

**Family Newsletter**

October 2015

Some things you can watch for include seeing your child wearing long sleeved shirts or long pants, especially in warm weather when you wouldn’t expect to see that type of clothing. Other signs include:

* Injuries or scars, especially on arms and legs
* A more introspective child
* Watch for signs of depression
* Have they stopped doing their usual activities?
* Are they being bullied?
* Are your medical supplies, such as band-aids or gauze, being used faster than normal?
* Are you finding sharp objects in unusual places, such as a razor blade in their sock drawer?
* Does your child seem to exhibit low self-esteem?
* Is your student sad/mad all the time? ([www.wikihow.com/tell-if-your-teen-is-cutting](http://www.wikihow.com/tell-if-your-teen-is-cutting))

What can you as parents and guardians do? First of all, calmly talk with your child. And listen to what they have to tell you. If they don’t want to talk to you, encourage them to talk with another trusted adult. But, make sure they understand that you are worried about them. You should talk with your doctor or even a mental health professional. Dr. David Rosen, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Michigan and director of the Section for Teenage and Young Adult Health at the University of Michigan Health Systems in Ann Arbor, says that the ultimate decision to stop cutting is up to the child. They have to decide not to do this anymore and no amount of bribery, ultimatums, or hospitalizations will change this behavior unless the child wants to change it. They require a good support system and often times they require treatment for underlying disorders such as depression. They need to learn better coping skills. ([www.webmd.com/cutting-self-harm-signs-treatment?page=3](http://www.webmd.com/cutting-self-harm-signs-treatment?page=3))

If you have concerns about your child cutting or engaging in other forms of self-injury, please consult your family physician. This article is meant for informational purposes only.

**Cutting and/or other self-harm**

Although cutting can seem very frightening, one very important thing to keep in mind is that it is generally NOT a suicide attempt. For kids, it is a way to control their emotional pain, according to Jeanie Lerche Davis of WebMD. ([www.webmd.com/cutting-self-harm-signs-treatment](http://www.webmd.com/cutting-self-harm-signs-treatment)) Although more girls than boys are cutters, some students who are into Goth culture also find it acceptable behavior.

Mainly, self-injury is a coping technique for kids who are unhappy. Wendy Lader, PhD, the clinical director for SAFE Alternatives at Linden Oak Hospital in Naperville, Il, states that many kids who self-harm have an eating disorder, or are sensitive, perfectionists, and overachievers. If they fail in one area of their lives, cutting is a way for them to get back some control. Lader also notes that cutting can be a symptom of psychiatric problems like borderline personality disorders, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. ([www.webmd.com/cutting-self-harm-signs-treatment](http://www.webmd.com/cutting-self-harm-signs-treatment))

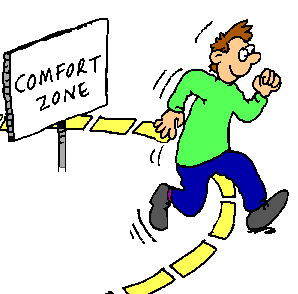
The Mayo Clinic staff says that your teen might be trying to feel something, even pain, when feeling emotionally empty. Cutting may be an attempt to manage or reduce severe distress or anxiety and provide a sense of relief. They might also be trying to punish themselves for perceived faults. ([www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/self-injury/basics/causes/con-20025897](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/self-injury/basics/causes/con-20025897))

**Word Search**

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| The editors of the *American Heritage Dictionaries* have compiled a list of the 100 words they recommend every high school graduate should know. Here are 25 of them for you to find. | | | | | | | | | |
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| According to Senior Editor, Steven Kleinedler, "The words are not meant to be exhaustive, but | | | | | | | | | |
| are a benchmark against which graduate and their parents can measure themselves. If you | | | | | | | | | |
| are able to use these words correctly, you are likely to have a superior command of the | | | | | | | | | |
| language." www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com | | | | | | | | | |

Answer on page 4.



When you teach your child to find different solutions to their problems, you not only encourage creative thinking, but also get them to understand that not every idea they come up with will work. Still, they need to try new ideas or possible solutions. Forbes contributor Steven Kotler wrote in a piece about Einstein, “Creatives fail and the really good ones fail often.” ([www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/26/stepping-outside-your-comfort-zone\_n\_5872638.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/26/stepping-outside-your-comfort-zone_n_5872638.html))

As people age, their comfort zones tend to shrink. There may be health factors at work, such as limited vision, hearing or mobility, which cause stress if routines are disturbed. But, if elders are able to stay engaged and continue to challenge themselves, they often experience greater satisfaction with life.

If you help your student take some risks now, while you are there to “catch them if they fall,” you will be better preparing them to be successful adults. Get them to engage in new activities, try new foods, and learn to advocate for themselves. One day they will thank you.

**Stepping out of your comfort zone**

We are all set in our ways, have certain daily routines we follow, and cut down on the amount of stress we incur. But researchers say we should take more chances and step out of our comfort zones every once in a while. Doing this will not only get us to perform better, but help us to grow and expand our knowledge. If we try new things we may begin to think more creatively or even help ourselves to better prepare for becoming an elder.

If you are willing to try just one new thing, whether it is at work, school, or in your personal life, you will strive to do it well. Sure, you might be a little anxious, but by doing only one new thing or trying one new food, you are just exposing yourself to a limited amount of anxiety. If you dare to try eating some broccoli, you might find you like it. If you try an alternate way home for work or school, you might see something new or discover a quicker route to take.

Every time you take even a small risk, you will grow. Perhaps this is a way you can help your child to grow, too. If your student is too shy to order their own meal, for example, it might behoove you to encourage them to learn how to do that for themselves. When they get into a new situation or go to college, they will need to be able to ask for help. If you model how to do it, then it won’t be so hard for them to try something for themselves. You could stop and ask for directions. You could ask a neighbor to help you learn more about planting a flower bed. For us parents, we may need to ask a younger person how to program our phones or find a certain app on our tablets.

* **Change up your daily routine**—brush your teeth first, and then take a shower. Go left at the top of the hill instead of right. Read your email at the end of the day, instead of at the beginning.
* **Take a college class**—have you ever wanted to throw a pot, play the piano, learn to belly dance or find out more about gay and lesbian history?
* **Try some foods you hated as a child**—over the years our taste buds change. Maybe you really like broccoli!
* **Take a power nap**---even 20 minutes can recharge you.
* **Volunteer**—if you are afraid of dogs, why not go to the animal shelter and make friends with one. If hospitals are not really your thing, volunteer to answer the phone or help out in the gift shop.
* **Become a mentor**—share your life’s experiences with someone. Make the difference in a young person’s life. Or go to the nursing home and read to someone. Everyone needs a friend.

The above ideas have been adapted and excerpted from those found at [www.success.com/articles/52-ways-to-get-out-of-your-comfort-zone](http://www.success.com/articles/52-ways-to-get-out-of-your-comfort-zone)

**A Few Ways to Step out of Your Comfort Zone**

Getting out of your comfort zone may take a few tries. It might not be easy at first, but the more often you try, even one little thing, the easier it will become the next time around. Here are a few suggestions to get you thinking about what you can do. Feel free to deviate from this suggested list. It’s ok.

* **Read a book a month**—try something you don’t normally read. Try non-fiction. Try a memoir. Read a comic book or science fiction. Pick up a magazine that you have never looked at before.
* **Unplug**—try to go a day without looking at any gadgets. No cell phone, no tablet, no e-mail. If you can’t go a whole day, start with just an hour.
* **If you are not tech savvy, learn**—ask your kids to help you or sign up for a class at the library
* **Find a hobby that gets you moving**—dance? Yoga? Karate? Learn to play an instrument?
* **Brush your teeth while standing on one leg**—this could improve your balance
* **Get lost, literally**—then figure out your way back. Just use your GPS as a last resort
* **Get creative**—try cooking something new. Build some shelves or a shed. Go ride in a hot air balloon.

GEAR UP  
Multicultural Education & Resource Center  
3001 Hedgcock  
1401 Presque Isle  
Marquette, MI 49855  
1-906-227-1554  
This newsletter and past editions are available at:  
http://www.nmu.edu/multiculturaledandres/node/30  
GEAR UP Director Shirley Brozzo

**Word Search Answer Key**

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