

10 understanding why you self-injure

you need to know

Everyone has a different history, and everyone has his or her own reasons for SI. The better you understand why you self-injure, the more likely you will be to find an alternative way to cope with your problems.

Here is the story of one girl who self-injures. Read it and then think about your personal history.

When I was about twelve, I accidentally cut myself with some scissors. I was using the scissors to open an envelope, and they slipped and made a long gash up my arm. The pain was horrible. A few months later I was at a party, and a girl who I thought was my best friend wouldn't even say hello. Then I saw two other girls who also ignored me. I stood there trying to talk to them, and it was like I was a ghost or something.

The next day, I asked another girl why everyone was ignoring me. She said it was because I looked like a freak and I had freaky-looking hair, and those other girls were into the preppy thing.

I wasn't trying to be a freak or anything, but I couldn't afford the preppy clothes that my friends—make that former friends—were wearing. I kept thinking about those girls and the party and how I felt like an invisible ghost and stuff, and then I saw the scissors on the table and remembered when I had cut myself.

I thought, well if I look like a freak, I might as well be a freak, so I picked up the scissors and cut my arm. Although all the stinging hurt, I just had this thing where I liked the pain and I liked to watch myself bleed.

activity 10 * understanding why you self-injure

I tried to stop because I knew it was wrong, and I eventually got better. But in the 7th or 8th grade, it started up again. Sometimes when I wanted to punish myself, I'd put a little bit of salt in my cut, or put milk, orange juice, salt, and vinegar in a cup, put a cap on the cup, shake it up, and then I'd drink it. And then of course, I'd throw up. Which is another thing I like.

I've also put a toothbrush in the back of my throat until I threw up. I've lighted candles as an attempt to calm myself, but I couldn't help but leave my finger in the flame until I got a blister or something. It's gotten worse to the point where I shut everyone out and I am stuck in my own little world. I've gotten so desperate that now if I want to cut at school, I can use a piece of wire from a spiral notebook and scratch. Sometimes I put peroxide on my cuts and watch it foam. I bite my tongue or the inside of my mouth too, until I bleed. The doctor has been trying to get me to stop for a while, and I haven't hurt myself for one month.

a self-injury questionnaire

What do you have in common with the teen who wrote this story?

activity 10 * understanding why you self-injure

What are some differences between you and the teen who wrote this story?

What are some thoughts you have about this story?

Is there a lesson behind this story?

If the girl who wrote this story were in your school, would she be someone you'd be friends with? Why or why not?
