

Get Valuable Resources And Insight On Self-Injury

Posted 7/28/09 12:00 pm ET by [Control Freak](#) in [The Real World](#), [Top TV Shows](#)

[Last week's Real World: Cancun](#) and its [After Show](#) took a serious turn when [Ayiiii](#)'s cutting problem was revealed to the roommates, as well as to viewers at home. Since the episode aired, we've received a lot of questions and comments on [MTV.com](#), so we got in touch with [To Write Love on Her Arms](#), a non-profit organization that seeks to present hope and find help for people struggling with depression, addiction and self-injury. Below, read Kaitlyn from TWLOHA's blog post to get more insight on the complexities of cutting and find links to helpful resources.



Last week I received a text that read, “Are you by a computer? I just emailed you, and this is important.”

Jamie Tworkowski, founder of To Write Love on Her Arms, had asked me to draft a response on our TWLOHA blog regarding the most recent episode of MTV’s *Real World: Cancun*, in which Ayiiii’s history of self-injury is exposed.

Together, a few members of our team watched the story unfold online, with its house-wide, honest responses to the issue of self-injury (or, “self-mutilation” as Ayiiii referred to it). After seeing the episode, we also viewed a couple of the '[Backstage Pass](#)' videos, as well as reactions showing up on Twitter and on our various social networking websites. Some of them were negative, but somewhat understandable ... As much as hurtful responses toward people struggling with self-injury are not OK, often they’re the only way people know how to initially respond at all. (In fact, many of the cast members admitted to having a new perspective on Ayiiii’s struggles after speaking with a doctor post-production.)

With this particular episode, the *Real World* producers did a good of job shedding light on the different ways we can choose to respond to others during confusing and painful moments in their lives. I think that Chloe, one of our TWLOHA team members, raised a good point among us by saying that when faced with an issue people don’t understand, like self-injury, they can either antagonize, sympathize or become apathetic. Each of these responses was evidenced in the *Real World* episode.

TWLOHA sees the confusion. We see Ayiiii's pain, and we see the frustration of her roommates who don't understand why she chooses to respond by hurting herself and believe it to be a cry for attention, which is why striving to understand these issues is so important. Education is foundational in breaking the stigma carried by self-injury, as well as other issues relating to mental health like depression, addiction and suicidal thoughts (to name a few).

Our organization knows all too well the reality of pain in the lives of millions worldwide; people who could very easily have seen Ayiiii in her place of pain and desired to hurt themselves in the same way -- we recognize moments like these as "triggers" for people who have struggled with the same issue before. However, in the same way it hurts us to see pain broadcasted into homes on TVs and computer screens, it cannot be denied that the exposure forces the world to see the reality of these issues; that they exist, and that they happen in each of our realities, our world. Ayiiii's vulnerability in sharing herself with every viewer reminds us once again of the power our stories hold and the role they play in breaking silence, entering dark places and in turn, helping us feel less alone.

We want to be a resource for every *Real World: Cancun* viewer. If you or someone you know is interested in getting more information, please check out [our website](#) and go to our ["Find Help" section](#) for a list of helplines, treatment facilities and resources specific to individual struggles and needs.

You're not alone.

Love,
Kaitlyn

More helpful resources:

S.A.F.E. Alternatives
selfinjury.com

Self Mutilators Anonymous
selfmutilatorsanonymous.org

National Hopeline Network
hopeline.com and 1-800-SUICIDE