



## Newsletter March 2014

Tena Koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei,  
Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kam Na Mauri, Greetings to all!



**Data base: 5561 Whanau Carers.**

**From the National Office:**

**Your voices:**

**Cutting /Self-mutilation**

(Not a pleasant subject but something we must be aware of) we are repeating this January 08 article again due to an increase in calls about this.

Emma's mum first noticed the cuts when Emma was doing the dishes one night. Emma told her mum that their cat had scratched her. Her mum seemed surprised that the cat had been so rough, but she didn't think much more about it.

Emma's friends had noticed something strange as well. Even when the weather was hot, Emma wore long-sleeved shirts. She had become secretive, too, like something was bothering her. But Emma couldn't seem to find the words to tell her mum or her friends that the marks on her arms were from something that she had done. She was cutting herself with a razor when she felt sad or upset.

### What Is Cutting?

Injuring yourself on purpose by making scratches or cuts on your body with a sharp object — enough to break the skin and make it bleed — is called cutting. Cutting is a type of self-injury, or SI. Most people who cut are girls, but guys self-injure, too. People who cut usually start cutting in their young teens. Some continue to cut into adulthood.

People may cut themselves on their wrists, arms, legs, or bellies. Some people self-injure by burning their skin with the end of a cigarette or lighted match.

When cuts or burns heal, they often leave scars or marks. People who injure themselves usually hide the cuts and marks and sometimes no one else knows.

### Why Do People Cut Themselves?

It can be hard to understand why people cut themselves on purpose. Cutting is a way some people

try to cope with the pain of strong emotions, intense pressure, or upsetting relationship problems. They may be dealing with feelings that seem too difficult to bear, or bad situations they think can't change.

Some people cut because they feel desperate for relief from bad feelings. People who cut may not know better ways to get relief from emotional pain or pressure. Some people cut to express strong feelings of rage, sorrow, rejection, desperation, longing, or emptiness.

There are other ways to cope with difficulties, even big problems and terrible emotional pain. The help of a mental health professional might be needed for major life troubles or overwhelming emotions.

For other tough situations or strong emotions, it can help put things in perspective to talk problems over with parents, other adults, or friends. Getting plenty of exercise can also help put problems in perspective and help balance emotions.

But people who cut may not have developed ways to cope. Or their coping skills may be overpowered by emotions that are too intense. When emotions don't get expressed in a healthy way, tension can build up — sometimes to a point where it seems almost unbearable. Cutting may be an attempt to relieve that extreme tension. For some, it seems like a way of feeling in control.

The urge to cut might be triggered by strong feelings the person can't express — such as anger, hurt, shame, frustration, or alienation. People who cut sometimes say they feel they don't fit in or that no one understands them. A person might cut because of losing someone close or to escape a sense of emptiness. Cutting might seem like the only way to find relief or express personal pain over relationships or rejection.

People who cut or self-injure sometimes have other mental health problems that contribute to their emotional tension. Cutting is sometimes (but not always) associated with depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, obsessive thinking, or compulsive behaviours. It can also be a sign of mental health problems that cause people to have trouble controlling their impulses or to take unnecessary risks. Some people who cut themselves have problems with drug or alcohol abuse.

Some people who cut have had a traumatic experience, such as living through abuse, violence, or a disaster. Self-injury may feel like a way of "waking up" from a sense of numbness after a traumatic experience. Or it may be a way of re-inflicting the pain they went through, expressing anger over it, or trying to get control of it.

## **What Can Happen to People Who Cut?**

Although cutting may provide some temporary relief from a terrible feeling, even people who cut agree that it isn't a good way to get that relief. For one thing, the relief doesn't last. The troubles that triggered the cutting remain — they're just masked over.

People don't usually intend to hurt themselves permanently when they cut. And they don't usually mean to keep cutting once they start. But both can happen. It's possible to misjudge the depth of a cut, making it so deep that it requires stitches (or, in extreme cases, hospitalisation). Cuts can become infected if a person uses non sterile or dirty cutting instruments — razors, scissors, pins, or even the sharp edge of the tab on a can of soda.

Most people who cut aren't attempting suicide. Cutting is usually a person's attempt at feeling better, not ending it all. Although some people who cut do attempt suicide, it's usually because of the emotional problems and pain that lie behind their desire to self-harm, not the cutting itself.

Cutting can be habit forming. It can become a compulsive behaviour — meaning that the more a person does it, the more he or she feels the need to do it. The brain starts to connect the false sense of relief from bad feelings to the act of cutting, and it craves this relief the next time tension builds. When cutting becomes a compulsive behaviour, it can seem impossible to stop. So cutting can seem almost like an addiction, where the urge to cut can seem too hard to resist. A behaviour that starts as an attempt to feel more in control can end up controlling you.

### **How Does Cutting Start?**

Cutting often begins on an impulse. It's not something the person thinks about ahead of time. Shauna says, "It starts when something's really upsetting and you don't know how to talk about it or what to do. But you can't get your mind off feeling upset, and your body has this knot of emotional pain. Before you know it, you're cutting yourself. And then somehow, you're in another place. Then, the next time you feel awful about something, you try it again — and slowly it becomes a habit."

Natalie, a high-school junior who started cutting in middle school, explains that it was a way to distract herself from feelings of rejection and helplessness she felt she couldn't bear. "I never looked at it as anything that bad at first — just my way of getting my mind off something I felt really awful about. I guess part of me must have known it was a bad thing to do, though, because I always hid it. Once a friend asked me if I was cutting myself and I even lied and said 'no.' I was embarrassed."

Sometimes self-injury affects a person's body image. Jen says, "I actually liked how the cuts looked. I felt kind of bad when they started to heal — and so I would 'freshen them up' by cutting again. Now I can see how crazy that sounds, but at the time, it seemed perfectly reasonable to me. I was all about those cuts — like they were something about me that only I knew. They were like my own way of controlling things. I don't cut myself anymore, but now I have to deal with the scars."

You can't force someone who self-injures to stop. It doesn't help to get mad at a friend who cuts, reject that person, lecture her, or beg him to stop. Instead, let your friend know that you care, that he or she deserves to be healthy and happy, and that no one needs to bear their troubles alone.

### **Cutting — A Way to Be Cool?**

Girls and guys who self-injure are often dealing with some heavy troubles. Many work hard to overcome difficult problems. So they find it hard to believe that there are some teens whom do cut just because they think it's a way to seem tough and rebellious.

Tia tried cutting because a couple of the girls at her school were doing it. They pressured her. "It seemed like if I didn't do it, they would think I was afraid or something. So I did it once. But when I walked away, I thought about how lame it was to do something like that to myself for no good reason. Next time they asked I just said, 'no, thanks — it's not for me.' "

If you have a friend who suggests you try cutting, say what you think. Why get pulled into something

you know isn't good for you? There are plenty of other ways to express who you are. (Not giving in to peer pressure is one of them!)

Lindsay had been cutting herself for 3 years because of abuse she suffered as a child. She's 16 now and hasn't cut herself in more than a year. "I feel proud of that," Lindsay says. "So when I hear girls talk about it like it's a fad, it really gets to me."

## **Getting Help**

There are better ways to deal with troubles than cutting — healthier, long-lasting ways that don't leave a person with emotional and physical scars. The first step is to get help with the troubles that led to the cutting in the first place. Here are some ideas for doing that:

Tell someone. People who have stopped cutting often say the first step is the hardest — admitting to or talking about cutting. But they also say that after they open up about it, they often feel a great sense of relief. Choose someone you trust to talk to at first (a parent, school counselor, teacher, coach, doctor, or nurse). If it's too difficult to bring up the topic in person, write a note. Identify the trouble that's triggering the cutting. Cutting is a way of reacting to emotional tension or pain. Try to figure out what feelings or situations are causing you to cut. Is it anger? Pressure to be perfect? Relationship trouble? A painful loss or trauma? Mean criticism or mistreatment? Identify the trouble you're having, then, tell someone about it. Many people have trouble figuring this part out on their own. This is where a mental health professional can be helpful.

## **Ask for help.**

Tell someone that you want help dealing with your troubles and the cutting. If the person you ask doesn't help you get the assistance you need, ask someone else. Sometimes adults try to downplay the problems teens have or think they're just a phase. If you get the feeling this is happening to you, find another adult (such as a school counselor or nurse) who can make your case for you.

Work on it. Most people with deep emotional pain or distress need to work with a counselor or mental health professional to sort through strong feelings, heal past hurts, and to learn better ways to cope with life's stresses. One way to find a therapist or counselor is to ask at your doctor's office, at school, or at a mental health clinic in your community.

Although cutting can be a difficult pattern to break, it is possible. Getting professional help to overcome the problem doesn't mean that a person is weak or crazy. Therapists and counsellors are trained to help people discover inner strengths that help them heal. These inner strengths can then be used to cope with life's other problems in a healthy way. Reviewed by: D'Arcy Lyness, PhD  
Some cut in their inner thigh, buttocks, or areas not easily seen. They will use a craft knife, broken glass, sharp needles. Keep a lookout for pencil sharpener with the blades missing; these tiny blades are easy to hide. Also another tell-tale sign is finding broken razor blade cartridges.

## **Chewing the Fat:**

My grandson and I were sitting on the bench swing, me with a cup of tea and him with his orange juice. We were looking at the clouds to see what shapes we could make out of them. We heard it before we saw it; I can only describe it as a loud beat (thwop, thwop repeatedly in the air)

There it came in all its magnificent glory, a huge Wood pigeon (Kereru) it was low and the sound of its wings beating the air made the thwop sound, it worked hard to get very high in the sky, then tucked in its wings in a free fall straight down, wow what a sight, we could almost hear it going Weeeeeeeee.

These are things we as older people with a young 'un at our side have time to notice and enjoy. I said to him, see how hard that Pigeon worked to get up so high and then had fun on the down fall flight, "yeah I know Nana just like when I climb up the slide and go weeeee coming down" 😊 Well he is only just 4 years old and not too bad when one thinks about it.



### Ashburton Members:

We are looking for a new Co-ordinator to take over this area for meetings as the Co has now moved, if you have an interest in doing this please phone Diana East on 0800 472 637 ext 4 to discuss. Thanks.



Mosquito bite? Heat a spoon under hot tap water and press it onto the spot. The heat will destroy the protein that caused the reaction and the itching will stop.

### Kia ora and a word to the wise:

Ten years ago I gained custody and guardianship orders for my moko three of them.

As life improved and relationships with their mother improved they slowly were returned to her care, leaving the middle boy with me as he never re-connected with her and has ongoing medical issues.

Over the years his siblings have spent holidays with me, I being the main one who ensured haircuts were up to date, clothing was suitable and birthday and Christmas presents were provided, while mother got paid

for having her kids.

The normal practice was that prior to Christmas 2013 the younger sibling came down to stay with us, it was I that provided all those goodies and gave him an awesome holiday.

There was always a conversation coming up about the one I had returning and when I asked his mother she declined the offer.

Last Friday mother turned up to pick him up and asked if the one in my care could go for a holiday with her.

This was exciting for him, so with bags packed and money in their pockets, I for some reason gave my one my Kiwibank card and pin number telling him that if needed I may be able to put money in it and he could access it from up north. Xmas presents had been cellphones so I knew both boys could link up with me in



an emergency. The boys were also aware that even if they had no call or txt time on their phones they could send a message to me by putting my phone number into the message line and sending it to 798.

I then would receive a message stating 021\*\*\*\*\*wants you to call them.

These were the best things I could ever have done.

By Friday evening, the mother had spent their money buying KFC on their way home, arriving at the home to empty cupboards and a mother that had no money.  
WOW

Saturday they went out with her ex-partner and their youngest sibling and returned to her in the evening. Very nice of him, but he only bought food for his daughter and nothing for the two boys. So starving kids went to bed being warned by their mother that they were not allowed to tell me or they would get the bash and she would smash the phones.

GOOD BOYS: Made contact with me Sunday evening.  
*PANIC SET IN;*

First thing Monday morning the mother packed up her daughter aged 7 and went off to her voluntary humane work leaving behind the boys with nothing.

Initiative set in and the boys contacted me.

So txt messages provided a shopping list for them and a trip to the bank gave them \$28 to feed themselves till I could get sorted and arrange travel to collect them.

Monday night mother enjoyed eating their food but was so angry, as she wanted them to give her \$5 for petrol to go to her unpaid work Tuesday and that they did not purchase any toilet rolls.



A lot of threats went down Monday night and shoes were thrown at the boys in rage.

The boys even walked to the 24hour service station in the night to use the toilet.

Tuesday morning I was able to access money, I then phoned CYFS to see if my paper work re custody and guardianship were still valid. YES!

I was informed that they were doing a high priority case and that they would link up with me when I arrived up north

The support from them and NZ Police and CYFS were marvelous and I thank them.

Safely with 2 boys in my car, another \$20 given to the two remaining children and CYFS on board we set off on our journey home.



Do you know how quick starvation can affect our kids?

I bought them a good feed on leaving and all we had was sore tummy's the whole trip back. We got home and started back with light food and a lot of trips to the loo.

This morning they are still exhausted but safe AND I am \$200 out of pocket but the best money I ever spent. AND THEY WILL NEVER GO BACK.

WARNING; Even when your moko leave your care, keep those precious papers. You never know when you may need them.

Now I am busy looking for a set of drawers and clothing, organizing a visit to WINZ , arranging college enrolments and uniforms.

Welcome back to the real world of being a grandparent for me.

But they are happy and safe and we will survive.

And I am feeling good knowing that my moko are safe.

Maree

### Seasons™ Peer Support program

The Seasons™ Peer Support program provides opportunities for children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years to share their personal stories of the loss of an important person from their daily life as a result of death, separation or other family change. A Seasons group runs for 9 sessions and meets for one hour a week. By the end of the sessions the children participating have had a chance to talk about all the different feelings involved with their grief. They have had a chance to tell their story, found different ways to deal with things internally such as writing or finding someone they can trust to talk to, they have named external resources that they are able to use and learnt positive skills for living with their loss. The sessions are activity based involving art, stories, games, and music. Here are some quotes from children and teens that have recently participated in Seasons:



- *"Seasons was amazing because it got stuff off my chest that I'd been holding on to for years and it's given me a sense of release. I have more confidence and I'm comfortable with myself. It was the best thing that has happened in my life."*
- *"It is very caring and joyful. I liked everything."*
- *"It is helpful and fun. I loved it all. I learnt other people feel the same way."*
- *"I felt depressed when I wasn't going to Seasons and now I feel good about everything. It got me back on track and made me just stay positive."*

Seasons is offered through schools and as an after school program in Anglican churches in a number of regions in New Zealand. The program has no religious content and is respectful of different cultures and traditions. To find out more and for all contact details please go to [www.seasons.org.nz](http://www.seasons.org.nz) these are run thru various regions.

**KidzaCool Adventures:** [www.standforchildren.org.nz](http://www.standforchildren.org.nz)

## Why KidzaCool Adventures?

Quality support and respite for foster/kin/whanau carers.

Our KidzaCool Adventures programme gives children the opportunity to play and relax in a fun, safe and sociable environment while foster/kin/whanau carers work, relax or catch up with friends and family. We like to think we offer foster/kin/whanau carers peace of mind while offering children, aged 5-12, a piece of the action!! The programme is a free service for caregivers. Register NOW!



## KidzaCool Adventures Holiday Programme Dates for 2014

- **Northern Office**, Phone 09 437 9050 22 - 26 April
- **Auckland Office**, Phone 09 534 4017 22 - 26 April
- **Midland Office**, Phone 07 345 9097 22 - 26 April
- **East Coast Office**, Phone 06 867 5614 22 - 26 April
- **Central Office**, Phone 06 364 8069 22 - 26 April
- **Christchurch Office**, Phone 03 332 2541 22 - 26 April
- **Southern Office**, Phone 03 446 8119 22 - 26 April

Please phone for registration forms or you can download from web site.

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Please feel free to send/email this report on to others whom you think may be interested.

Please pass this on to other grandparents/kin carers you know of.

GRG Trust Head Office hours are 9am – 2pm daily. (We raise grandchildren too)

Views expressed in this newsletter may not be the views of the GRG Trust.

We are a voluntary not-for-profit organisation.

All donations to the GRG Trust are tax deductible.

### Abbreviations:

GRG – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust

BOT – Board of Trustees

CYF – Child Youth and Family Services

Co's – Co-ordinator/s

UCB – Unsupported Child Benefit

WINZ – Work and Income NZ now DWI – Department of Work and Income

BPS – Business Professional Services Limited. Our secretarial service.

### Are your children under CYF?

Do you have trouble getting hold of your Social Worker? If this is the case then you can call 0508 CARER (0508 227 377) and they will then make sure you are spoken to by your Social Worker and if they are not available then someone else will talk to you.

[www.grg.org.nz](http://www.grg.org.nz) or [www.kin.org.nz](http://www.kin.org.nz) or [www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz](http://www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz) Email [office@grg.org.nz](mailto:office@grg.org.nz)

### Member Support Manager: Di Vivian

Free Phone 0800 GRANDS or 0800 472637 ext. 1 (not for use for Auckland callers)

Landline users only. Auckland callers (09) 480 6530

Postal Add: PO Box 34 892 Birkenhead. Auckland 0742

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**We are a Charitable Trust**