

Alternatives to Cutting and Self-Harm

Some people cut or self-harm to try to cope with pain or strong emotions, intense pressure or upsetting problems. It may be a way for them to feel control in a situation they feel helpless in. It can be a way to express pain they can't put into words. It can be a way to feel something (even if it's pain) at a time they are having trouble being able to feel anything at all.

The relief that comes from self-harm does not last long. It can quickly be followed by feelings like guilt or shame. It can become addictive. **It's possible to hurt yourself badly.**

Finding coping techniques or finding other outlets can help in times a person feels the need to cut. Below are ideas to focus on instead of self-harming

To express pain/intense emotions:

- Draw/Paint/Color
- Start a Journal/blog/vlog
- Write a story or poetry
- Compose music
- Play a musical instrument
- Scribble on paper
- Create something in clay
- Sing
- Talk to yourself
- Build/Craft something

To release tension or vent anger:

- Exercise
- Punch a cushion
- Throw socks
- Use a stress ball
- Make Noise/Scream as loud as you can
- Squeeze clay
- Stomp your boots
- Instead of cutting, cover yourself in band-aids
- Write the names of special people or thoughts on your arms
- Tear up an old newspaper
- Draw slash lines on paper

To calm or sooth yourself:

- Take a hot shower or warm bath
- Pet or cuddle a dog or cat
- Wrap yourself in a blanket
- Massage your neck, hands or feet
- Listen to calming music
- Hug a pillow or stuffed animal
- Paint your nails
- Watch a favorite movie
- Re-read a favorite book
- Go for a nice walk or drive
- Sit in a cafe and people watch
- Count ceiling tiles or lights
- meditate

Because you feel disconnected/numb:

- Talk to friends
- Take COLD shower
- Hold Ice in the crook of your leg or arm
- Chew something strong like chili, lemon or peppermint
- Snap a rubber band on your wrist
- Focus deeply on a

- piece of chocolate as you eat
- Blow up a balloon and pop it
- Talk to a therapist or counselor
- Connect online with help forums
- Concentrate on things that have made you happy in the past

Things that inspire you and to focus on instead of self-harm:

- Listen to music
- Read a new book
- Watch a youtube personality that inspires you
- Cook/Bake
- Eat your favorite foods
- Perform 1 act of kindness
- Memorize a song
- Volunteer somewhere

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www.LGBThotline.org