



Myths & Facts About Suicide and Nonsuicidal Self-Injury

Statement	Answer
Self-Injury	
1. Only young people self-harm.	Fiction: Anyone can self-injure (self-harm).
2. Self-harm is more than just cutting, burning and things we can see.	Fact: Excessive exercise, pinching oneself, increased drinking, overdose with non-fatal intention, sabotaging relationships, staying with people who treat you terribly, pulling hair and mixing meds with alcohol can all be forms of self-injury.
3. Self-harm is a failed suicide attempt.	Fiction: Intention is to harm self, not kill self.
4. Self-harm can be a good thing.	Fact: It may stop suicide, perhaps sacrificing a part of the body to save the whole. Self-harmers often say there is a build-up of pressure—harming can be like opening the lid of a boiling pot to give some release. So, it can temporarily be a relief until new coping strategies are learned, and/or an underlying mental health problem is treated.
5. People who self-harm are attention seekers.	Somewhere in between: They are attention needers. They may not have the words to communicate their needs and may feel they do not have anyone to confide in.
Suicide	
1. If you ask a person about his or her suicidal intentions, you will encourage the person to kill themselves.	Fiction: The opposite is true. Asking someone directly about their suicidal feelings will often lower their anxiety level and act as a deterrent. Your openness and concern in asking about suicide will allow the person experiencing pain to talk about his/her problems. This may allow the person with suicidal thoughts to feel less lonely or isolated, and perhaps a bit relieved.
2. Once a person is seriously considering suicide, there is nothing you can do.	Fiction: Most suicide crises are time-limited and based on unclear thinking. Persons attempting suicide are generally looking for a solution or an escape. They generally do not see any other solutions.

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<p>3. A person who attempts suicide will always be “suicidal.”</p>	<p>Fiction: Most people who are at risk feel suicidal for only a brief period in their lives. With proper assistance and support, the person will probably never be suicidal again.</p>
<p>4. Improvement following a suicidal crisis means that the risk of suicide is over.</p>	<p>Fiction: Most suicides occur within three months after the onset of a period of improvement, when people have the energy to turn their suicidal thoughts and feelings into action. Relatives and physicians should be especially vigilant during this time.</p>
<p>5. Suicide happens without warning.</p>	<p>Fiction: Studies reveal that a person who is suicidal generally gives many clues and warnings regarding their suicidal intentions. Alertness to these cries for help may prevent suicidal behavior.</p>
<p>6. Suicide occurs across all classes of people.</p>	<p>Fact: Suicide is neither a rich man’s disease nor the poor man’s curse. Showing no class prejudice, suicide is represented throughout society.</p>