

Breaking the Cycle of Self-Harm

Participants Guide

Objectives

This workshop will cover:

- Overview of **Trauma Invested Practices**
- Defining **self-harm**
- **Strategies and resources** for families

✓ Defining Trauma

- Trauma is an exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous events overwhelm a person's capacity to cope.
- Keep in mind the experience does not have to be life threatening to trigger a trauma response.

✓ Impact of Trauma

Early childhood trauma affects every aspect of children's stress regulation. Trauma can attribute to a child's inability to find and sustain a comfortable level of arousal.

- Low energy
- Lack of motivation
- Aggression
- Defiance

Trauma Invested Practices: The Foundation



✓ The Three Rs to Intervention

- **Relationship:** Just one safe, connected adult can help build resilience in a child
- **Responsibility:** Follow through on what you say or promise and express importance of following through even in difficult times
- **Regulation:** Emotional regulation strategies start in the body and move to the mind.



Defining Self-Harm

- Self-injury is the act of deliberately harming body tissue (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 2019).

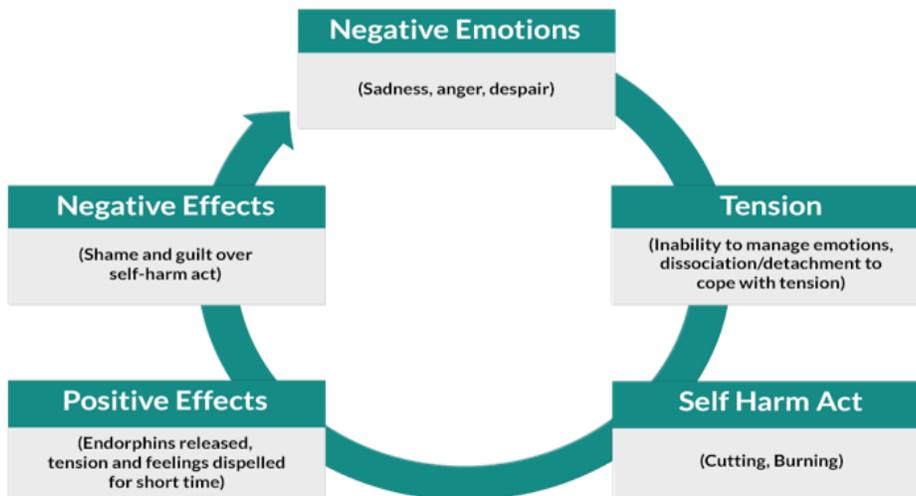


Why Do People Self-Harm?

- Inability to regulate from heightened emotions
- Distract themselves from their negative feelings
- Feel something physical, due to apathy
- Develop a sense of control over their lives
- Self-hatred/Poor self-esteem
- Express emotions



Cycle of Self-Harm





Things Caregivers Should Avoid

- Yelling/Lectures/Harsh punishments
- Invasion of privacy
- Ultimatums/Threats
- Language that may cause guilt or shame
- Acting shocked or appalled by their behavior
- Talking about self-injury in front of others
- Trying to teach what you think they should do
- Denial that the child is self-harming as a way of coping
- Keeping the child from seeing friends – but monitor who they are seeing
- Taking the child's self-injury tools away
- Over-scheduling or putting too much pressure on child to perform
- Self-blame for the child's behavior



Helping Strategies

- Validate the child's feelings.
- Be a respectful listener before offering an opinion.
- Speak in a calm, comfortable tone.
- Offer reassurance.
- **Questions to Ask:**
 - How do you feel before self-injuring?
 - How does self-injury make you feel better?
 - What is it like for you to talk to me about hurting yourself?
- Foster a protective home environment.
- Provide guidelines around social media.
- Practice using positive coping skills together.
- Practice and model your own self-care.



Resources

- <http://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu>
- Healing Self-Injury: <https://www.audible.com/pd/Healing-Self-Injury-Audiobook/151593358X>
- SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text **TalkWithUs** to 66746
- The Crisis Text Line: text **TALK** to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
- Make a list of your own local resources (Hot lines, Warm lines, Crisis Response)