

## How Can I Get Help?

Find out what triggers make you want to cut, then find new ways to deal with them. Talking with a therapist or counselor about new ways to cope can help. It can be hard to stop but many teens have gotten help and never cut again. Next time you feel the urge to hurt yourself, try one of the methods below:

- Take a shower (with no razors)
- Go for a walk or play a sport
- Draw, paint, or write
- Listen to music or play an instrument
- Read a book, or watch your favorite movie
- Wear a rubber band and snap it

### Below is a list of additional resources that can help you cope with your pain:

- [butterfly-project.tumblr.com](http://butterfly-project.tumblr.com)
- [doorofhope4teens.org](http://doorofhope4teens.org)
- [selfinjury.com](http://selfinjury.com)

## Helping a Friend

1. Don't accuse or be combative. They need your support and understanding to talk about it. Don't judge or make them feel bad.
2. Acknowledge their feelings. Many turn to cutting to feel in control of their overwhelming feelings.
3. Share healthy ways to deal with your emotions - walk, listen to music, journal, etc.
4. Keep lines of communication open. Let them know you are concerned and want to help. Also, tell a trusted adult.

## Who Can I Talk To?

It can be really hard to talk to someone about difficult feelings. The more you open up to someone you trust, the less likely you are to hurt yourself. If you don't have a friend, parent, teacher or counselor you trust, please call us at **Teen Line**<sup>®</sup>. Our trained teens are there to listen and to help.

We are open every night and can also provide referrals for services in your area. Call **(800) 852-8336** toll-free within USA & Canada from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM PST or text **"TEEN"** to **839863** from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM PST to speak to one of our peer counselors. After hours, your call will be directed to **Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center**. You can also visit our website at [www.teenlineonline.org](http://www.teenlineonline.org)

**And remember:** Don't be too hard on yourself! The more you let your urges to self-harm pass, the easier it will be to stop hurting yourself.

**teen line**<sup>®</sup>  
teens helping teens



CEDARS-SINALA



Accredited by the American Association of Suicidology

You cut yourself to stop the pain.  
We get it.



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# Self-Injury

## What Is Self-injury?

Self-injury (also called self-mutilation) is intentionally hurting yourself physically. In fact, 5 in 10 adolescents have hurt themselves at least once. Have you? There are different types of self-injury; most common are using objects to cut or burn the skin. Some teens even write or draw on themselves with something sharp.

## What Are The Dangers Of Self-Injury?

- Although cutting may provide temporary relief, the issues continue. Nothing really changes!
- The more you self-harm, the more tolerant you become to the pain. It will take a greater amount of pain to achieve the same sense of relief as you once felt.
- Since it's hard to judge how deep you're cutting, it can lead to blood loss, stitches and hospitalization. Not all people who cut are suicidal, but it can lead to serious injuries.
- Non-sterile cutting objects can lead to severe infections, particularly if used repeatedly, such as razors, scissors, and safety pins. Burns can get easily infected, too.
- Teens that cut often can't stop. The more they do it, the more they feel they need to. It becomes an addiction.

## Why Do People Self-Injure?

**Myth:** People who self-injure want to die...

Most people who self-injure use it as a way to cope and try to take control of their pain.

There are many reasons. Some teens try it because they're curious, others because they saw it in a movie or heard about it from friends at school. Many begin on their own. Teens say when they cut or burn themselves they get a sense of relief from feeling stressed, angry, depressed or anxious. Many believe that if they feel out of control inside, they can re-gain that control by hurting their outside. When they cut or burn their body, teens may feel a slight rush because of the release of chemicals in the brain. Many start cutting to gain control, but most find that eventually it controls them.

## Recognize the Warning Signs

- Unexplained wounds or scars.
- Blood stains on clothing, sheets, tissues.
- Sharp objects in person's belongings.
- Covering up, i.e. wearing long sleeves in warm weather.
- Wanting to be alone for long periods of time.
- Irritability.
- Frequent excuses of "accidental" wounds.