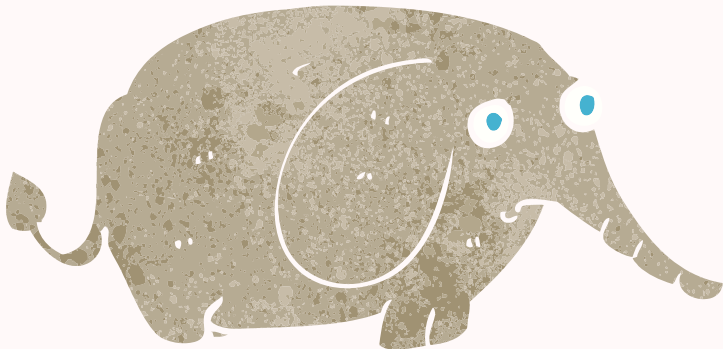
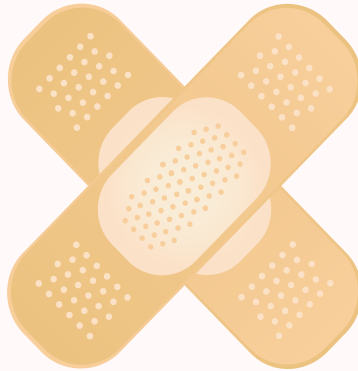
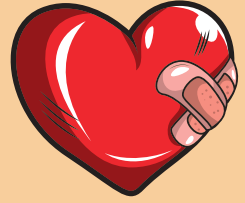


SELF- INJURY



WHAT IS SELF-INJURY?

The act of deliberately harming one's own body, without intending to commit suicide, e.g. cutting, burning/abrasions, biting, scratching, head banging, excessive body piercing.



FUNCTIONS OF SELF-INJURY

- Relieve or control negative emotions
- Feel connected to reality
- Reduce suicidal urges
- Cry for help
- Regain self-control
- Self-punishment
- Distract from problems

CYCLE OF SELF-HARM

Self-harm can keep occurring in teenagers as it helps to reduce negative emotions

Negative emotion

e.g. low mood,
frustration,
anxiety



Self-harm



Negative emotion

reduced



Feel relieved

The sense of relief trains the brain to revert to self-harm the next time negative emotions arise. Over time, self-harm becomes an automatic response. Using different ways to manage emotions can break this cycle!

WHAT CAN I DO INSTEAD?



Wait 20 minutes when you get the urge

- distract yourself by watching TV, doing housework, or preparing something to eat

Change your surroundings

- leave the place you usually self-harm at
- go outside when you get the urge



Replace the sensation

- rub an ice cube across your skin
- take a cold shower
- draw on your skin with a marker pen
- snap a rubber band on your skin

Express your feelings

- start a journal
- paint, draw or write poems
- okay to cry!



Self-soothing and calming

activities to manage emotions

- listening to music
- petting or cuddling a pet
- taking a warm shower
- light exercise



Connect with others

- talk it out with a trusty friend/family member
- make plans with friends

SOME INFORMATION FOR PARENTS...

"It's just teenage angst!"



One main cause of self-injury is an **invalidating environment**. This means that a child is not assured that their emotions are valid, accepted, and worthy. Instead, emotions may be dismissed as "no big deal".

This makes a child unable to understand or manage their emotions, causing them to express themselves in unhealthy/extreme ways.

SIGNS OF SELF-INJURY

- Wearing long sleeve-shirts/long pants even in **hot weather**
- Unexplained **wounds or scars**
- Wounds that don't seem to heal
- **Frequent injuries** that are brushed off as "accidents"
- Sharp objects **hidden** in their bag



DON'T

Ignore the problem or think that it will go away on its own

Confront your child or **panic** even if you are feeling upset or worried

Judge or criticize: This can trigger more self-injury instead

Give them an **ultimatum** or make **demands**

DO

Keep an eye out for **signs of self-injury**

Show concern calmly and privately about what you noticed

Offer to listen and see things from **their perspective**

Give them time to learn healthier ways to manage their emotions

IPMDA

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