

RealQuestions RealSolutions

ChristianFamilySolutions.org

We asked teens to submit their most pressing questions about mental health and wellness.

The serious submissions we received reveal the serious state of youth mental health.

The U.S. Surgeon General has sounded the alarm with a [mental health alert](#):

We need to rally around our young people.

We can start by listening to their questions.

What if you cut your wrists and your friends want to get you help but you don't want it?

By Julie Educate, MS, LPC, Licensed Professional Counselor, Christian Family Solutions

Thank you so much for being open and asking this question. I know it is not easy to ask for help. Let's talk about cutting and what to do next.

When I was in high school, most of my friends were cutting. I remember going to a friend's birthday party. We were all hanging out in her bedroom. She was frustrated with her boyfriend. She pulled out her razor and started cutting herself.

Why did she do that?

Because that was what she could control. She could not control her world, she could not control the heartache, but she could control the pain.

According to Mental Health America: "Self-injury often begins around the ages of 12 to 14, and it is most commonly the result of feelings of sadness, distress, anxiety, or confusion. Teenagers often use self-injury as a way to cope with these negative emotions. Recent studies have found that one-third to one-half of adolescents in the US have engaged in some type of non-suicidal self-injury, although some studies put the rate at 13 to 23 percent" (2022).¹

It is hard to quit cutting when that is the only coping skill you know.

Even though you do not think you want to get help for cutting, it might be time to get help to *understand your world*. You need a non-biased individual to help you navigate your thoughts. You

might not want to seek a professional yet, and that's fine. Who could you talk to? Maybe you have a parent or relative that you trust.

Maybe you have an older sibling you could open up to. Is there a teacher you enjoy talking with? (I actually went to my math teacher for guidance in high school.)

The important thing is, *talk to someone about the things you are struggling with*. If you are a Christian, you might find peace in talking to God and asking for help. Open up God's Word and let His promises pour over you. "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

It can be hard to wait for answers to some of the challenges that caused you to self-harm in the first place. In the meantime, here are some coping skills to help you with self-harm habits.

COPING SKILLS FOR CUTTING

- Whenever you want to cut, take a marker and draw on yourself. You don't have to be an artist. Just draw some hearts or stars. Color them in or use different colors to express your moods.
- Take some red food coloring and drip a couple of drops in the place where you want to cut yourself. Some individuals need only to see red to feel relief.
- If you need to feel the pain, put a couple of drops of the food coloring on an ice cube and place the cube on your wrist or body.
- Some people find relief in music. Citizen Soldier has a vast playlist of songs that represent an assortment of mental health issues. You might relate to their songs.

Self-harm is a habit, like doing drugs or being addicted to alcohol. When you are stressed, your brain hungers for relief. When you find new coping skills, your brain will stop wanting pain, and instead want the enjoyment of your new activities.

Be brave, and take control with new habits.

¹*Self-injury and youth*. Mental Health America. Retrieved June 20, 2022, from <https://www.mhanational.org/self-injury-and-youth>

Christian Family Solutions has a team of professional counselors deployed to schools, partnering with school staff to offer clinical level services to youth.

- Clinical assessment to uncover the source of the hurt and create a treatment plan
- Sessions with an experienced clinician on site or through telehealth
- Access to higher levels of care if needed to address more serious concerns
- The unconditional love of Christ to build trust and offer hope beyond healing

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