What You Can Do to Help

- Self-injury behavior is an attempt to keep a certain amount of control, which is self-soothing.
- Let them know that you care and are available to listen.
- Encourage them to express emotion, including anger.
- Spend time doing enjoyable activities together.
- Offer to help them find a therapist or support group.
- Don’t make negative comments or tell the person to stop the self-injury behavior. People who feel worthless and powerless are even more likely to self-injure.
- If your child is self-injuring, prepare yourself to address the difficulties in your family.
  o Start with expressing feelings.
  o This is not about blame. It’s about learning new ways of dealing with family interactions and communication that will help the entire family.

Referrals

Contact your primary care provider or call
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, Division of Psychiatry,
Psychiatric Intake Response Center: 513-636-4124 available 24 hours a day.

Crisis Numbers:
24-hour Crisis Line: 281-CARE (281-2273)
877-695-6333

Call to schedule appointments:

**Hamilton County**
Children’s Hospital Psychiatric Intake-PIRC 513-636-4124
Talbert House 513-221-4673
St Joseph’s Orphanage 513-741-3100
Camelot Community Care 513-961-5900
Children’s Home of Cincinnati 513-272-2800

**Butler County**
Butler Behavioral Health 513-881-7189
Access Counseling Services 513-649-8008
Children’s Diagnostic Center 513-868-1562

**Warren County**
Solutions Mental Health 513-228-7800
Warren Outpatient Services 513-932-4337

**Clermont County**
Child Focus 513-688-8280
Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services. 513-345-8555

**Kentucky**
North Key Community Care 859-331-1900
Children’s Home of Northern Kentucky 859-261-8768

**Indiana**
Lawrenceburg Community Health 812-537-1302

[Image of a child]
What is self-injury?
Self-injury is a deliberate, intentional injury to one's own body that causes tissue damage or leaves marks for more than a few minutes.

Self-injury is done to cope with an overwhelming or difficult situation.

Types of self-injury
- **Cutting** – making cuts or scratches on your body with any sharp object, including knives, needles, razor blades or fingernails. The arms, legs and front of the body are the areas most commonly cut.
  - These areas are easy to reach
  - Cuts or scratches can be hidden under clothing.
- **Branding** – burning yourself with a hot object
- **Friction burn** – rubbing a pencil eraser on your skin
- **Picking at the skin** or re-opening wounds, causing damage
- **Hair pulling** – pulling out hair from any part of the body. This can leave patchy bald spots on the head.
  - Wear hats, scarves and wigs to hide bald spots
- **Hitting, bone-breaking, punching, head-banging**

Who self-injures?
- Majority are young adults. Usually starts at 10-16 years old and behaviors usually last 5-10 years
- Females are more likely to use self-cutting
- Males also self-injure by cutting, burning, or self-battery
- 1% of the U.S. population and 13% of teens self-injure
- People who self-injure are **not** usually seeking to end their own life

Reasons for self-injuring
- Relieves intense feelings of anger, sadness, shame, guilt, loneliness
- Gives a sense of control over your body and emotions
- Dealing with physical pain is easier than dealing with emotional pain
- Feeling so numb or “dead inside” that seeing your own blood helps you feel alive
- Results in a sense of calm or peacefulness afterward

Clues that teens may be self-injuring
- Mood swings
- Low self-esteem
- Poor impulse control
- Sadness/tearfulness
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Trouble expressing emotions verbally
- Disappointed in self
- Unable to identify positive aspects in their life
- Tendency to dress in long sleeves and long pants even during hot weather
- Resistance to being unclothed
- Patterns of making excuses to avoid being in activities such as physical education classes, sporting events, and outdoor summertime activities that require undressing or exposing their skin