

hurting
yourself

hurting yourself

how to take care of yourself when you feel the urge to hurt yourself

Words: The Icarus Project
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theicarusproject.net



Have you ever hurt yourself?

Have you ever thought of hurting yourself?

This zine is for **YOU!!!**

Contents

Self-injury is a common behaviour in our society	6
Did you know a lot of people self-injure?	8
Making wounds visible	13
Harm Reduction	19
How do you care for yourself?	23
Nothing to be ashamed of	28
Rituals that include injuries or the infliction of pain	29
Hurting yourself is not the problem	31
Who gets to define what self-injury is about?	32
Bodies are landscapes of who we are	45
Resources	47
About me	50
About The Icarus Project	51

Self-injury is a common behaviour in our society. What do you think is self-injury? Why?

- working very hard
- smoking
- running a marathon
- dieting
- not getting enough sleep
- exercising excessively
- not exercising at all
- piercing
- drinking alcohol
- walking on high heels
- getting tattoos
- playing football
- eating an unhealthy diet
- mountaineering
- living with someone who insults you
- skateboarding
- ballet
- getting cosmetic surgery
- having unprotected sex
- wearing a corset
- kinky sex / BDSM
- fasting
- working in a job you hate
- driving dangerously
- getting into fights
- skydiving
- BASE jumping
- undergoing psychoanalysis
- working even though you are sick
- depilating (waxing etc.)

What other examples can you think of?

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Who decides what is self-injury and what isn't?

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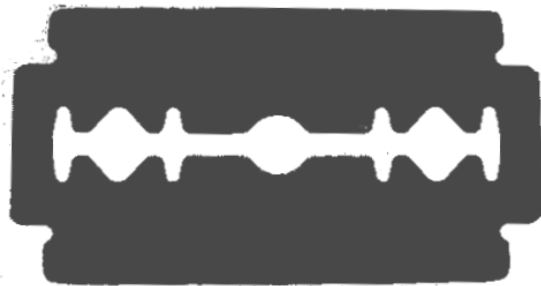
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Did you know a lot of people self-injure?

Nobody knows exactly how many people hurt themselves. Many keep it a secret. But we know for sure that you are not alone. A lot of people self-injure. All sorts of people: men, women, young people, old people, . . .

It can help to hear about other people's experiences.



Pain has been a part of cultural and religious traditions all over the world all through history. The chapter **Rituals** gives a few examples. Even though not all of these traditions are benign their existence shows that the self-infliction of pain or injuries is not as strange or extraordinary as some want to believe.

You can listen to Ruta Mazelis in this **interview**. She has cut herself for many years and talks about what it was like.

<http://www.madnessradio.net/madness-radio-ruta-mazelis-cutting-edge-self-injury-9-27-06>

There are people at **The Icarus Project** forums who hurt themselves or have in the past. They talk about their experiences and share what helps them. You can just read the posts or sign up and post your experiences.

<http://theicarusproject.net>

You can order the newsletter **The Cutting Edge** and read about other people's experiences and share your own.

<http://healingselfinjury.org/archivedissues.html>

Here are some things people at The Icarus Project have written:

Do you know the three populations where 'self-harm' is most prevalent? Captive animals. Prisoners. Young women who are survivors of abuse, especially rape.

I used to be convinced I was ugly, and it led me to want to self-harm... I also used to self-harm because I was afraid of my sexuality.

It was a really clear, simple thing I could focus on in a small period of time that would pull me back to the present. It cut through the fog and from there I could purge something - cry, scream, whatever - and then usually sleep.

It was a really difficult experience. Understanding what I did, and that I did it in order to care for myself (which is undoubtedly a GOOD thing!!!) was helpful. Forcing myself to stop wasn't.

Did you know that nearly every culture throughout the entirety of human history has used pain and the infliction of pain (often self-inflicted or inflicted by family members/religious leaders) as a rite of passage, a means of inducing an altered state of consciousness, as part of healing ceremonies (both physical and spiritual), and as part of religious ceremonies?

I still grapple with the difference between body modification and cutting - IS there a difference? I'm not so sure that getting a stranger to rub ink in an open cut for \$150 is more ok than cutting myself at home for free.

I cut to try and control myself and to create feeling during the periods of where I have to deal with the silence of myself.

Self-harming behaviour occurs in a "depersonalised" state where the subject is removed emotionally from their sense of self. While commonly associated with borderline personality disorder, self-harming behaviour turns up in all sorts of people.

What girls at the **Young Women's Empowerment Project**

(YWEP) say:

Some girls also find cutting or injuring themselves as a soothing form of self care. This led us at YWEP to re name what some people call 'self injury or self mutilation'. We now call it 'Self Harm Resilience'. We call it this because so many girls who filled out the Girls Fight Back Journal said that using controlled self injury was a practice that they said was an important form of coping. Girls said that they weren't doing this to hurt, they wrote they were doing it to feel better. Many girls wrote stories of body modification, like giving themselves and their friends tattoos and piercings. Respondents talked about reclaiming their body through body modification. 'Body modification can mean body autonomy to girls' according to one journal writer. Other girls wrote about more complicated forms of self harm resilience like breaking bones or making cuts or burns on their skin. Rather than judge this as 'bad' or 'dangerous', we decided to use harm reduction as a way to understand this. We respect that girls wrote these stories of self harm resilience in the section of our journal that asked 'how do you heal or take care of yourself'. Its important to remember that everyone uses Self Harm Resilience for different reasons. For example, Self Harm Resilience was identified as a way for girls to be in control of their own bodies. One girl talked about self harm resilience as being empowering because she was hurting herself as opposed to someone else hurting her. Self Harm Resilience can be a way to prevent or come out of disassociation. Some girls said that it can be a way to deal with being triggered because it draws you back into your body and into the present moment.

Making wounds visible

What different types of wounds can you think of?

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What 'counts' as wound and what doesn't?

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Who gets to decide whether or not a wound counts?

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Has ever a kid proudly made you admire a multicoloured plaster? Or insisted on getting one for even the smallest scratch? Have you ever left your signature on a friend's plaster cast? Have you asked anybody how they came to have a certain scar?



Then you know that **visibility** can somehow play a role in coping with being wounded.

Somatic wounds can be visible in various ways:

- red marks
- missing limbs
- swellings
- palsies

Equally caring / coping / healing can have a visual expression:

- bandages
- scabs
- plaster bandages
- scars
- stitches
- crutches



But how do we make **these** wounds visible?

- broken promises
- broken hopes
- broken relationships
- lost opportunities
- wrong choices
- disappointments
- disconnectedness
- losses
- defeats
- changes
- fears
- confusion

How do we care for wounds that are invisible?

How do we talk about invisible wounds?

How do we commemorate them?

How do we express that they shaped what we are today?

How do we visualize healing?

Self-mutilation is generally seen only as a negative response to trauma. But when trauma cannot be expressed, other forms of communication become necessary. As gestural communication, self-mutilation can reorganize and stabilize the trauma victim's world, providing a 'voice on the skin' when the actual voice is forbidden.

Janice McLane, *The Voice on the Skin* (1996)

Thinking about placebo surgery . . .

Placebo surgery means that the skin, tissues, and even bones are cut like in real surgery but the main task of the surgery is not done. In many cases people get better nonetheless, just as if they had had real surgery.

You can read about placebo surgery in these articles, or find more articles yourself:

[Sham surgery \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Placebo Surgery? \(2008\)](#)

[Placebo Surgery Shows Surprising Results \(2004\)](#)

[Placebo Surgery Trial Studied For Parkinson \(2004\)](#)

[Knee Surgery Proves No Better Than Placebo \(2002\)](#)

[Doctors drill into patients' heads in placebo surgery \(1999\)](#)

Why does placebo surgery help?

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I needed
desperately
to see
that
I could heal,
so
I slashed
and
I burned
and
I watched
myself heal.

Inga Muscio. Slash an' Burn.

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction means that there are ways to care for yourself even though you can't or don't want to stop a potentially risky behaviour. If you drink, for instance, you can make sure that you don't drink and drive. If you use drugs you can make sure you use clean syringes and needles. The idea is to reduce as much harm as possible while keeping up the desired effects.

Even though you hurt yourself you may not want to cause permanent damage. There are a lot of harm reducing things you can do when you hurt yourself. What works for you depends on what aspect of the experience is most important for you. For instance:

If the **pain** is most important there are a lot of ways to cause pain that maybe cause less damage to your body than what you do now.

If **bleeding** is important you can make sure not to cut an artery so it won't become life threatening. If you cut you can use a clean knife or blade and maybe disinfect your skin (with alcohol for instance).

If **marks on your skin** or scars are important you can try if writing or painting on your body helps, or maybe getting a tattoo, piercings, or other body modifications. Some people say they help them customize their bodies in order to feel at home.

You can also reduce harm by caring for yourself **after** having hurt yourself. You can cool, disinfect, or bandage injuries. You can rest or sleep. If necessary go to the ER. People there often can't understand, and they might hold you in hospital for a few days, even against your will. But bullying ER staff should never keep you from caring for yourself when the damage is too big for you to cope with on your own.

If you allow somebody else to hurt you always agree on a **safe word** that means: Stop immediately!

You can try to replace the hurting with something else entirely, like exercising or relaxation, whatever works for you. Perhaps the **How do you care for yourself?** section gives you some ideas.

When I hurt myself the **most important** experience is ...

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Which of the below harm reduction ideas would you like to try?

What ideas do **YOU** have?

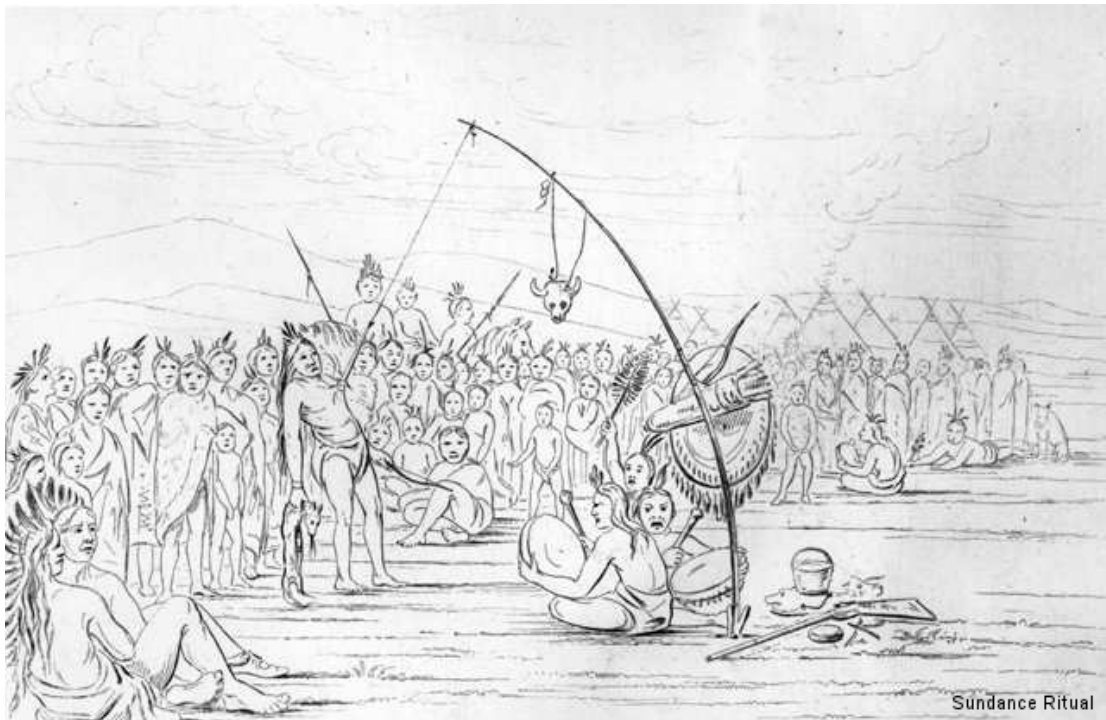
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Harm Reduction Ideas

- pulling and letting go of an **elastic band** round your wrist
- you get a burning sensation with an ointment that contains **capsaicin**
- bite into a **chili**
- hold an **ice cube** in your hand or on your body
- use a **snap bracelet**
- have a **hot (not scalding) shower**
- have an **icy cold shower**
- let **cold water** run over your wrists
- write or paint on your skin**
- binding **tape** around one's arm (take care to keep circulation going!)
- exfoliate yourself** (e.g. with salt or coffee grounds)
- get (henna) **tattoos**
- get **piercings**
- desinfect** your skin before you cut
- use **clean** knives / blades to cut
- especially:** don't cut or pierce with objects that had contact with somebody else's **blood**
- heparin** ointment helps with bruises - **don't apply on open wounds!**
- try diverse **grounding** techniques (see **self-care** section for ideas)
- depilate** your body

 If you need a burning sensation - have you tried **hot wax**? It causes a sting without necessarily causing much damage. But be careful! **Don't** use beeswax as it has a high melting point (147° F/64° C – this may not sound much but the wax stays on the skin for a while and sorta seals it which can do more damage than direct contact with a flame, and the wax near the flame is even hotter.) Some sex shops sell special candles with a low melting point that might work for you. As they risk to be expensive you can try to find paraffin candles with lower melting points (113° F/45° C). BDSM how-tos might give further info.

 seek **medical help** for injuries if necessary



How do you care for yourself?

You are deserving of love, respect, and care exactly as you are.

The most important person to care for yourself is . . . **YOU!**

Caring for yourself can be difficult. First of all you need to find out:

- ▶ What do you like?
- ▶ What does feel good?
- ▶ What makes you feel safe?

It is like a quest for gold. You will come across a lot of dirt. Just keep searching. The only criteria is that it (sometimes) feels good.

It is very important you do not only care for yourself when you feel bad!!! Would you only drink water just before you die of dehydration? That might be too late. Mabe the water wouldn't help you any more at that point.

An inner stance of **mindfulness** can be very helpful.

Mindfulness means you check in with yourself and figure out what you want and feel. Are you tired? Angry? Are your boundaries violated? Most things are far easier to deal with and influence when they are still small.

Collect things and lists of activities that you like and that have been helpful in the past, or ideas what you might want to try. Your collection can be like a **first aid box** or a **survival kit**.

Post it at **The Icarus Project** so others can be inspired by your ideas. You can also be inspired by other people's kits (we call them 'mad maps').

Libraries may also help you find more ideas. They have books on yoga, stretching and relaxation, and coffee-table books that are nice to look at. You can photocopy what you need. Often, they have also music and CDs with guided relaxation exercises.

The following pages give a few examples. There is a lot of stereotypically female-gendered stuff. Just scrap everything you don't like and create your own list.

- hot showers / baths
- a cuddly toy
- reading
- some poems you like
- a specific scent
- a scented candle
- your favourite bath oil or shower gel
- small objects that remind you of good memories
- photographs of friends
- a CD with your favourite music
- your favourite magazine
- a book you want to read
- letters from friends
- a letter to yourself that reminds you how awesome you are
- a pebble or stone or piece of wood to hold in your hand
- a marker to write on your body
- a diary and a pen
- paper and pencils or watercolours if you like to draw or paint
- a list of yoga asanas that you like
- a list of stretching exercises that feel grounding
- a CD with a guided relaxation exercise (e.g. progressive muscle relaxation)
- write a long letter
- work on a scrap book
- learn a poem by heart
- icy cold showers / baths
- a list with phone numbers of supportive people
- a list with emergency phone numbers
- get a massage or give yourself a massage (be very aware of what feels good and what doesn't and make sure to remember it!)
- acupuncture
- CD with nature sounds (e.g. thunderstorm)
- join in some postcrossing (www.postcrossing.com)
- emergency medication

- Sex (you can have Sex with yourself if you're alone)
- things to care for your injuries like plaster or bandages
- tape or elastic bandages to wrap around your arms to feel grounded
- tea bags of your favourite tea
- think of your most beautiful memory in all details
- expose a book (www.bookcrossing.com)
- meditate (but make sure to give it a few tries, meditation isn't something that will instantly make you feel good)
- chocolate or something else you like to eat
- a body lotion or massage oil that you like
- a childhood toy
- write a fuck-you-list (figuring everybody you are currently angry at)
- visit an exposition
- an ointment with capsaicin that gives a warm and burning sensation to the skin that can help to feel grounded
- play a drum (you do not need a real drum, every object has its own sound)
- hum a tune you like or sing
- sit on a hard floor and lean against a hard wall to feel grounded
- dance
- rock your body back and forth to soothe yourself
- go for a walk
- watch a DVD
- think of new ideas for your survival kit
- meet a friend
- hold an ice cube in your hand
- let cold water run over your wrists
- go to cinema
- read this zine
- ear-plugs
- learn how to juggle
- focus on your breath

- a warm scarf or a blanket
- care for a potted plant
- play with a yo-yo
- spend a day in bed
- a coffee-table book to look at the pictures
- if you are religious pray or attend a ritual
- a bowl or a bag of buttons, or dry beans, or beads or very clean coins and just funnel them through your fingers over and over
- make the room dark or hide in a dark space
- focus on something completely uninteresting in the room and try to make your mind a blank to lessen panic (focal point)
- a mind-numbing but addictive and distracting computer game
- daydream
- bird watching
- hang out with animals
- white noise
- browse the shelves of a public library
- hang out in cyberspace (or maybe keep away from cyberspace for a while)
- write your own zine

Healing is a daily thought process, a series of infinite questions and choices, a skill that is not taught, much less revered, in our culture.

Inga Muscio, *Slash an' Burn*.

Nothing to be ashamed of

Self-injury is rarely talked about. There is a lot of shame around the issue.

It's maybe a good idea to think carefully about who should know about your self-injury and who shouldn't. Some people have a rather superficial grasp of what's going on and might not be of much help. But don't judge yourself for what you're going through.

Shame is dispensed more generously for some things than for others. Think of the person who self-injures in order to retain some sense of control, and the person who is aggressive towards their spouse / kids / employees for the same purpose.

Behaviours are not pathologized in the same way depending on who is displaying them and what standards their surroundings are accustomed to.

Sometimes hurting yourself is the lesser of all available evils. When you don't have the tool you need you use the tool you have.

Oversimplified paradigms, like right/wrong, desirable/not desirable, sane/insane, don't help anybody. Life is multifaceted. Self-injury has always been part of the human experience. There's nothing to be ashamed of.

Rituals that include injuries or the infliction of pain

The **Sun Dance** (or Sundance) is a religious ceremony practiced by a number of Native American and First Nations peoples, primarily those of the Plains Nations. Each tribe has its own distinct practices and ceremonial protocols. Many of the ceremonies have features in common, such as specific dances and songs passed down through many generations, the use of traditional drums, the sacred pipe, tobacco offerings, praying, fasting and, in some cases, the piercing of skin on the chest or back for the men and arms for the women. Source: [Wikipedia](#).

Modern processions of hooded **Flagellants** are still a feature of various Mediterranean Catholic countries, mainly in Spain, Italy and some former colonies, usually every year during Lent. For example in the commune of Guardia Sanframondi in Campania, Italy, such parades are organized once every seven years. Some Christians in Philippines practice flagellation as a form of devout worship, sometimes in addition to self-crucifixion (during the end of Lent season). Very similar practices exist in non-Christian traditions, including actual flagellation amongst Shiites (commemorating the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali), as well as traditions such as whipping women (while spanking men) in a Taoist temple on the Chinese New Year. In modern times, it has been speculated that the more extreme practices of mortification of the flesh may have been used to obtain altered states of consciousness for the goal of experiencing religious experiences or visions; medical research has shown that great pain releases endorphins which can have such effect, and even get some fetishists addicted to pain. Source: [Wikipedia](#).

Part of Tendai Buddhism's teaching is that enlightenment can be attained in the current life. It is through the process of self denial that this can be achieved, and the Kaihogyo is seen as the ultimate expression of this desire. The **Kaihogyo** is a set of the ascetic physical endurance trainings. In the first 100 days, withdrawal from the challenge is possible, but from day 101 onwards the Monk is no longer allowed to withdraw; he must either complete the course or take his own life. The mountain has many unmarked graves from those who have failed in their quest, although none date from the 20th/21st century. Only 46 men have completed the 1,000-day challenge since 1585. Source: [Wikipedia](#).

A **cilice** was originally a garment or undergarment made of coarse cloth or animal hair (a hairshirt) used in some religious traditions to induce some degree of discomfort or pain as a sign of repentance and atonement. It was in common usage in monasteries and convents throughout history up until the 1960s, and has been endorsed by popes as a way of following Christ. Source: [Wikipedia](#).

Since at least the mid-19th century, a group of Catholic flagellants in New Mexico called *Hermanos de Luz* ("Brothers of Light") have annually conducted reenactments of Jesus Christ's **crucifixion** during Holy Week, in which a penitent is tied but not nailed to a cross. Some Catholics are voluntarily, non-lethally crucified for a limited time on Good Friday, to imitate the suffering of Jesus Christ, although the Church greatly discourages this practice. A notable example is the ceremonial re-enactment that has been performed yearly in the town of Iztapalapa, on the outskirts of Mexico City, since 1833. Devotional crucifixions are also common in the Philippines. Worshipers drive thin nails through the palm of the hand, a step is used to stand on, and the period is short, not a full crucifixion. Although the country's dominant Catholic Church disapproves of the ritual, the Filipino government says it cannot stop the devotees from crucifying and whipping themselves. The health department insists that those taking part in the rituals should have tetanus shots and that the nails used to pierce their limbs should be sterilized. In many cases the person portraying Jesus is first subjected to flagellation and wears a crown of thorns. Source: [Wikipedia](#).

The **Day of Ashura** is of particular significance to Shi'a and Alawite Muslims, who consider Husayn (the grandson of Muhammad) Ahl al-Bayt the third Imam and the rightful successor of Muhammad. As suffering and cutting the body with knives or chains have been prohibited by Shi'a marjas like Ali Khamenei, Supreme Leader of Iran, some Shi'a observe mourning with blood donation and flailing. Yet some Shi'ite men and boys, considered heretics by some Muslim scholars, slash themselves with razors or swords and allow their blood to run freely. Certain rituals like the traditional flagellation ritual using a sword, involving the use of a zanjeer (a chain with blades) are also performed. These are religious customs that show solidarity with Husayn and his family. People mourn the fact that they were not present at the battle to fight and save Husayn and his family. Source: [Wikipedia](#).

Hurting yourself is not the problem

Some people will tell you that self-injury is BAD BAD BAD.

What do you think?

I think: Most things aren't either good or bad. It depends on the function for that specific human in that specific moment. Suffering is bad. And suffering is increased when it is not allowed to talk openly about self-injury.

Hurting yourself is a coping mechanism. I am convinced it sometimes helps people to stay alive. Many coping mechanisms have a downside to them, that's nothing unusual.

Hurting yourself is not the problem. The problems are the things that make you do that.

Hurting yourself can be a **starting point**: This is what you have found to help you cope right now. Maybe there are more (and even more effective) things to help you cope.

The goal is not necessarily to stop hurting yourself. The goal is that you feel better. That might imply to stop hurting yourself – or not. It does imply that you find things you enjoy. It does imply that you take care of yourself as best you can.

Who gets to define what self-injury is about?

Instead of having mental health professionals define for you what self-injury is about or what it isn't, you can explore your experience yourself.

The following questions can help you discover what the self-injury does for you. This is not a diagnostic test of any sort! These questions are only for you.

If you feel bad about a question leave it out. If you want you can come back to it later. You can think about why this question feels bad but don't force yourself to.

There is no specific order. Just start with any question you feel comfortable with and perhaps curious about.

It can help to write your ideas down. You can print these pages, or take some extra paper.

Important: If you feel overwhelmed by your feelings while answering these questions just walk away, and do something to care for yourself!!! You can always come back later if you want.

How do you feel about hurting yourself?

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What did you do to hurt yourself? What are you thinking of maybe doing if you haven't hurt yourself yet but feel the urge?

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When you last hurt yourself, what had the day been like before? How did you feel? Did anything special happen?

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Do you remember how you felt before hurting yourself?

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Are there any thoughts that make you hurt yourself? Can you write them down?

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Is there a point where you know / decide that you are going to injure yourself?

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How did you feel while doing it? Did you feel pain?

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At what point did you stop hurting yourself? Did anything happen? Did your feelings change? If yes, in what way?

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How did you feel after hurting yourself?

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Is there a difference how you feel directly afterwards and some time later?

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Do you care for your injuries? How?

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What feels relieving or helpful about the self-injury?

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What is most important for you, for instance, feeling something, bleeding, etc.? What's the point you start to feel better?

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Is there a way to reduce harm when you hurt yourself while still preserving the helpful effects? (See the [Harm Reduction](#) section.)

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Can you think of other ways of injuring yourself that maybe cause less damage?

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Did you or would you like to try other things that cause intense sensations or pain but don't necessarily injure?

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Is there anything that feels good that you can do for yourself regularly?

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How do you feel about doing things that feel good to yourself when you don't injure yourself?

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Do others know that you injure yourself? How do you feel about that?

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Do you want others to know about it? Who would you want to know?

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Who should get to know under no circumstances?

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If someone already knows - how did they react?

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What did their reaction feel like to you?

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Did anything about their reactions feel bad? What was it?

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Was there anything that felt good and helpful? What was it?

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How would you like people to react? In an ideal world - what would they say / do? (You can wish for everything even if it seems completely unrealistic!)

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Are there things you don't want them to do / say?

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People who feel safe and who you can contact for support:

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People who you don't want to have contact with in crisis:

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What comes to your mind first when you think about your body?

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What do you like about your body?

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Are there parts of your body that are less valuable than others?

Why?

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Are there parts of your body that you would not injure?

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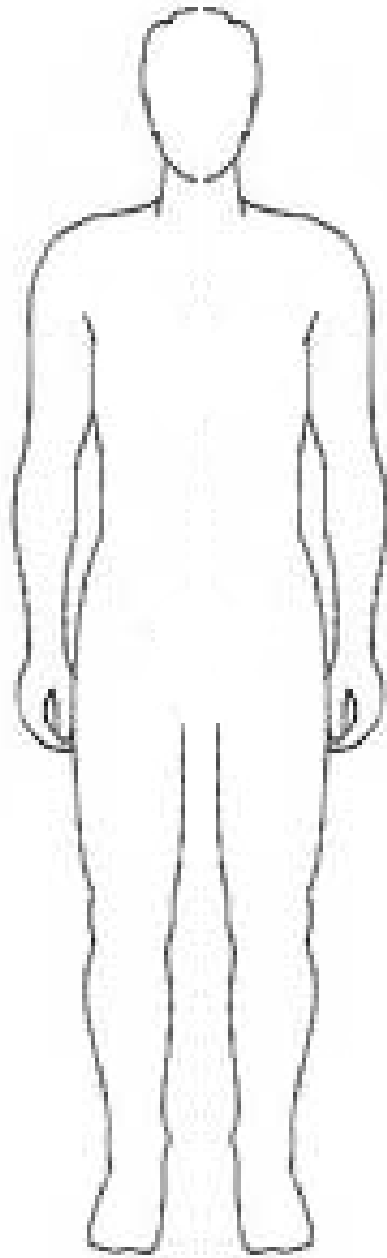
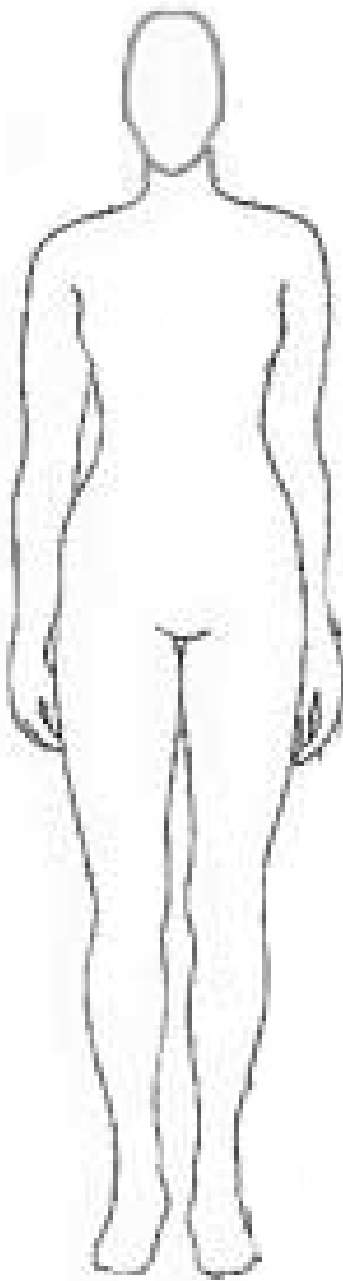
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Bodies are landscapes of who we are

You can draw your body (just the outline). If you have a big sheet of paper (you can stick several small sheets together) you can lie down on the paper and let someone draw your outline on the paper with coloured cray or a marker. You can then complete it with symbols for things that are important for you (e.g. your interests, your dreams). You can mark wounded or sore places. You can use different colors for how you feel about your body (e.g. red = I like this part of my body, blue = I don't like this part of my body).



Resources

Interview with Ruta Mazelis who self-injured for many years

<http://www.madnessradio.net/madness-radio-ruta-mazelis-cutting-edge-self-injury-9-27-06>

Website for people who hurt themselves

<http://healingselfinjury.org>

Newsletter The Cutting Edge

<http://healingselfinjury.org/archivedissues.html>

Articles

<http://healingselfinjury.org/resources.html>

Poems and prose

<http://healingselfinjury.org/survivorexpressions.html>

Links

<http://healingselfinjury.org/links.html>



Non-fiction

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The Icarus Project (TIP) Publications

Navigating the Space Between Brilliance and Madness

<http://theicarusproject.net/publications/navigating-the-space-reader>

Harm Reduction Guide To Coming Off Psychiatric Drugs

<http://theicarusproject.net/HarmReductionGuideComingOffPsychDrugs>

Friends Make the Best Medicine

<http://theicarusproject.net/icarus-downloads/friends-make-the-best-medicine+>

'Depression' in 20 words or less

<http://theicarusproject.net/art/depression-20-words-or-less>

Crooked Beauty

Movie about TIP co-founder Jacks Ashley McNamara by Ken Paul Rosenthal

<http://www.crookedbeauty.com>

Madness Radio

<http://www.madnessradio.net>



About me

I have injured myself during many years. I cut my arms and wrists with knives and blades. I punched my head or hit it against walls. I carefully hid both what I did and my wounds.

In a society where emotions are seen as somehow less important than sound skin, and less real, I needed a biologically real wound in order to tell myself: I hurt and this hurting is real.


It was a really difficult experience. I thought I had gone completely crazy. But worse than the experience itself was the stigma around it.

The more extreme forms of self-injury only ever appeared under the influence of SSRIs and stopped immediately after going off these drugs. But I had experienced self-harm tendencies before, like biting the backs of my hands.

I don't self-injure today. And I haven't for many years. Understanding what I did, and that I did it in order to care for myself was helpful. Forcing myself to stop wasn't.

I honour my scars. Cutting has helped me claim ownership of my body.

This zine reflects my experiences. I share the vision of [The Icarus Project](#) where my standpoint and many other standpoints are welcome.

The background of the page is white, featuring several stylized yellow bird silhouettes in flight. The birds are scattered across the page, with some appearing larger and more prominent than others. They are all facing towards the right side of the page, suggesting a sense of movement and direction. The silhouettes are simple, with no internal details, and their wings are spread in various stages of a stroke.

The Icarus Project
envisions
a new culture and language
that resonates with
our actual experiences
of 'mental illness'
rather than trying to fit our lives
into a conventional framework.

theicarusproject.net

Self-injury is a common behavior in our society. Only a few forms are seen as problematic. Shame thwarts an open exchange about experiences. "Hurting yourself" is a workbook that aims at encouraging reflection and generating awareness of various different aspects of self-injury from a non-coercive, self-compassionate, and harm reduction perspective.

