

## Definitions of Self-Injury

Self-injury remained very much a mystery until 1996 when Princess Diana revealed that she had struggled with it. It has become much more visible in society within the last ten years. Self-injury is also termed self-mutilation, self-harm, or self-abuse. It can be defined as the deliberate, repetitive, impulsive, non-lethal harming of one's self, including but not limited to;

- 1. cutting**
- 2. burning**
- 3. picking or interfering with wound healing**
- 4. infecting oneself**
- 5. punching/hitting self or objects**
- 6. inserting objects in to skin**
- 7. bruising or breaking bones and**
- 8. some forms of hair pulling**

While these behaviors pose serious risks, they may be symptoms of a problem that can be treated.

Experts estimate that 4% of the population struggle with self-injury. It has the same occurrence between males and females, even though in popular culture it can appear to be more prevalent among girls.

Self-injury, like many addictions, is often a coping mechanism to deal with some manner of internal pain, many who struggle with it also struggle with other issues such as eating disorders and alcohol and drug abuse.

While self-injury may be someone's way to cope with or relieve painful or hard-to-express feelings and is generally NOT a suicide attempt, relief is always temporary, and usually only perpetuates a destructive cycle that continues the struggle. This cycle often means that those who do not get help can become more depressed and shameful, adding to the pain and need for relief, thus perpetuating the cycle.

The Dangers of Self-Injury - While self-injury may not be about attempting suicide, the damage done while harming oneself ALWAYS carries the risks of inflicting serious, and even lethal, harm to oneself regardless of whether suicide is intended or not. Also the continued cycle of addiction and self-harm, as in substance abuse and other eating disorders can have a destructive effect on one's health both physically and mentally, and struggles worsen as time continues without treatment.

(SAFE alternatives – [www.selfinjury.com](http://www.selfinjury.com))

Self-injury, like alcohol and drug abuse and eating disorders, is addictive, and thus not something that is easy to simply 'stop'. However, while all addictions are very difficult to overcome, help and treatment are out there and available, and recovery and freedom

are possible. We believe this is true whether someone's struggles may be self injury, depression, drugs and alcohol, body image issues, sexual addiction, or other areas of brokenness.

Research shows that those who seek professional help and therapy have a very good chance of recovery, and finding relief from symptoms such as depression and anxiety as well as others. (APA, 1998)

Content taken from <http://www.twloha.com/facts>

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