



Alternatives to Nonsuicidal Self-Injury (NSSI)

This handout presents some non-injurious alternatives to NSSI. These alternatives may be particularly helpful when first starting to stop self-injuring. However, it is also important to learn to express your feelings, by talking, writing or drawing about them.

- Draw marks to look like blood on paper
- Cut paper or cardboard
- Make marks with a red marker on your skin or paper
- Punch a punching bag, pillow or cushion
- Stomp your feet or jump around
- Take a bath or shower
- Place ice on your skin or in the palm of your hand
- Snap a rubber band or hair elastic around your wrist
- Pinch yourself
- Put Tabasco sauce on your tongue
- Wax your legs
- Play drums or other percussion instruments
- Break old crockery or glass in safe ways
- Throw ice cubes
- Smash or stomp on aluminium cans
- Scream, shout, yell
- Rip up paper
- Record yourself yelling, screaming or shouting
- Throw soft toys, cushions or pillows against a wall
- Squeeze, squash or throw a stress ball
- Vigorously shred, rip or tear paper.
- Read a book
- Watch TV or a DVD
- Play Wii, Xbox, Playstation, Nintendo DS, online games etc.
- Go for a walk, ride, run, scoot
- Play with a pet
- Promise yourself to wait 5-10 minutes before self-injuring
- Listen to music
- Do homework

- Call a friend
- Breathing, relaxation or meditation techniques
- Talk out the impulse to self-injure
- Talk about something else
- Listen to recordings of a friend or a counsellor talking
- Chat on MSN, Facebook, Twitter, Skype
- Text or IM a friend
- Access a helpline via phone or online e.g., Kids Helpline (ph. 1800 55 1800)
- Face-to-face chat with a friend, family member or mental health professional
- Imagine your perfect vacation spot
- Think of a happy memory that makes you smile
- Imagine the happiest situation or scenario you can think of
- Imagine being with the person who makes you the most happy
- Think of a funny past experience or movie that always makes you laugh
- Exercise e.g., walk, run, boxercise, zumba, swim, sprint, kickbox, jog,
- Dance
- Play a physical game
- Sleep
- Rock yourself
- Wrap yourself up tightly in a blanket or doona
- Eat a favourite food e.g., ice cream, chocolate etc.
- Draw, paint or sculpt the feeling, need or memory
- Write in your journal, a poem or song lyrics
- Tell the story of your life on a timeline, marking the important things that have happened since you were born
- Make a scrap book with photos, letters, school reports, drawings & bits of writing
- Keep a journal or diary
- Write letters about what you would like to say to people (you don't have to actually send them)

