

Close to Home Study Guide

Dealing with Self-Harm

1. Opening (1 minute)*

- Why do you think some people engage in self-harm?

Note that self-harm is a mystifying, yet age-old human experience.

2. Storytelling (8 minutes)

Read or tell Jana's story (pp. 2–3).

- Do you know persons who have a similar problem with self-harm?

3. Review of pamphlet (6 minutes)

Self-harm goes beyond an occasional emotional outburst accompanied by some physical injury, such as slamming a body part too hard. Review the key points in “Why do people self-harm?” (p. 4).

- How many warning signs describe your experience or someone else's experience?
- How does self-harm affect you personally?

4. Reading of Scripture text (15 minutes)

Our relationships with God and with others are important and interconnected, and we need to be intentional about doing our part.

Read Mark 5:14-20.

- How could the people have responded in more helpful ways?
- What ministry did Jesus give to the man?

Refer to the brochure to highlight other helpful aspects for understanding this story (pp. 6–7).

- When was the last time you recognized the “still small voice” or “gentle whisper” of God?
- How could preoccupation with the Internet be a form of “bowing the knee to Baal” or giving our life to another god?

5. Steps toward healing (14 minutes)

Review pages 8–9.

- If you engage in self-harm, what have you tried in seeking healing? What could be your next step?

Invite the group to review the “Qualities of caregivers” (p. 9).

- If you are a caregiver for or friend of someone who harms himself/herself, which of these qualities are easier for you? With which ones do you struggle?
- What could be your next step?
- What is difficult and/or helpful about Jana's advice (p. 3, last paragraph)?
- If you do self-harm, what advice would you add?

* The suggested time frames are for a 45-minute session. With more discussion and storytelling, you will need to adjust upward, and possibly extend to a second session.

6. Closing (1 minute)

Encourage the group to find and use the resources listed in “For further awareness” (p. 10).

Pray: *Dear God, help us to find true selves in our relationships with Jesus. Help us to experience Jesus’ love, hope, and healing in our lives, and to share this love, hope, and healing with others. Amen.*



**Faith & Life
Resources**

This study guide is written by Sharon Williams, editor of *Adult Bible Study* (Faith & Life Resources) and Minister of Worship with Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church, Norristown, Pennsylvania. It is one of a series of free downloadable study guides for the *Close to Home* pamphlets, which can be ordered from MennoMedia of the Mennonite Church (see www.MennoMedia.org/closetohome) or the Mennonite Brethren Kindred Productions (www.kindredproductions.com/closetohome).