

SELF-INJURY WARNING SIGNS

Individuals who self-injure are often very good at hiding it from others. They may feel shame and fear judgemental reactions. Sometimes a self-injurer will recognize that they have a serious problem and seek help, but more often parents/caregivers/friends will detect that something is wrong.

Warning Signs

- Frequent injuries (i.e., cuts, bruises, burns) with suspicious explanations.
- Wearing pants and long sleeves in warm weather (to cover injuries).
- Wearing bangles, bracelets and wristbands (to cover injuries).
- Low self-esteem.
- Difficulty handling emotions, easily overwhelmed.
- Extremely sensitive to rejection.
- Self-defeating comments and attitude.
- Extreme emotional ups and downs (due to the cycle of self-injury).
- Difficulty functioning at school, work or home.
- Relationship problems.
- Avoiding sports or other activities that would require showing more of one's body.
- The presence of behaviours that often accompany self-injury: eating disorders, drug/alcohol misuse, excessive risk-taking.
- Discovery of tools used for self-injury (broken disposable razors, lighters, un-bent paper clips).
- Bloodied wads of tissue or toilet paper, blood on towels or clothing.
- First aid supplies being used quickly.
- Rubbing arms, especially wrists, through sleeves (cuts often itch while they are healing).
- Withdrawing from activities once enjoyed.
- Increased time alone
- Increased time with peers who self-injure.