



TeenHelp.org presents...

# Avatar

TeenHelp.org's eZine  
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## Editorial

by Rob

Welcome to December's issue of Avatar! We hope that by now you're starting to get into the Christmas spirit, so to kick off the beginning of the festive season, we've got a vaguely Christmassy version of Avatar for you! (And I do mean vaguely.)

For this month's issue of Avatar we've been working like crazy to get several changes in place for the future of Avatar. And I guess you're already looking at the main one ... Avatar's got itself a new pimplin' dinner suit (oh he'lllll no!); welcome to the new design of Avatar! We hope you like it, because it's going to be around for a while. Now that things are settling down with Avatar and we have a clearer idea of where we'd like to go, we thought it was time to stop faffing around with completely different designs each month. You may notice a few similarities with past issues of Avatar ... and well, you should, since around 85% of the design ideas have come from one of the past issues of Avatar! We decided we liked bits and bobs from each of the past issues, so we took the parts we liked the most and put them altogether in one. This design will be used for the rest of volume one, after which a redesign will probably occur.

This brings me on to the second, much more boring change, which is the altered numbering system for issues. Avatar will now be split into volumes, most likely a year in length each, which will coincide with redesigns. It's not really remotely interesting, so I won't waste any more of my precious space on it...

On to the content: For this issue we'd like to share several articles. The first will be helpful to all the newbies at TeenHelp, while the second and third will help those who are fighting self harm or panicking about the holiday season! We'd also like to talk about how to stay safe on the Internet and how to make a great & easy Christmas gift. And we'll finish off with some great self expression by our members, and some horoscopes.

And remember, as always, that Avatar is created by YOUR submissions. If people like you don't write things for us, we have a much more difficult time putting Avatar together each month. We accept all content, anything from movie and book reviews to self help articles, self expression, games and more! We look forward to your submissions! (Though we cannot guarantee that your content will make it into Avatar, especially poems, most will be used!)

The Avatar Editors.

**Editors:**

Mel (.Infinity.)  
Rob

# Welcome to new members!

by BellaLuna

Welcome to TeenHelp (a.k.a. TH), newcomers!

I know sometimes it can be hard to write an arrival thread, but I do advise that all new members to do so anyway! It's important that you introduce yourself to as many people as you can. Why, you might ask? Because by introducing yourself you can then meet the regular members, which people are around the certain subsections of TH, and become more comfortable around people on the site, chat with them and ask questions.

There are numerous conveniences that can be found in the threads that you, as a new member, may want to look at. An example is the "How to use the forums" guide, which can be found at the top of the "Arrival and Departures" forum in the "General" section. This guide explains a lot about how to use the forum, the different staff groups and so on. Another thing that you may find helpful is the TH Glossary. The TH Glossary can be helpful for learning commonly used lingo, and can be found by clicking on the "FAQ" (frequently asked questions), and then in the "Most Common TeenHelp Questions" section.

And last but not least, staff members are here for a reason. "Buddies" are staff members who are specifically here for you. So please, don't be afraid to PM (private message) them at any time if you have a question or just what to chat with them! Any staff member will be more than happy to help you.

Take care, newcomers. I hope that you enjoy your time here at Teenhelp!

Super Noob



"SUPPORT THE NOOB!"  
- Gianna Masetti

Image source:  
[www.oldvegaschips.com](http://www.oldvegaschips.com),  
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# How to manage stress and tension

by Kevin Sinclair

*As Christmas approaches, it's likely that you'll be swamped with work and deadlines, and worried about buying people presents on time, so this month we're providing an article that'll help you stay relaxed and healthy during this time:*

Stress has always been a big part of our lives. It is becoming an all too common occurrence to hear someone complaining about how stressful his or her life has become in school, work or family. This situation happens no matter what race, nationality, education or whatever status obtained in life. The stress and tension is there no matter where you go, and you cannot just disregard this truth.

The main thing to remember in whatever we choose to do is there are some inevitable factors that will cause pressure and anxiety in our lives. What we need to focus on are the ones that we can control. So after you learn the difference between the ones that you can control and the ones you have no control over you can focus your time, energy and money in the direction of the ones you can influence.

The list below will give you some advice on handling the everyday tension caused by stress.

1. Identify what it is that is making you anxious and uneasy. Make a list of all the things that cause you a stressful experience. Deal immediately with the ones that you can change, like getting to work earlier or changing the way you handle work projects. Then just forget about the ones that you cannot help, like traffic or parking spaces or the ones that are just part of life.
2. Calm down and get away for a few minutes. A few-minutes break will do you good. You can go to the bathroom wash your face and just start over with a new attitude. Go reward yourself with a vending snack or early lunch if your work permits it. Find some relaxing music on your PC to listen to while you work, anything that will give your mind a chance to relax will work.
3. It will be over before you know it. Do not fall into a trap of being the only one who is constantly reliving the event and causing yourself more stress than is needed. Know that it will pass and it will be over. Think of a good thing to do that will make you feel better about yourself.
4. Always look for the cause and triggers. Every time one happens, write it down and start to look for that common pattern. If most are work related, it might be time to find a new job or start your own business. If you have vacation or sick time coming remember to take it; nothing like a day or two off to clear the mind. Keep looking at the list and start to solve the ones you have control of.

In the end there are only two choices, make a change to help with the problem or accept it and move on with your life.

**Source:** [www.articlesbase.com](http://www.articlesbase.com)

## **About the Author:**

Kevin Sinclair is the publisher and editor of [www.my-personal-growth.com](http://www.my-personal-growth.com), a site that provides information and articles for self improvement and personal growth and development.

# Self harm

by \*xxjessxx\*

Self harm is a technique that some people use to try and cope with the things that are going on in their lives at that time. For some people expressing how they feel through emotions is way to painful, so they choose to let this pain out in a physical way - by hurting themselves.

People who do this may feel angry, worthless, pathetic, frustrated, alone or depressed. Although these feelings make us feel and think all sorts of strange things, there is help out there, help that can really make a difference to someone's life.

## Am I alone?

If you are hurting yourself and you feel you are alone, you couldn't be further from the truth. Self harm is a lot more common than you really think. Although you may be ashamed and feel isolated from the world, you're not. There are people who really care and do want to help you. Would you believe that 3 young people self harm every hour, and 1 in 10 teenagers have self harmed by the age of 16? <sup>[1]</sup>

## Reasons why people may do it:

There are many people who may start to self harm. A lot of people who start it are going through hard times in their life and need a way to let out their pain. Reasons some start could include:

- o Bullying or discrimination.
- o Losing someone close to them such as a parent, brother, sister or friend.
- o Lack of love and affection or neglect by parents or carers.
- o Physical or sexual abuse.
- o A serious illness that affects the way they feel about themselves.
- o Lack of self esteem or self worth.

Those are just a few reasons why young people start to hurt themselves. There are also other reasons such as just the pure stress and pressures of everyday life, pressures that can come from family, friends or school work. Young people may also feel as if they have to conform to peers who are also self harming, this may be to feel as if they "fit in".

## Distractions

There are lots of distractions that you can do to help prevent yourself from hurting yourself, here are just a few:

- o Make Play-Doh or other clay models and cut or smash them.
- o Throw ice into the bathtub or against a brick wall hard enough to shatter it.
- o Break sticks.
- o Put a finger into a frozen food (like ice cream) for a minute.
- o Bite into a hot pepper or chew a piece of ginger root.
- o Pick a subject and research it on the web.
- o Draw on yourself with a red felt-tip pen.
- o Try counting down slowly from 10 to 1
- o Put a rubber band around your wrist and flick it lightly.
- o Take a shower.
- o Ride a bike fast and far.

For more ideas see the resources section at the end of this article.

## Who can help me?

When you feel you are ready to get the help you deserve, there are lots of people out there who want and are there to help you through this.

There are lots of people in whom you can confide in, these can include:

- o Teachers
- o School counselors
- o Doctors
- o Family
- o Youth workers
- o Social workers

All of these people can help you and offer you help and support, but if you feel as if you can't open up and talk to anyone, there is lots of online support you can receive - TeenHelp being one of them.

# Self harm

by \*xxjessxx\*

(Continued)

## Recovery story

Here is a story that may give inspiration to anyone that is in the process of recovery.

"Ok, so my story is pretty simple, I'm an ordinary girl, with an ordinary life. I suppose I had never particularly liked myself, but that wasn't so much of an issue. When I was about twelve everything in my life started to fall apart, I found out that I had a condition called alopecia, which meant that my hair fell out. Well some of it. I was desperate for no one to find out, because we had a uniform at school, I couldn't wear a hat, so I started to get bullied. Nothing awful, but it was the times that I wasn't bullied that were the worst, because I was always waiting.

I shut myself off from the world, I didn't want to feel the pain that they were trying to inflict on me. I knew that I was always a strong one, I couldn't cry, I couldn't get angry, people had to rely on me. So I started to self harm.

The cycle of self harm carried on, I didn't want anyone to know, I suppose that I had been an intermittent self harmer for about 3 to 4 years, when my friend found out. We decided together that I needed to tell someone; so I did. I told my teacher. Though I sometimes wish I hadn't, I know if I hadn't got it out in the open I never would have stopped.

Things got worse for a while after I told someone, because I couldn't bear people knowing. But it did get better. I decided that I was worth more than self harming, that the thing that I was trying to kill inside me wouldn't go away by hurting the outside. I had to tackle that monster in a new way because the old way only hurt him for a second, and each time I hurt he grew stronger.

I had to talk. I know that I will always be a self harmer, but that doesn't mean I have to hurt myself. I have power within myself to stop, and when I feel like I'm going to break, I ring someone, or I listen to music.

Finally I have found control, not in hurting myself, but in stopping. In finally saying no. Anyone can do it, but if you can't then you are NOT a failure. Just trust and know that you will one day find that you are too special to hurt yourself, and most importantly there is a way out. Never accept the lie that self harm is the only way." [2]

## Resources

### References

- [1] <http://www.lcet.org/selfharm/>
- [2] <http://www.selfharm.org.uk/information/default.aspa>

### Distractions and help

For more self harm distraction techniques have a look at these websites:

#### National Health Service

<http://www.firststeps-surrey.nhs.uk/selfharm.htm>

#### BBC Health

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental\\_health/coping\\_skills.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health/coping_skills.shtml)

#### Self-Help: Organized and otherwise

<http://www.palace.net/~llama/psych/self.html>

#### Hot Springs: Self-Injury

<http://www.geocities.com/HotSprings/6446>

#### Coping Skills

<http://www.angelfire.com/ri/edsm/coping.html>

#### Mosaic Minds

<http://www.mosaicminds.org/safe-asi.shtml>

### For more information...

To find out a bit more information on self harm you can have a look at this website:

#### Young people and self harm

<http://www.selfharm.org.uk>

# Internet safety

by Gidig

This article consists only of guidelines; there may be other precautions that you could take. While taking all of these precautions does NOT guarantee you'll be completely safe, doing them would be a step in the right direction and can help a great deal in keeping you safe

We have all heard about Internet safety time and time again. We hear it from our teachers, parents, schools and friends. You're probably absolutely sick of hearing about it, but it is important. Considering the mentioned, you probably already know that there are creepy people online who may be "out to get you", but you may also know that not every person is a creep. The only problem is how to correctly determine who is and who isn't.

Though no-one can be absolutely sure that someone isn't a creep, I will try and give you some helpful hints and tips based on my experiences to try and keep you safe.

1. Don't put ANYTHING too personal online. This includes inappropriate pictures, phone numbers, your address, your full name, email addresses with your full name in them and so on. If you wouldn't want the whole world knowing or seeing it, don't expose it. What's the risk? Not only can predators find it, but family members and future employers can also come across it. How? A simple Google search. Google can pull up practically anything, so as said, be careful with content that you share.

2. Be careful as to where you're giving your information out. Yes, giving it online anywhere is risky and probably not a good idea, but there are places that are totally out of the question. Where? Chat rooms or threads. It has been done many times that people would give out their phone number right in the middle or beginning of a chat or thread, and I must say, doing that is probably 100 times more riskier than doing it in a private message. Why? Because everyone can see it!

3. Make sure you've known the person for a while and have a lot of trust in them. Let's face it, giving someone who you hardly know or trust all of your information is an awful idea. It's an awful idea to give any information to them, actually. You should only even consider this when you really trust them.

4. If possible, don't give out your home phone number. It is very easy to track people that way. Yes, you can find people through their cell phone number, but there is usually more work involved.

5. Be careful with what you believe. Remember, people online can lie about everything just as easily as you could. If someone gives you a reason to doubt their truthfulness or anything at all, be careful. As said before, don't give out information to those who you can't trust.

6. It is usually not recommended that you meet someone from the Internet, however, if you do decide that you want to, be very safe about it. Let someone know that you're doing it, make sure that you meet in a public place, ask someone to go with you and never leave with the person you're there to meet. If you can't get someone to go with you it's fine, but never meet someone without letting someone else know that you are. Take a cellphone with you if that option is available.

The one great thing about the Internet world is we have that absolutely amazing ability to block people, especially on IM services such as MSN Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, AIM and so on. If someone is making you feel uncomfortable, being rude or creepy, block them. Remember, you do not have to listen to any of it. If you're on a website and someone is doing it, report them to an administrator, this also goes for TeenHelp. If someone is making you uncomfortable, being rude or anything of the sort, speak up. Any issue can be dealt with if given the chance.

Doing the opposite of things stated here can set you up for a world of trouble. I hope that you consider some of the things, because really, your safety is important. Stay safe!

## More information...

### TeensHeath

[http://www.kidshhealth.org/teen/safety/safebasics/internet\\_safety.html](http://www.kidshhealth.org/teen/safety/safebasics/internet_safety.html)

### Teen Safety on the Internet

[http://www.lambda.org/online\\_safety\\_tips\\_for\\_teens.htm](http://www.lambda.org/online_safety_tips_for_teens.htm)

# A Christmas craft

by .Infinity.



This is what the finished product will look like

We all know that as Christmas comes near, we all ask ourself one question: What am I going to get everyone? As sometimes this is hard to decide, and as sometimes funds are low, here's a cute gift idea for you. What is it? Snowman soup!

Not only are you able to make snowman soup with a small amount of funds, but it's easy to make and something that almost everyone can enjoy.

## Things you'll need:

(Note: All of the items below can be purchased at a Dollar Store.)

- A Christmas mug.
- Hot chocolate mix. (One little packet for the mug.)
- Mini marshmallows.
- A candy cane.
- Christmas decorated plastic wrap for crafts.
- Ribbon.
- A small piece of paper.

## Directions:

1. Take the mug and place a single hot chocolate packet (unopened) into it.
2. Place a handful of mini marshmallows in.
3. Stick the candy cane in there. (Wrapped still.)
4. Take the mug and set it on the plastic wrap.
5. Write the following message on the piece of paper:

"I was told you've been real good this year,  
and I'm always glad to hear it!  
With freezing weather drawing near,  
you'll need to warm the spirit."

So here's a little snowman soup,  
complete with stirring stick.  
Add hot water, sip it slow,  
It's sure to do the trick!"

6. Wrap the mug with the plastic wrap and tie the top with a ribbon, making sure to tie the piece of paper to it with the ribbon as well.
7. Give it away!



### What I am and you are

*By misskiss*

I am dark and you are light,  
I am wrong and you are right.  
I am weak and you are strong,  
I am different but you belong.

I am tart and you are sweet,  
I never win and you can't be beat.  
I am short and you are tall,  
I have no friends and you've got them all.

We are complete opposites but no matter how we are,  
I watch you from a distance because I love you from afar.

### Untitled

*By EpS3742*

A friend, a mother, an elder,  
you were the world to me.  
You made me feel like I mattered,  
you treated me equally.

The solitude that I felt each day,  
seemed to disappear.  
The world was made ok again,  
whenever you were near.

You were so very kind at heart,  
a spirit so very strong.  
People tell you this and that,  
and you would prove them wrong.

*Made by mfem6*



*Taken by Romantic Dragon*

(Continued)

Regret begins to cloud my mind,  
as sadness fills my heart.  
I've got so much to say to you,  
now that we're apart.

A piece of me left that day,  
an element of my soul.  
Now I feel an empty void,  
nothing can fill this hole.

I know that you could understand,  
I know that you could see.  
You know I treasured you more than anything,  
and I know that you loved me.

I feel it deep, it tugs and pulls,  
it runs through my veins.  
A feeling of a loss so deep,  
things will never be the same.

'Till this day I cry and beg,  
I wish that you were here.  
To hold you close, to feel your hand,  
to wipe away my fear.

The final beat, the softest breath,  
I don't want you to be gone.  
And though I clench your hand so tight,  
your spirit has moved on...

# Horoscopes for December

While past horoscopes have been written by Becky, this month's horoscope has been selected from a horoscope website by the editors:

## Sagittarius - November 22-December 21

A fabulous conclusion to Jupiter's transit through your sign occurs this month, when personal influence and prestige is very strong. Events occur that help you overcome problems that previously seemed challenging or even insurmountable. The impression you create on others is distinctive. You feel considerably more free to be yourself, and others tend to accept you more readily. Opportunities arise to better your situation in life and to be less dependent on others. This is a strong month for travel and education. Watch for financial excesses in the last week of December.

### Zodiac information

Sagittarius is a positive, mutable fire sign ruled by the Planet Jupiter. It is symbolized by the Archer. Sagittarius has a deep love of learning, meeting new cultures, making friends and searching for meaning. They are the travelers of the zodiac. Being of an expansive personality, those with this horoscope adapt easily to new surroundings.

Sagittarius make great business partners. They have vision that can be put to practical use. But, this person is not the one for petty details.

Those with this sun sign in their horoscope are warm, open and spontaneous. They have a sense of humour and wit. They are optimistic. Sagittarius like people and people like them, though they are not apt to form deep attachments.

If you are looking for someone who is outgoing, sociable - someone to talk to and share with, Sagittarians are the perfect sun sign for you. But, if you are seeking depth and closeness, look further than those with this horoscope or you will be sadly disappointed.

### More information...

#### Horoscope

[www.cafeastrology.com](http://www.cafeastrology.com)

#### Zodiac

[www.astrostarcharts.com](http://www.astrostarcharts.com)

## Thanks for reading!

Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of Avatar! Any comments, suggestions or criticisms can be directed towards one of the editors, Rob and Mel. You can also send any submissions you have for Avatar to us, which as we said at the beginning are a really important part of keeping Avatar alive. We appreciate any submissions that are made to us. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!

The Avatar Editors.

Please visit us at the Avatar page, [www.teenhelp.org/avatar](http://www.teenhelp.org/avatar).