



Self Harm: Cutting

What is self-harm?

Self-harm is the intentional injury of body tissue without intent of suicide. The most common form of self harm is *cutting*. However, it can also be; burning, scratching, hitting body parts, pulling hair, or ingestion of toxic substances, among other things.

Why do people cut themselves?

People tend to harm themselves because of deep pain in their lives. Deep pain, generally speaking, causes anger or sadness. When a person is angry it is typically because they have been offended, abused, experienced loss of some kind, or denied something that they wanted. Likewise when someone is sad, to cope with being sad they express anger towards the cause of their sadness, whether it is a person or a circumstance. In these situations people often desire to control their environment so that whatever was causing them sadness does not happen again. If control is not an option, then self-harm can occur because self-harm is controllable, the person can do it when, how and to the degree they want to, this gives them a sense of control over their life. Another reason is to express their pain, without properly processing the pain in their lives they use self harm to say in essence, 'this is how much I'm hurting on the inside.' The physical pain has the ability, for some, to mask the emotional pain. Rarely do people harm themselves because they are curious about it. More often it is inner pain expressed outwardly. There are other causes, but these seem to be most common.

Is cutting a sin?

Yes. You were created in the image of God! The Bible says in Genesis 1:26-27, "...Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.'" This means that you have great value and worth simply for being alive. The Bible goes on to say that when God created humanity he said that it was GOOD, meaning it was perfect, it was right, it was pleasing to Him. One of Leonardo Da Vinci's masterpieces is the *Mona Lisa*; Vincent Van Gogh's famous *The Starry Night* is certainly a masterpiece, and you are God's masterpiece. An artist puts their heart and soul into creating a

masterpiece; if someone were to even slightly damage it they would be devastated. To harm oneself is to harm a masterpiece of God and it devastates Him because He loves you so much and put His heart and soul into creating you.

Already cutting yourself?

GOD LOVES YOU! The most common response to sin is hiding. In the Garden of Eden when Adam first sinned against God he hid. Why? Because he was afraid, Adam felt shame in the fact that he was exposed and naked before God. But God knew Adam's sin and pursued him nonetheless. If you are injuring yourself, DON'T HIDE. God desires to help you and heal you. However, He can only do this if you come out of hiding, confess to Him and share with someone else (James 5:19). When we bring ourselves to Christ, there is no reason to be ashamed, He has cleansed us from our sins and loves us despite our failures. Romans 8:1 tells us, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." This means that because of Christ, through His sinless life, death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead, we are now free in Him from guilt and shame. He took it upon Himself.

Moving forward

Tell someone you trust like a CSM leader or another trusted adult. This can oftentimes be the most difficult step, but also the most crucial. When you have the urge to self-harm contact the trusted adult or friend immediately. When you're tempted take some time to identify what triggers the desire to cut, write this down and share it with someone. Dependent upon the reason for cutting, it may be necessary to seek professional help from a licensed therapist. Remember, cutting is a symptom not the problem.

Going Deeper

Read and reflect on, Psalm 119:114, 116; Proverbs 25:28; James 5:16.