

Freedom From Self-Harm

Caitlin Craft

My life was flat, gray and numb; there was no color, no joy, no hope. For years I was trapped in self-harm, living every moment of every day seeking relief for my deep despair and shame. Some momentary relief could be found at the end of a blade. With every cut and burn, I *felt* less and less, losing who I really was. My identity was placed on my sin and my name was "Caitlin, the cutter."

But God is faithful! After years of struggle with the blade and the desire, I was brought to a place of complete brokenness. I saw that what I had searched for, what I used to fill me never would, but God could. God could take my pain, my heartache and my sin. He cleansed me, refreshed me and brought me from death into life. Not only life, but life abundantly—I could feel again in a whole new way! I could laugh and experience joy. I felt peace for the first time. I felt like a person, growing, healing and becoming whole. I felt God's presence, His love and His comfort over the shame.

This new life came by God's grace, but required action on my part. I found victory when I took my thoughts captive, when I cried out to God, confessed my sins and found new ways to face and express the deep pain inside.

WORKSHOP GOALS

- Define and describe the struggle of self-harm
- Give a Biblical perspective and solutions
- Point those struggling to the hope that is waiting for them and provide tools for the journey
- Provide encouragement and steps for friends and family
- Give Heart X-ray questions and homework

TOOLS FOR THE JOURNEY

- Find a true Christian friend that will walk this journey with you
- Memorize Scriptures to speak out loud when the struggle is overwhelming
- Find ways to be plugged into a healthy Christian community
- Do not allow yourself to be isolated
- Destroy the lies by speaking truth found in the Bible and pray those truths out loud

KEY VERSES

1 Peter 1:14-16 *As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: Be holy, because I am holy.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

RESOURCES

Hope & Help for Self Injurers and Cutters by Mark Shaw

Relief without Cutting by Amy Baker

Self-Injury: When Pain Feels Good (Resources for Changing Lives) by Edward Welch

X-ray Questions: Drawing Out the Whys and Wherefores of Human Behavior by Dr. David Powlison from the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*. Volume 18. Number 1. 1999 (Google "X-ray Questions")

13 Reasons Why Not by Matt Mizell

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