Minding Your Hair

Trichotillomania is also emotionally painful.

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Besides the physical and medical problems hair-pulling causes, those who suffer from this disorder also experience shame and isolation, as well as interference with intimate relationships, work and school. Many also avoid activities they previously enjoyed.

According to Mental Health America, trichotillomania is officially classified as an “impulse control disorder,” much like the uncontrollable urge to steal (kleptomania), light fires (pyromania) or gamble. Some mental health experts consider “trich” to be a type of obsessive-compulsive disorder that can trigger depression, guilt and lowered self-esteem because the behavior can be hard to stop.

Some mental health experts also believe that hair-pulling is a type of addiction, or a form of harming oneself. In addition, guidelines for diagnosing the disorder are explored in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V).

A hairstylist or dermatologist may be more likely to uncover the physical damage trich causes, but mental health docs are the ones who make the diagnosis.

Sometimes physicians and mental health professionals may team up to diagnose trich and create a treatment plan. For those who have the problem, “You are not crazy, helpless, weak or out of control, even though you may feel like some or all of these things at times,” stresses the Trichotillomania Learning Center (TLC), a nonprofit organization that offers a wealth of information about the disorder.

The TLC and mental health doctors share a mission: To make people aware that although there isn’t a cure for trich, there are ways to treat the disorder so folks can recover from the mental and physical damage it causes.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/hair-pulling-causes-27326-5295