DO THEY DO IT?

- ◉ *To feel something, anything, even if it's physical pain, when feeling emotionally empty*
- ◉ *To express internal feelings in an external way*
- ◉ *To communicate depression or distress to the outside world*
- ◉ *To be punished for perceived faults*



WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO SELF-INJURE?

- ◉ **Females.** Females are more likely to self-injure than males are.
- ◉ **Teenagers.** Most people who self-injure are teenagers and young adults, although those in other age groups also self-injure. Self-injury often *starts in the early teen years*, when emotions are more volatile and teens face increasing peer pressure, loneliness, and conflicts with parents or other authority figures.
- ◉ **Those with friends who self-injure.** People who have friends who intentionally harm themselves are more likely to begin self-injuring.

- ◎ **Life issues.** Some people who injure themselves were neglected, or sexually, physically or emotionally abused, or experienced other traumatic events. They may have grown up and still remain in an unstable family environment, or they may be young people questioning their personal identity or sexuality.
- ◎ **Mental health issues.** People who self-injure are more likely to be impulsive, explosive and *highly self-critical*. In addition, self-injury is commonly associated with certain mental disorders, such as *borderline personality disorder, depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder* and *eating disorders*.
- ◎ **Excessive alcohol or drug use.** People who harm themselves often do so while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS

- ◉ Worsening feelings of shame, guilt and low self-esteem
- ◉ Infection, either from wounds or from sharing tools
- ◉ Life-threatening problems, such as blood loss if major blood vessels or arteries are cut
- ◉ Permanent scars or disfigurement
- ◉ Severe, possibly fatal injury, especially if you harm yourself while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- ◉ Worsening of underlying issues and disorders, if not adequately treated

NEED NEW COPING STRATEGIES

- ◉ While it may seem logical, it is actually usually a bad idea to encourage someone to discontinue self-harm until healthier coping mechanisms are in place.
- ◉ Learn by seeing others do it
- ◉ It may be the only thing preventing them from acting out on suicidal thoughts.



HOW IS SELF-INJURY TREATED?

- ◉ Treatment can be difficult because self-injurers are often very secretive and unwilling to seek out help
- ◉ There's no one best way to treat self-injuring behavior, but the first step is to tell someone so you can get help.
- ◉ Because self-injury can become a major part of your life and it's often accompanied by mental disorders, you may need treatment from a mental health professional experienced in self-injury issues.

don't give up.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

- ◉ Therapy can help you *identify and manage underlying issues that trigger self-injuring behavior.*
- ◉ Therapy can also help you learn skills to better manage distress, help *regulate your impulsiveness* and other emotions, and *boost your self-image.*

~~SELF HARM~~

SELF LOVE

MEDICATION



- ◉ There are no medications that specifically treat self-injuring behavior.
- ◉ However, your doctor may recommend treatment with antidepressants or other psychiatric medications to help treat depression, anxiety or other mental disorders commonly *associated with self-injury*.
- ◉ Treatment for these disorders may help you *feel less compelled to hurt yourself*.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION

- ◉ If you injure yourself severely or repeatedly, your doctor may recommend that you be admitted to a hospital for psychiatric care.
- ◉ Hospitalization, often short term, can provide a *safe environment* and *more intensive treatment* until you get through a crisis. Day treatment programs also may be an option.



SOURCES

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