



Student Wellness Series

Cutting

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A psychologist, attorney, author, and mother, Dr. Lisa Strohman established Digital Citizen Academy to help keep families safe from online dangers. Her background working as a visiting scholar with the profiling unit at the FBI during one of the most tragic school shootings in the U.S. helped create her passion to help proactively prevent and educate students, educators, and parents on issues related to technology.



Paget Hetherington

Vice President, Marketing, Gaggle
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Paget Hetherington has empowered children to achieve academic success for more than three decades, leading sales and marketing efforts for global publishing and EdTech companies. As the vice president of Marketing, Paget's focus is spreading Gaggle's message to school districts across the country, helping to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

What Is Self-Harm?

- A deliberate, non-fatal act
- The individual knows it will cause physical harm and could potentially lead to death
- There may be no suicidal ideation or plan
- Types of self-harm:
 - Cutting (our focus for today)
 - Burning
 - Forced vomiting
 - Anorexia
 - Taking toxic substances



What Is Cutting?

Cutting is a destructive habit that involves self-injury and self-harm. Those who cut often use sharp objects such as needles, knives, razor blades, or even student IDs to cut or scratch their skin to the point of bleeding.

Teens most commonly cut in body parts that can easily be hidden—such as the inner wrist and thigh—but the inner palm, stomach, and legs are also common areas.

They do this to hide their wounds or scars from areas people commonly see. You will find that teenage cutting is quite common in today's world.



Why Does Cutting Happen?



Relief

Some teenagers cut to get “relief” from pent-up feelings. Cutting gives them a false sense of respite from their mental stress or emotional problems.



Self-Expression

Cutting may give teens a platform to express intense feelings such as depression, rejection, anger, betrayal, or confusion.



Curiosity

There are some who try cutting out of curiosity. Ever heard the saying “curiosity killed the cat” before? Well, as much as curiosity can be a good thing, in this case, it does not lead to any benefit at all. At first, they may try out cutting as a harmless innocent behavior, but this is addictive and the compulsion to cut may cause life-threatening situations.



Abuse

Emotional or physical abuse may cause some people to close off the outside world and become reclusive. In this state, they may resort to cutting. Many victims of emotional and physical abuse often feel “unclean” or “disgusted” with themselves and cut as a way of punishment.



Self-Hatred or Low Self-Esteem

Many people who cut do not love or appreciate themselves or their bodies. They find themselves to be “ugly” or “fat,” and in a desperate situation, they harm themselves by cutting to get a quick fix for their problem. If they learned to love themselves, they wouldn’t dream of deliberately self-harming.



Stress

Too much pressure or stress can cause teenagers to resort to cutting. You would be surprised to know that many teens who cut are actually honor roll students.

Triggers

Something that sets off a memory or emotion that is disturbing and difficult to manage.

Triggers can include:

- Anniversary dates of upsetting events
- Social media trends
- Peer pressures
- Streamed content



Stopping the habit is not an easy thing for someone who has already begun cutting. Acknowledgement without judgment is key—interest doesn't equate to support or acceptance of an ongoing issue.

Here are some ways you can try to help someone who cuts themselves:



Tell them you care

Show them that there are people who care for them. If one of your friends is cutting, show them how much you care for them and how much you wouldn't want to lose them or see them get hurt. They may realize that there are so many people who care for them after all, and out of compassion for all those who love them, they may decide to stop cutting.



Establish an open dialogue

Many teens cut in secret and may be afraid to tell an adult about their cutting. Improving your relationship with your child can help them be more relaxed and friendly so they can feel free to share with you.



Suggest joining a support group

Joining a support group can help a cutter feel they are not alone and give them an opportunity to share in private. In a support group, they can share their personal stories and get to hear the stories of others with similar experiences. This can help them gain the strength and confidence to stop cutting.



Help them learn to love themselves

If you want to help a friend or child who is cutting, one important thing to do is to get them to love themselves unconditionally. Many people who cut are sensitive, compassionate souls who would never hurt another human being.



Suggest professional treatment

Many teens are cutting because of deeper and more complex issues, such as childhood abuse or physical torment. Getting them to see a professional therapist to receive qualified treatment can help facilitate healing to solve the root cause so they can stop cutting.



CONTENT ANALYSIS

Machine learning technology flags concerning content in students' school-issued accounts for review and blocks potentially harmful content



EXPERT REVIEW

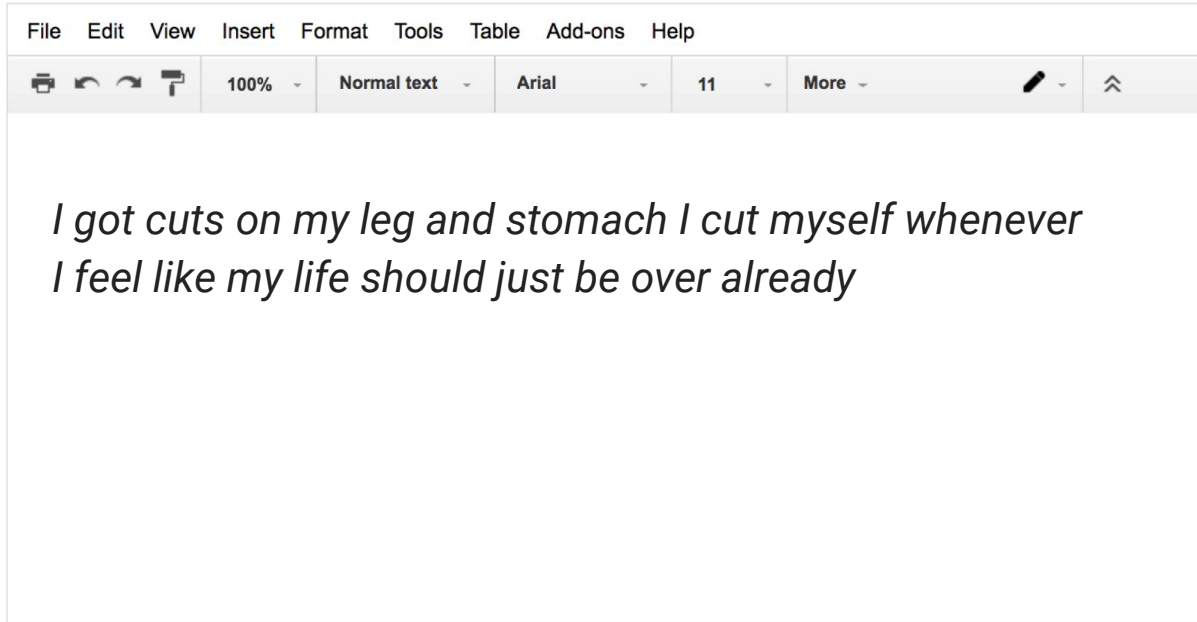
Gaggle helps districts **see the early warning signs** so they can take action to protect students from harming themselves or others—before it's too late



RAPID RESPONSE

In severe situations, district-appointed contacts are **immediately notified** by phone, even after standard business hours

Student Example



The image shows a screenshot of a Google Docs document. At the top, there is a menu bar with the following items: File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Tools, Table, Add-ons, and Help. Below the menu bar is a toolbar with icons for print, undo, redo, and insert, followed by a zoom level of 100%, a text style of Normal text, a font of Arial, a font size of 11, and a 'More' dropdown menu. The main content area of the document contains two lines of text in italics: "I got cuts on my leg and stomach I cut myself whenever" and "I feel like my life should just be over already".

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Add-ons Help

100% Normal text Arial 11 More

*I got cuts on my leg and stomach I cut myself whenever
I feel like my life should just be over already*

Student Example



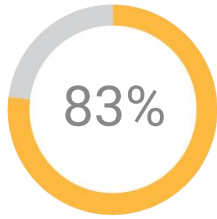
[Student Name Redacted]
to [Name Redacted]



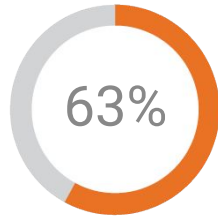
REPLY

omg yes hes trying to kill himself an hes cutting an hes trying to give up on school as well . hes trying to give up on everything

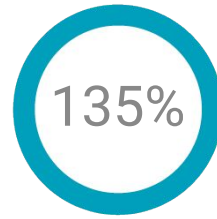
Increase in Incidents by Category



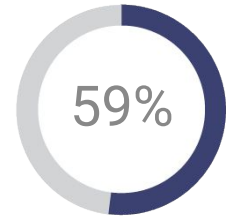
Increase in
Suicide & Self-Harm



Increase in Violence
Toward Others



Increase in Nudity &
Sexual Content



Increase in
Drugs & Alcohol

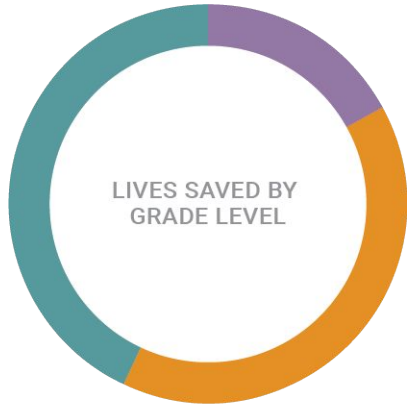
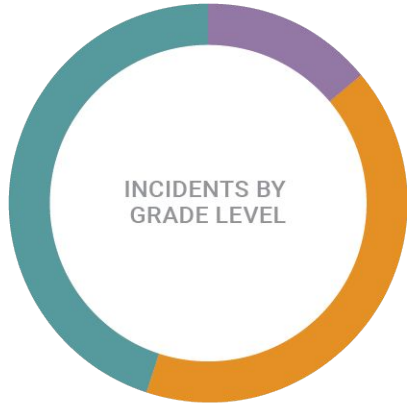


**INCREASE IN
OVERALL INCIDENTS**

Lives Saved



53%
increase in
lives saved



- ELEMENTARY
- MIDDLE
- HIGH

INCIDENTS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE DISTRICT ACTION



- AFTER HOURS (5:00 PM TO 8:00 AM AND WEEKENDS)
- OVERNIGHT (10:00 PM TO 7:00 AM)

Questions & Answers



Find Out More

Dr. Lisa

www.drlisastrohman.com

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Anxiety Resources

Crisis Text Line

[https://www.crisistextline.org/topics/self-harm/
#what-is-self-harm-1](https://www.crisistextline.org/topics/self-harm/#what-is-self-harm-1)

National Alliance Mental Illness

[https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Co
mmon-with-Mental-Illness/Self-harm](https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Common-with-Mental-Illness/Self-harm)

Thank you



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