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Resources for those who self-harm ^[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-harm. You're already taking key steps in your recovery process by connecting with resources such as your therapist and medical care. While support groups for self-harm may be less prevalent, there are a few that have national as well as local resources that can hopefully support your healing journey further.

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 S.A.F.E. model in eleven different locations ^[4] throughout the continental United States. However, if there isn't one near you, a good place to ask questions and find immediate support may be S.A.F.E.'s 24-hour hotline: 1-800-DONTCUT. In addition, S.A.F.E.'s website regularly updates a list of therapists ^[5] from multiple states are able to support individuals who self-harm and therefore may be an additional resource to find information about support groups for those that self-mutilate. Similar resources include the Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator ^[6] from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which provide locator services to help individuals find a mental health professional in their area.

If you haven't already, you may want to consider talking with your current therapist or health care

provider, and potentially other people who suffered from self-harm in the past 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. If you're a college student, you may be able to let your college counseling center know that you'd be interested in a support group and see if they know of any local resources, including potentially asking to start one on campus if it doesn't already exist. If the in-person options are unable to meet your needs, you may want to check out some of the available online resources. To find reliable resources, you may want to check who runs the organization, what their credentials are, whether they cite their sources on the site, and if they do, how reliable are those sites.

If you've asked for more resources or have tried to be more clear in your request, but your mental health professional hasn't been able to provide more help, you may want to consider finding a new provider. To explore this a little more, it may be helpful to discuss how to find the right mental health professional. Therapy can be a time-consuming, emotional, and challenging part of the recovery journey. Therefore, when looking for a mental health professional, it's worthwhile to put in the effort to find one that suits your needs, expectations, and goals. When starting the search, patients or their family may want to consider someone trustworthy, experienced, licensed, and in good standing with the state regulatory board. It's also wise to learn about the different treatment types and styles available and, most notably, trust their gut if the fit doesn't feel right. You may find another Q&A, [How to find a therapist](#) [7], helpful, as it goes more in-depth on what criteria may be most helpful when trying to find a mental health professional that meets your needs.

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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Go Ask Alice! is not an emergency or instant response service.

If you are in an urgent situation, please visit our Emergency page to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

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