

#CutForBieber Trend Mocks Pain of Tormented Teens

Cutting is a dark trend that's suddenly making its way into the limelight. Indeed, the **#CutForBieber** and **#Cut4Bieber** hashtags have been trending on Twitter, a social media platform of choice for teens.

After rumors surfaced that pop star **Justin Bieber** was smoking weed, members of a message board known as 4chan decided to launch the **#CutForBieber** Twitter campaign in a mock protest. Members used fake accounts, included photos of cutters and the **#CutForBieber** hashtag.

"Lets start a cut yourself for bieber campaign," an anonymous user wrote on the message board. "Tweet a bunch of pics of people cutting themselves and claim we did it because bieber was smoking weed. See if we can get some little girls to cut themselves."

The campaign went viral and is now making headlines.

Let's step back for a minute. What is cutting? And how serious is it? Cutting is a form of deliberate self-harm, self-inflicted violence in which people take a razor blade or other sharp object and cut into their flesh to the point of letting blood.

The psychology behind it is heart-wrenching: The pain of cutting is a distraction from the emotional pain, anger and frustration the cutter feels. The cutter may slice their wrists, arms, legs or stomachs. The cuts are often so deep they leave scars that mirror the emotional scars in their soul.

I've been involved with youth who call themselves cutters. So when I saw the **#CutForBieber** campaign it struck my heart.

Encouraging anyone to cut, even in a mock protest, is more than irresponsible. It's a demon-inspired ploy to drive depressed teenagers deeper into bondage and lure curious youth to engage in an act they've never had the courage to act out.

Cutting is indeed a serious problem, but because cutters tend to hide their self-injury it often goes unnoticed and is difficult to track. *The Journal of Clinical Psychology* reports about 4 percent of the U.S. population show signs of self-injurious behavior. That's more than 12 million people. A poll shows that one in five teens have purposely injured themselves at some time.

Although self-injury may bring a momentary sense of calm and a release of tension, the Mayo Clinic reports it's usually followed by guilt and shame and the return of painful emotions. And, Mayo reports, with self-injury comes the possibility of more serious and even fatal self-aggressive actions. Make no mistake: Even though the cutter's intent is not suicide, cutters could take the practice down the dark road to death, even accidentally.

If you think your teen—or someone you know—is cutting, consider the signs and symptoms the Mayo Clinic lists, which include scars, fresh cuts, scratches, bruises and other wounds; possession of sharp objects; wearing long sleeves or long pants (even in hot weather); spending a lot of time alone; claiming to have frequent accidents; behavioral or emotional instability; and statements of helplessness or hopelessness.

Teens are good at hiding what's going on in their hearts. If you think someone is cutting, seek out help from a pastor, school counselor or pediatrician. *To Write Love on Her Arms* offers valuable insights. Cutting is no laughing matter and I pray that every young one who is caught up in cutting will find healing for their wounded hearts. And, #Twitter, if you are listening, I urge you to find a way to cut off the

#CutForBieber campaign before copycat mockers find a new platform to spread their potentially deadly messages.

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