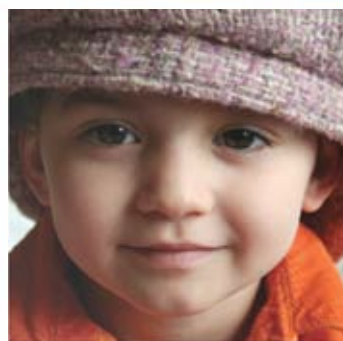
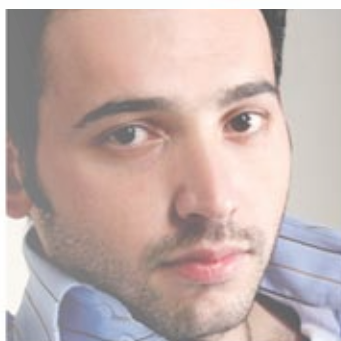


comprehensive Information Guide

to Living with and Healing from Trichotillomania and Skin Picking

Compiled by the Trichotillomania Learning Center



TLC



trichotillomania
LEARNING CENTER

bringing hope and healing since 1991

“Reflection”

By Aundrea Rose
Fresno, CA

Have you ever played tug-o-war?
It's a battle from within.
My hands have minds of their own
and inside me lives a twin.

How this war started out
is anybody's guess.
The doctors don't know as far as I do
any more or less.

I know it's hard to understand
what it's like to be me.
But my hands reach up to tug and tug
And I fight it constantly.

So tell me if you've ever been
in a tug-o-war?
And seen, like me, the casualties
lying on the floor?

Oh! You see! I thought I was alone
through this decade of despair
A childhood lost of friends and love...
All for the loss of hair



Founded in 1991, the Trichotillomania Learning Center is a nationally based nonprofit organization that works to improve the quality of life of children, adolescents and adults with Trichotillomania and related behaviors, such as skin picking, through information dissemination, education, outreach, alliance building and support of research into the causes and treatment of these disorders.

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Please note that the information in this guide is not intended to provide treatment for trichotillomania, skin picking and related behaviors. Appropriate treatment and advice should be obtained directly from a qualified and experienced doctor and/or mental health professional. The opinions expressed are those of the individual authors.

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getting Started

This guide is put together by TLC to assist in your research of trichotillomania, skin picking and related behaviors, such as nail biting. It is a collection of research and treatment articles, personal stories, and other resources we believe you'll find useful. A basic understanding of these behaviors, as well as the roles of anxiety and depression, will prepare you to evaluate their role in your own life.

In addition to this booklet, we suggest you also review the reading list included in your membership materials for more publications on these disorders. The more you learn about these conditions and how they manifest themselves in our lives, or the lives of those we love, the better prepared you are for recovery. Many of these publications are available for purchase through TLC as well as major booksellers.

Not all hair pullers or skin pickers are alike. We have found that to effectively treat these behaviors, it is important to identify your "sub-type" of pulling or picking. Is it fueled by depression or anxiety? Do you have a perfectionistic urge to make things "even"? Do you believe that the hair you pull *doesn't belong there*, is *different*, and should not be allowed to continue growing? Do you pull in an unfocused or absent-minded state? By identifying these fueling mechanisms, it is easier to design an appropriate strategy for changing your behaviors.

Despite recent progress, we are still in the earliest stages of learning to understand, treat, and even talk about trichotillomania and skin picking. At this time, there is no quick fix. So be gentle in your demands upon yourself for progress. There is tremendous hope, and it is getting better all the time. We know people who have been without hair for decades, who have reached out and released years of pain, allowed help to enter, and are experiencing what it is like to grow new hair without pulling it. We know children who were completely bald or lashless, who today are happy, engaged in being kids, and no longer pull, or pull far less. We know people who have hidden their scabbed arms and legs under their clothing for decades, who now wear shorts, even bathing suits, without shame. Many have experienced a substantial reduction in the need to pick or pull, and lessened the distracting impact of this disorder in their lives. Recovery also takes other forms: shame and isolation can be the worst symptoms of TTM and skin picking. Just talking about these behaviors is an important act of healing.

TLC staff is available to answer your questions, provide support and resources any time by email sent to info@trich.org. You may also call the office Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm Pacific Standard Time, to speak to a staff person.

With love and support,

TLC

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