

**Teen Self-Injury: Working Toward Healthy Coping Skills**

*Featuring*  
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**Agenda**

- Introduction
- Self-Injury Overview
- Identifying Self-Injury
- Responding Effectively
- Treatment
- Healthy Coping Skills
- Families for Depression Awareness
- Q & A



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**Education about mental health matters**

**You are doing the right thing:** According to a 2019 study, for a cohort of young people who previously attempted suicide, having trusted adults to turn to, and for those adults to have been educated about suicide prevention and adherence to treatment, substantially reduced teen suicidal behavior.



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**Depression and self-injury**

- Watch our Understanding Teen Depression webinar: Overview of teen depression; communication strategies; treatment options; where to get help; what to do if help is refused.
- Self-injury most commonly co-occurs with depressive disorders (e.g., Major Depressive Disorder).<sup>1</sup>
- In a study of adolescents with depression, non-suicidal self-injury increased the odds of having a suicide attempt by 5.4 times.<sup>2</sup>



1. Washburn, J., Aldridge, D., Antoniewicz, T., Gebhardt, M., Juzwin, K. R., Mitkess, D., ... Yourek, A. (2014). *Self-Injury: Simple Answers to Complex Questions* (First). Hoffman Estates, IL: Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital.

2. Asarnow JR, Porta G, Spirito A, et al. Suicide attempts and nonsuicidal self-injury in the treatment of resistant depression in adolescents: findings from the TORDIA study. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. Aug 2011;50(8):772-781.

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**Jason Washburn, Ph.D., ABPP**



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**Self-Injury Overview**



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## What is non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI)?

**"The deliberate, self-inflicted destruction of body tissue without suicidal intent and for purposes not socially sanctioned"**

- International Society for the Study of Self-Injury



## What are other names for self-injury?

### By any other name...

- Parasuicide
- Self-Harm
- Self-Harm Behavior
- Self-Directed Violence
- Self-Abuse
- Suicide Gesture
- Self-Mutilation
- Deliberate Self-Harm
- Self-Inflicted Injury
- Self-Destructive Behavior
- Cutting or Self-Cutting
- Suicide-Related Behavior



## Is "cutting" the only method of NSSI?

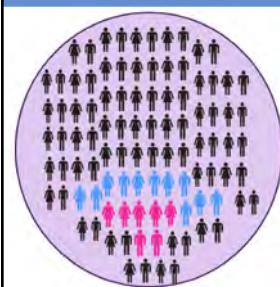


- 'Cutting' is the most known and common, but is by no means the only method.
- Out of 578 patients, 79% report engaging in two or more methods of self-injury.<sup>1</sup>
- NSSI may present differently between males and females.<sup>1</sup>
  - Males: burning, hitting
  - Females: cutting, scratching

1. Washburn, J., Aldridge, D., Antoniewicz, T., Gebhardt, M., Juzwin, K. R., Mitckess, D., ... Yourek, A. (2014). *Self-Injury: Simple Answers to Complex Questions* (First). Hoffman Estates, IL: Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital.



## How common is NSSI?

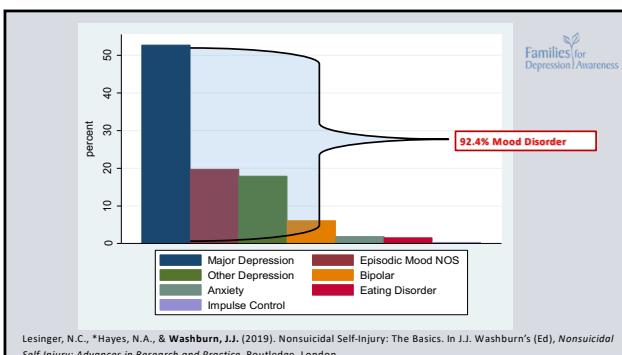


Approximately **18%** of adolescents self-injure at least one time

- **7%** experience serious NSSI

Average age of onset is between 12 and 15 years old

- NSSI behavior does not discriminate. Affects people of all genders, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.



## How is NSSI different than suicide?

	Suicidal Self-Injury	Non-suicidal Self-Injury
Injuries	Potentially life-threatening	Mild-to-moderate; not lethal
Reason	To die; end it all; escape; stop the pain	To cope; persist; feel better; continue on
Frequency	Infrequent	Frequent

Kerr et al., 2010; doi: 10.3122/jabfm.2010.02.090110; Mars et al., 2014; doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjs5954

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### The reason behind self-injury matters

Understanding why someone self-injures is the first step to figuring out how to help them stop.

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### Reasons why adolescents self-injure

Level of emotional pain exceeds the teen's ability to cope.

Reflections how the teen feels inside

**NSSI "works"**

- Brings some relief
- Stops constant emotional pain
- Distracts from problems

Can be learned from and reinforced by others

Increases tolerance for pain

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### Identifying Self-Injury



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### Observe physical marks

- Number of injuries
- Repetition of injuries
- Stage of healing
- Placement of injuries
  - arms, legs, or stomach
- Injury clusters
- Shape, size, and direction of injury
- Type of wound

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### Observe behavioral signs

- Having numerous "accidents"
- Becoming uncomfortable when talking about how a wound occurred
- Providing nonchalant explanations of multiple or repeated wounds
- Attempting to cover-up certain parts of the body (e.g., long sleeves or pants in hot weather)
- Refusing to put on a bathing suit or seeking doctor's excuse to avoid wearing clothing for participation in sports

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## Responding Effectively



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### Do's and don'ts for talking with teens

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Don't</b> be judgmental</li> <li>• <b>Don't</b> overreact</li> <li>• <b>Don't</b> think of self-injury as a way to get attention</li> <li>• <b>Don't</b> recommend a replacement behavior for self-injury</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do</b> focus on the behavior not the identity</li> <li>• <b>Do</b> encourage code words</li> <li>• <b>Do</b> use a functional model to understand self-injury</li> </ul>
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Washburn, J., Aldridge, D., Antoniewicz, T., Gebhardt, M., Juzwin, K. R., Mitkess, D., ... Yourek, A. (2014). *Self-Injury: Simple Answers to Complex Questions* (First). Hoffman Estates, IL: Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital.

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### Take action: non-suicidal self-injury

<b>Steps to take</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Assess immediate danger</b> and the severity of the injury; seek medical attention if appropriate</li> <li>2. <b>Respond with calm concern in private</b> E.g., "I notice that you have wounds on your arms and know that this can be a sign of cutting. Are you injuring yourself?"</li> <li>3. <b>Ask *respectfully curious* questions</b> E.g., "Where on your body do you tend to hurt yourself?" or "Do you find yourself in certain moods when you injure yourself?"</li> <li>4. <b>Engage the young person in identifying next steps</b> E.g., "I'm concerned about you continuing to hurt yourself. Let's talk to someone about how we can identify better ways to cope"</li> <li>5. <b>Find a provider for a formal evaluation</b></li> </ol>
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### Important crisis contacts

Call **9-1-1** for emergencies

<b>NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE</b> 1-800-273-TALK (8255) <a href="http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org">suicidepreventionlifeline.org</a> 1-800-273-8255	<b>CRISIS TEXT LINE</b> Text HOME to 741741	<b>TREVOR</b> LGBTQ CRISIS HOTLINE CALL 1-866-488-7386 1-866-488-7386
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**Treatment**

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### Goals of treatment

**Initial Goal**  
Replace dangerous forms of coping with safe/effective forms of coping

**Overall Goal**  
Assist with developing healthy, positive, and proactive ways to respond to problems and distress

**Ultimate Goal**  
No self-injury



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### Effective treatment options

**Individual talk or group therapy**

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy
- Family Therapy

**Medication**

- Takes time to find right medication/dosage
- Monitor for positive effects and side effects
- Alcohol and drugs interfere

**Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)**

**Hospitalization (Inpatient Program)**



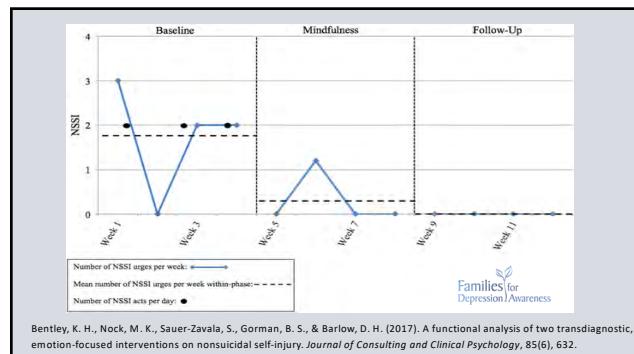
**Other interventions:**

- "SEEM" (take care with Sleep, Exercise, Eating, Mindfulness)
- Self-help
- Support groups
- School staff and resources

**Key to Treating NSSI: Emotion Regulation**



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### Healthy Coping Skills

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### Healthy coping skills

- Talking with friends
- Spending time with pets
- Listening or playing music
- Exercising
- Writing in a journal
- Coloring or crafting
- Getting adequate sleep
- Holding family game night
- Noticing when you need a break – and taking it!



Visit our website for more family stress-relief ideas:  
[familyaware.org/stress-relief-activities/](http://familyaware.org/stress-relief-activities/)

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When the urge to self-injure is strong

**Distraction Techniques and Alternative Coping Strategies**

<http://bit.ly/copingPDF>

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**Remember to take care of yourself**

- Practice self-care: you can't take care of others if you don't take care of yourself (watch our Coping with Stress webinar for ideas)
- Get support from family, friends, support groups, etc.
- Revisit these materials when you need a refresher
- Find and go to a therapist of your own

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**About Families for Depression Awareness**

**Families for Depression Awareness**

**Our Mission**

We help families recognize and cope with depression and bipolar disorder to **get people well and prevent suicides**.

Families for Depression Awareness is a national nonprofit organization providing education, training, and support.

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**Our Philosophy**

Depression and bipolar disorder affect the **whole family**

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**Teen Depression Program**

We have trained 29,500+ people since we launched the Teen Depression Program in 2010.

- Teen Depression national webinars and in-person workshops in MA
- Teen (and Young Adult) Speakers
- Teen Depression Resource Cards
- Teen Videos, Family Stories, and Expert Interviews
- Instagram @familyawareteens

**Teen Speakers Program**

Contact Devin Shmueli to learn more  
781-890-0220 or Devin@familyaware.org

**Our Website**

**Free Webinars**

Register today!  
[www.familyaware.org/trainings](http://www.familyaware.org/trainings)

	<b>Understanding Teen Depression with Dr. Mary Fristad</b>		<b>Coping with Stress and Depression in the Workplace with Marianne Clyde, LMFT</b>
	<b>Bipolar Disorder: Beyond the Basics with Martha Tompson, Ph.D. and Dr. Pata Suyemoto</b>		<b>More Than Mood: Depression Symptoms with Dr. Alice Medalia</b>

**Using insurance to pay for treatment**

- "Isn't that Covered? What Families Need to Know About Mental Health and Insurance" webinar
- "Ask the Experts: Overcoming Insurance Barriers and Accessing Mental Health Care" interviews
- "Practical Tips and Essential Information About Medical Debt and Surprise Billing" interviews
- Family stories, fact sheets, and more

Visit [familyaware.org/healthinsurance](http://familyaware.org/healthinsurance)

**Stories and Interviews**

**Written and audio expert interviews such as**

- Talking to your Teen About Depression
- Diagnosis and Treatment
- Family Communication
- How to Find and Pay for Treatment
- Family History

plus **personal stories** about how families have addressed and managed depression and bipolar disorder

**Web Tools**

**Publications**

**Custom Teen Resource Cards**

**Thank you!**

To our expert presenter, Jason Washburn!  
And the Teen Depression Program funders who support our work:

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IAM Strong Foundation

**And thank you, too!**

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Make a donation at [www.familyaware.org](http://www.familyaware.org) and THANKS!

**Questions and Answers**

**Wrap up**

- Complete our online survey to at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TDMARCH2020> to be entered for a chance to win a free copy Dr. Jason Washburn's book!
- Make a family action plan
  - [www.familyaware.org/actionplan](http://www.familyaware.org/actionplan)
- Visit [www.familyaware.org](http://www.familyaware.org) to learn more, volunteer, and donate

**Thank you for participating!**