



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.

- Wear a spikey ring or bracelet
 - Draw marks to look like blood on paper
 - Cut paper or cardboard
 - Make marks with a red marker on your skin or paper
 - Injure a toy or stuffed animal
 - Put stickers or temporary tattoos on your body where you want to injure
 - 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 / hair elastic around your wrist
 - Put tape or a Band-Aid where you want to self-injure & rip it off
 - 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, empty plastic bottles or cardboard boxes
 - Throw sticks & stones
 - 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
 - Bang pots & pans together
 - Brush your hair
 - Blow up a balloon or blow bubbles
 - Play with play dough, slime, kinetic sand or putty
 - Bite into a chili
 - Paper chain activity: for each day you go without self-injuring add a coloured link to your chain. If you relapse, add a white link to the chain.
 - Read a book
 - Watch TV, Netflix or a DVD
 - Play Wii, Xbox, Playstation, Nintendo, online games
 - Go for a walk, ride, run, or scoot
 - Play with a pet
 - Promise to wait 5-10 minutes before self-injuring
 - Listen to music
 - Do homework
 - Call a friend
 - Breathing, relaxation or meditation techniques
 - Do a body scan by attending to each part of your body
 - 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 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
 - Dance
 - Play a physical game, sport or group exercise
 - Sleep
 - Rock yourself
 - Wrap yourself up tightly in a blanket or doona
 - Eat a favourite food e.g., ice cream, chocolate
 - Play with a fidget toy e.g., fidget spinner
 - Make & then sip a hot drink (or a cold one)
 - Light a candle
 - Bake
 - Pop a poppit or bubble wrap
 - Hold a stone, crystal or gem in your hand
 - Draw, paint or sculpt the feeling, need or memory
 - Write in your journal, a poem or song lyrics
 - Write positive affirmations
 - Make a scrap book with photos, letters, school reports, drawings & bits of writing
 - Read something nice someone has written about you, e.g., an old birthday card
 - Do something nice for someone else
 - Write letters about what you would like to say to people (you don't have to send them)
 - Pick a category (e.g., farm animals, cities, colours) & name as many as you can think of
 - Play "fizz buzz" - count to 100 & replace any number containing a 5 or a multiple of 5 with "fizz" & any numbers with a 7 or multiples of 7 with "buzz" i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, fizz, 6, buzz, 8, 9, fizz, 11, 12, 13, buzz
 - Describe the environment out loud in as much detail as possible (e.g., objects, smells, sounds, textures)
- Hold an object that reminds you of people & events in the present, remembering the association

