

Self-Harm: Knowledge for Parents

Johanna Krauter, NCC, LPC

Self-Harm Facts and Data

How Often?

- Teens: ~17%
- College Students/Young Adults: 17% - 35%
- Adults: ~5%

Most Common Methods:

- Skin cutting (70% - 90%)
- Head banging or hitting (21% - 44%)
- Burning (15% - 35%)

Reasons Someone Might Self-Harm



Self-harm acts as a form of unhealthy coping

- Emotional Expression
- Distraction
- Creating a Sense of Control
- Self-Punishment
- Physical Grounding
- Suicidal Ideation

What are they coping with?

Depression

Anxiety

Stress

Peer Pressure/Relationships

Self-Esteem

Fear for the Future



Supporting Research: Factors and Triggers

- Distressing emotions
 - Helpless and guilty, feeling like a burden, shame, being overwhelmed, anger
- Sense of isolation
 - Family conflict, lack of friends, feeling like they don't belong or feel accepted
- Exposure to self-harm
 - Visual triggers, self-harm personal stories, “contagion”
- Relationship difficulties
 - Family, friends, peers, teammates, romantic partners
- Social comparison
 - Competing for good grades, peer comparisons, “norms”, social media
- School (and/or work) difficulties
 - Exams, deadlines, grades, hostile or unhealthy environment, pressure about the future

Supporting Research: Coping without Self-Harm

- Customized self-help strategies
 - Level of distress/mood, personal interests, timing, environment/setting, cause of distress
- The importance of distraction
 - enjoyable/soothing activities, immersive activities to divert attention, activities to release bottled up emotions
- Connectedness
 - Overcoming feelings of isolation, assistance with self-soothing, effective communication skills
- Change in the environment
 - Removing triggers, getting up and doing activities, moving to a public space
- Mimicking strategies
 - Helpful in the moment but not enough to completely get rid of self-harm as an unhealthy coping mechanism

Risk Minimization

Safety Planning:

- Identify main triggers, coping skills, and people they can reach out to
- Safe storage of tools/items used to self-harm

Relapse Response:

- Stay calm
- Communication
- Wound cleaning and treatment
- Re-assess situation and child as needed
 - Are we still in crisis mode?
 - Do we need to keep eye on them?
 - Do we need to revisit safe storage of things used for the self-harm?



Safety Plan

Know When to Get Help

What are the warning signs that you are beginning to struggle with your problem? These can include thoughts, feelings, or behaviors.

Use Coping Skills

What can you do, by yourself, to take your mind off the problem? What obstacles might there be to using these coping skills?

Reach Out to Social Support

If you are struggling to handle your problem alone, contact trusted family members or friends.

Name	Contact Info

Seek Help from Professionals

If your problem persists, or if you have suicidal thoughts, reach out for professional support.

Local emergency number:	
My mental health provider:	
Talk to someone now in the United States:	• Call 988 • If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call 711 then 988 • For online chat, visit https://988lifeline.org/chat

SAFETY PLANS WORK

There is Hope.



- 1 Write 3 warning signs that a crisis may be developing.

- 2 Write 3 internal coping strategies that can take your mind off your problems.

- 3 Who/What are 3 people or places that provide distraction?
(Write name/place and phone numbers)

	Phone
	Phone
	Phone

- 4 Who can you ask for help? (Write name/place and phone numbers)

	Phone
	Phone
	Phone

- 5 Professionals or agencies you can contact during a crisis:

Clinician _____ Phone _____

Local Urgent Care or Emergency Department:

Address _____ Phone _____

Text or call **988** or chat 988lifeline.org

- 6 Write out a plan to make your environment safer.
(Write 2 things)



988
SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Communication

Language for Parents During Times of Worry

1. I noticed...
2. I care...
3. How can I help?



Communication

- Ask questions and LISTEN
- Be prepared for the truth and remain CALM
- VALIDATE your child's feelings
- Listen to your GUT
- Let your KID steer the conversation
- Take care of YOURSELF
- Take ACTION



Communication

Conflict Resolution Skills that Aren't Just Strictly for Conflict Resolution!

- Focus on the problem, not the person
- Use “I” statements while doing your best to avoid “You” statements
- Use reflective listening
- Know when to take a time-out
- Work together to problem solve for next time



Resources

www.therapistaid.com

www.erikaslighthouse.org

www.psychologytoday.com

www.crisishotline.org

www.namigreaterhouston.org

Crisis Intervention of Houston Hotline: 832.416.1177 | Teens: 832.416.1199 (CALL) | Teens: 281.201.4430 (TEXT)

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

References

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