

## HELPFUL RESPONSES TO SOMEONE WHO'S SELF-HARMED:

- Come from a place of compassion.
- Understand that self-harm is NOT acting out, manipulation, or a failed suicide attempt; the person is usually trying to cope with great emotional distress.
- Do not blame, accuse, punish, or threaten; those things only make it worse.
- Ask why — and listen to the answer.
- Ask what the person needs.
- Educate yourself about self-harm (check out Secret Shame and SIARI websites).
- Help them find alternatives — when they tell you they want to.
- Make concrete offers of help (give a meal; go to a movie; etc.)
- Listen, and offer a supportive ear, or help them find support.
- Know your own limits, and don't give more than you can.

*Written by Cheryl Rainfield, author of SCARS, a teen novel about a girl who self-harms to cope with abuse.*

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