



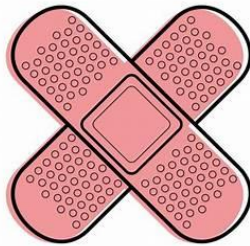
SELF-HARM

What is self-harm?

Self-harm refers to the act of self-inflicting injury without suicidal intent. These injuries may be mild or more severe, but they rarely put a person's life at risk.

Common forms of self-harm:

- Cutting, scratching, biting or burning;
- Pulling your hair or pulling your hair out;
- Taking very hot or very cold showers;
- Hitting oneself in the head or body or against hard surfaces.



Why do people self-harm?

In general, self-harm is a way to deal with difficult situations or painful thoughts and feelings. Anyone can self-harm, and for some, this happens only once.

For others, self-harm continues over time and becomes a habit that is difficult to change. When situations and feelings become too stressful or too intense, some people turn to self-harm to manage difficult emotions.

For example :

- By injuring oneself on the "outside", the person forgets the painful emotions on the "inside".
- Once the inner emotions are numb, the person might want to feel something, even physical pain.
- If a person feels devalued or guilty (with or without reason), self-harm can sometimes be a form of self-punishment.
- Self-harm can provide a sense of control.
- It can be a way to let others know that something is wrong.
- It can be a way to feel an adrenaline rush.

Whatever the reasons for self-harm, the relief it provides is short-term. Concerns and problems continue to accumulate, and the search for relief intensifies, creating a vicious and dangerous cycle.





Risk factors

Social or situational factors:

- difficult relationships with friends or family members
- problems at school or work, including bullying
- problems at home or family breakdown
- problems related to homophobia or racism.

Emotional or personal risk factors:

- feelings of alienation, loneliness and isolation
- anxiety, anger or depression
- history of trauma or violence
- family history of self-harm.

The reasons for self-harm can be complex. Self-harm is a very personal experience and it's not always easy to know why a person is doing it. In addition, a person's motivations can change over time.

Signs of self-harm

Many self-harming people work hard to keep their behaviors hidden, so much so that it can be difficult to detect them. However, here are some signs:

- Behavioural changes, withdrawal and more signs of stress or depression
- Overdressing; wearing long sleeves or long pants when it's hot
- Frequent unexplained cuts, bruises or burns
- Scars, infections
- Discovery of razors or other items that could be used to self-harm
- Blood stains in sheets

If you or someone you know is self-harming, help is available.

Équipe Santé Mentale Jeunesse
Youth Mental Health Team
CIUSSS-ODIM

Douglas
FONDATION
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RESOURCES

- **Info-Sociale (8-1-1)**
- **Your local CLSC**
- **Kids Help Line** – www.jeunessejecoute.ca
- **Friends for Mental Health** - www.asmfmh.org
- **Relief** – <https://monrelief.ca/>
Self-care for mental health problems.
- **Tel-Jeunes** – www.teljeunes.com
- **Esantementale** – www.esantementale.ca
Mental health service, help and support in your community.

THE PARENT'S GUIDE TO SELF-HARM: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW (2012)

By: Jane Smith

Jane Smith
author of *Parent's Guide to Self-Harm*
What Parents Need to Know



LIVING WITH SELF-HARM BEHAVIOUR (2016)

By: Ong Say How

