



# 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.

- Cry
- Wear a spikey ring, or bracelet
- Use a Calm Buddi Turtle or cone from a Sheoak tree
- 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 social media or text a friend
- Access a helpline via phone or online e.g., Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or Lifeline: 13 11 14
- 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 in a blanket (weighted) 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...
- Describe the environment out loud in as much detail as possible (e.g., objects, smells, sounds, textures)- 5,4,3,2,1
- Hold an object that reminds you of people & events in the present, remembering the association

