



Sexual Assault Response Services *of Southern Maine*

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SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SELF INJURIOUS BEHAVIOR

For most people who do not deliberately injure themselves, the act of self-injurious behavior is puzzling. In fact, because of the confusion and lack of information on this subject, individuals who do self-injure are often faced with a world of disbelief, disgust and even horror. For these reasons, and many more, individuals who self injure often feel isolated, alone and removed. The following is a list of reasons individuals have given for self-injurious behavior:

- Escape from emptiness, depression and feelings of unreality
- In order to ease tension
- Relief: physical pain can help to manage otherwise unbearable emotional pain
- Expression of emotional pain
- Escaping numbness: many of those who self-injure say they do it in order to feel *something*, to know that they're still alive
- Obtaining a feeling of euphoria
- Relief of anger: many self-abusers have enormous amounts of rage within, and afraid to express it outwardly, some individuals injure themselves as a way of venting these feelings
- Exerting a sense of control over one's body
- Grounding in reality
- Maintaining a sense of security
- Expressing or repressing sexuality
- Expressing or coping with feeling of alienation

Help, Hope, and Healing