



## HELP SELF-HARMING TEENAGERS

Nothing we do can totally protect young people from the stress of growing up in a fast-paced, complicated world. We can, however, help provide the support and resources they need to navigate challenges along the way. Encouraging kids to have strong relationships with rock-solid adults enlarges their circle of care throughout adolescence—and beyond.

Research dealing with the topic of youth growing into thriving Christian adults emphasizes the need for them to develop strong relationships with significant adults in addition to their parents. Young people need these relationships *before* they hit trouble spots so that a foundation of supportive, trusted adults is already present when life seems out of control.

Look to family, trusted neighbors, friends, church leaders, teachers, and coaches as resources for building a support team for your teenagers. Always with safety in mind, encourage your son or daughter to get to know adults who can be there when things get rough. These adults will become your support team as well, helping you nurture and encourage your teenagers on a healthy, faithful path to adulthood.

—Michael Ratliff, Young People’s Ministries, [mratliff@GBOD.org](mailto:mratliff@GBOD.org)

## THE VIEW

- One in five teens says they’ve purposely injured themselves at some time.
- An estimated one in every 200 teenage girls cuts themselves regularly. Without treatment, this behavior often continues into adulthood.
- In a study, most chronic self-mutilators described their families as “full of anger...in which they were told to always be strong and prevented from expressing their feelings.”

## TIPS >>>

*Group’s Emergency Response Handbook for Parents* offers guidelines about how to talk to teenagers who are hurting:

### What Not To Say

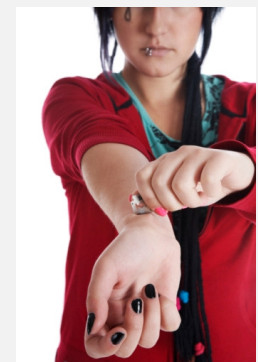
- **“You’re scaring me.”** Expressing shock or horror reinforces the belief that teens are isolated, different, and even deserving of the inflicted pain.
- **“If I find you doing this again...”** Self-destructive behavior isn’t a character issue. Rules and consequences won’t affect emotions, although you can limit negative influences.
- **“You’re too skinny.”** This brings the focus back to body image and makes weight loss the center of attention.

### What To Say

- **“I know you’ve been hurting yourself.”** The only effective way to deal with this problem is to face it head-on. Accusations and demands usually backfire, but a humble, honest explanation of the truth can be a first step to freedom.
- **“Have you noticed any circumstances, events, or patterns that occur before you react this way?”** Upon reflection, teenagers may realize they feel the urge to engage in self-destructive behavior at certain times. Work together to find other means of responding to emotional pain.
- **“Let’s get help.”** Assure teenagers you love them unconditionally and will walk with them through whatever

## PONDER THIS

- What self-destructive behavior or choices of your own might be influencing your teenagers?
- What adjectives would best describe your home life? How can you make it more conducive to honest expressions of emotion?





# Rx for Healing

Expert Insights for Parents of Teenagers

By Megan Hutchinson

I've been blessed to come alongside hurting teens for many years and have recognized that they all have one thing in common: something significant is missing deep within. And that something is very basic and is intentionally designed by God. Kids want to be 1.) nurtured patiently, 2.) accepted as they are, and 3.) loved genuinely. If these are absent from teenagers' primary relationships, there inevitably will be pain.

Typically, that pain begins to surface during the adolescent years, when developmental changes are at their peak. And that's where parents and youth workers come in. We're privileged to be part of these kids' lives just when they're hurting the

most. Here's how you can meet their three key needs:

**1. Patient Nurture.** Be tender and empathic. Come alongside young people and help them grow as if they're a fragile plant in need of gentleness and care. Nurturing is powerful because it validates the very emotion that's gone ignored and subdued in each hurting teen.

**2. Unconditional Acceptance.** This means welcoming teenagers as they are. Respect who they are as people, not as "kids" who need special treatment. Embrace teenagers regardless of your personal preferences or moral positions...no strings attached.

**3. Genuine Love.** Be the hands, heart, and mouthpiece of Jesus with kids. See each one as a precious soul cherished and loved by the Creator himself. Consistently show up in their lives with encouragement, belief, and hope for what they cannot see for themselves. Just as Jesus modeled with the woman at the well, love teenagers the way they are, but then refuse to leave them the way they are.

**Megan Hutchinson, co-creator of the curriculum *Life Hurts, God Heals*, writes at [SimplyYouthMinistry.com](http://SimplyYouthMinistry.com).**

## RESOURCE



The three-week series *Scarred: Preparing for the Hurt in Life* (Simply Youth Ministry) by Doug Fields and Megan Hutchinson helps young people prepare to deal with life's pain but also shows them how God can use that pain to create beauty.

## BIBLE FOCUS

Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.

1 Peter 4:12-13

# MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

## MAINSTREAM MUSIC



### FLORENCE + THE MACHINE

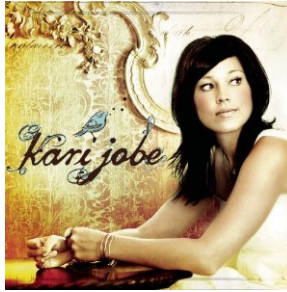
**Background:** This English band consists of singer Florence Welch and a group of collaborators. Their first album was a hit—especially in England—but they’re now well known here, too. Their style recalls past alternative acts, such as Kate Bush and Siouxsie and the Banshees, along with modern artists such as Björk and Fiona Apple. Florence is also known for her unique fashion stylings. Both albums focus on love and especially heartache.

**Albums:** *Ceremonials* (2011), *Lungs* (2009)

**What Florence + the Machine Says:** “When you’re heartbroken, you’re at your most creative. You have to channel all your energies into something else to not think about it. Contentment is a creativity killer, but don’t worry. I’m very capable of making myself discontented.”

**Explore:** Both albums are on Spotify. “Shake It Out,” the first single from *Ceremonials*, is available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbN0nX61rIs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbN0nX61rIs)

## CHRISTIAN MUSIC



### KARI JOBE

**Background:** This 30-year-old worship singer went to #3 on the Billboard Christian chart and #1 on the iTunes Christian chart. Jobe is a refreshing voice in a worship arena usually dominated by men and Hillsong-related women.

**Albums:** *Where I Find You* (2011), *Kari Jobe* (2009), *Le Canto* (2009)

**What Jobe Says:** “I was standing in a worship service, and I didn’t really care for a song that was playing, and so I was just kind of watching. I felt the Lord saying to me very strongly, ‘Does it really matter what song it is?’ ... It just makes me remember we are so full of the flesh.”

**Explore:** Listen to Jobe’s songs at [myspace.com/karijobemusic](http://myspace.com/karijobemusic). An acoustic version of her hit single “We Are” is available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=B07iK9uh9qY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B07iK9uh9qY).

## MOVIE

**Movie:** *Red Tails*

**Genre:** Action, Drama, War

**Rating:** PG-13 (for some sequences of war violence)

**Synopsis:** This WWII drama profiles the famed Tuskegee airmen, black pilots who posted stellar records but had to fight both German pilots *and* prejudice from their own country.

**Our Take:** Such films offer great opportunities to talk about prejudices and how we should address them. Plus, teaching teenagers about history is always a good thing.

**Movie:** *Underworld: Awakening*

**Genre:** Action, Horror

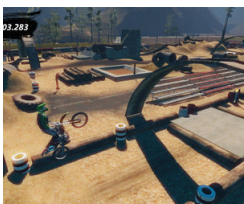
**Rating:** Not Yet Rated (Probably R)

**Synopsis:** After discovering that vampires and werewolves are real, humans try to wipe out both species.

**Our Take:** This is a decidedly nonsparkly take on vampires, with lots of guns, violence, and bloodshed. I’m not a fan of films that manipulate viewers so they root *against* humans.

For more media discussions and ideas, go to [www.MinistryandMedia.com](http://www.MinistryandMedia.com)

## VIDEO GAME



**Trials Evolution**—The follow-up to the smash Xbox Live Arcade game features more motorcycle mayhem. Now, instead of being in warehouses, the crazy courses are indoors, outdoors, and anywhere you can imagine. All 60 tracks were created with the same level editor that comes with the game, so players have hours of creative potential. And there’s no violence, other than crashing *hard* when you miss a jump.

**Silent Hill HD Collection**—The horror titles in this collection all received critical acclaim, but this is *not* something you want your kids playing. It’s deeply disturbing, filled with paranoia and unspeakable monsters (including barely dressed nurses) designed to scare players physically and psychologically.

# JANUARY 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>New Year's Day</b> <b>No Sunday School or Sunday night Fellowship</b>			WNT begins again.			
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
ORBIT Youth Group is back in gear: 4:30 choir; 5:30 meal.  Youth serve Community Care Fellowship meal Sunday am.		Harvest Hands starts back up: 3:30 to 6:15.			Winter Youth Retreat - at Lakeshore United Methodist Assembly.	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Youth return from retreat. (No Sunday Night activities.)	<b>MLK Jr. B.day Observance</b>	HH: 3:30 to 6:15				Church-wide leadership retreat
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
ORBIT Youth normal schedule: 4:30 choir, 5:30 youth.		HH: 3:30 to 6:15				
29	30	31				
ORBIT Youth normal schedule.		HH: 3:30 to 6:15				