

Self-injury ^[1]

Dear Alice,

Like the person who wanted help for their friend who is a self-mutilator ^[2], I also have sought help. I have not found any support groups for that though. It is like an addiction, but one can't locate help like you can for example "A.A." How do self-mutilators find a support group if in fact any exist? I am in a PHP (Partial Hospital) for grief issues, and yes past sexual abuse issues. I also have a therapist, but nobody here really can answer. Can S.A.F.E. help?

FLA

Answer

Dear FLA,

It sounds like you have been working hard to find support as you heal and seek help for dealing with grief and self-mutilation. You are already taking key steps in your recovery process by connecting with resources like your therapist and medical care. While support groups for self-mutilation may be less prevalent, there are a few that have national as well as local resources that can hopefully support your healing journey further.

Self-mutilation, also known as self-harm or self-injury, can show up in a variety of behaviors and is often a coping strategy for dealing with previous trauma. People inflict self-harm through cutting, burning, pulling out hair, or drawing blood through scratching or biting themselves. Typically acts of self-injury do not result in ending one's life. However, it can cause harmful short-term and long-term impacts on a person's physical and psychological health. While many people who resort to self-harm may report temporarily feeling calm after injuring themselves, this is often followed by feelings of guilt and shame, perpetuating a cycle of emotional and physical pain.

S.A.F.E. ALTERNATIVES ^[3] is one organization devoted to providing support for those who self-injure. S.A.F.E. programs range from intensive short-term inpatient residential treatment located near St. Louis Missouri to weekly group meetings for adolescents or adults. There are support groups that follow the SAFE model in 11 different locations throughout the continental United States. However, if there isn't one near you, a good place to ask questions and find immediate support is S.A.F.E.'s 24-hour hotline: 1-800-DONTCUT.

In addition to S.A.F.E., [Self-Mutilators Anonymous](#) [4] (SMA) holds weekly support meetings in the New York City area. SMA is geared for those interested in ending self-harm behaviors and is a space to share personal stories as well as collective hope and support in recovery.

In addition to in-person options, you may want to check out online resources. There are virtual chat sessions, online support groups, and blog posts available whenever you have Internet access. Here are a few places you could look:

- [Self Mutilators Anonymous](#) offers daily online self-mutilation support group meetings.
- [GriefNet](#) [5] provides a variety of resources related to death, dying, bereavement, and other significant emotional losses.
- [Sidran Institute](#) [6] is a non-profit organization aimed at helping survivors of trauma recover from and treat symptoms of traumatic stress.
- [Healing Self-Injury](#) [7] is an online adaptation of the Cutting Edge, a former print newsletter about self-inflicted violence.

If you haven't already, you may want to consider talking with your current therapist or health care provider about specific self-injury support resources in your area. They may be able to connect you with organizations or providers with expertise in understanding self-harm and ways to create new coping strategies.

Asking for help is sometimes the hardest step on the road to recovery and healing. Your work to expand your support network will hopefully help you to feel stronger as you continue on your journey.

Alice!

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