

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What's the mission of SMA?

SMA's mission is to provide a safe space (virtual and/or actual) for individuals who engage in physical self-mutilation to come together and share our experience, strength, and hope without judgment or criticism. Together, we deepen our understanding of our behaviors and triggers and, working within the framework described in our literature ("Layers to Discovery"), we help ourselves and each other on our path to freedom. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop mutilating oneself physically.

2. Where and when did SMA begin?

Self-Mutilators Anonymous (SMA) was founded in New York City in the summer of 1986.

3. What was the inspiration behind setting up this support group?

SMA's founders, one an engineer and the other a marketing executive, discovered their common struggle and began to speak frankly with each other about what they were doing. Although the group started with only these two men, its membership now includes individuals of every age, gender, race and creed. We are LGBTQ+ friendly and welcome members from numerous countries around the world.

4. Are there in-person SMA support groups? If so, where do they meet?

All in-person meetings are currently suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pre-COVID, the only regularly-scheduled meeting was in New York City, in the borough of Manhattan. We hope to resume in-person meetings in Manhattan when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, all meetings are taking place via GoToMeeting.com. Meeting link:<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/734149493>. This meeting is password protected. Please email us at Sma@selfmutilatorsanonymous.org for the password.

5. How frequently does the group meet?

There are currently two weekly SMA meetings, both via GoToMeeting.com. We have a Thursday meeting at 7:30 p.m. Eastern Time and a Saturday meeting at 4:30p.m. Eastern Time. Both meetings are one hour in duration.

6. What are the eligibility requirements to join or participate?

A desire to stop physically self-mutilating.

Thursday meetings are closed meetings (meaning only self mutilators may attend). Saturday meetings are open to all i.e. Parents of minors, Medical students, anyone wanting insight into self-mutilation.

7. Does SMA charge an attendance fee or membership dues?

No, SMA does not have any dues or fees. Donations are appreciated. We are self-supporting through our own contributions.

8. Who are the clinician collaborators with the SMA group?

SMA is solely a peer support group. We do not collaborate with clinicians, but we are open to partnerships.

9. If I want to be an anonymous participant, does SMA accommodate my privacy needs?

SMA online meetings are not recorded. SMA takes precautions to make sure no data is stored or recorded during meetings.