



Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) Protocol*

Protocol for Immediate Response to Self-Injury or Suspected Self-Injury

Teachers (and all other non-mental health staff)

1. If a staff member learns or suspects that a student is self-injuring, they should contact the counselor or school administrator. Self-injury signs may include:
 - Inappropriate dress for season (consistently wearing long sleeves or pants in warm weather)
 - Constant use of wrist bands/coverings
 - Unwillingness to participate in events/activities which require less body coverage (such as swimming or gym class)
 - Frequent bandages
 - Odd/unexplainable paraphernalia (e.g., razor blades or other implements which could be used to cut or pound)
 - Heightened signs of depression or anxiety
 - Unexplained burns, cuts, scars, or other clusters of similar markings on the skin
2. It is critical that the first response to self-injury disclosure be **empathetic, calm, kind, and non-judgmental** (see the use of "I statements" below). It is also important that first responders be honest with the student about the school protocol requiring them to share their knowledge of self-injury with the designated point person (most often school counselor). Demonstrate concern without judgment to help put a self-injurious student at greater ease.
 - a. "I'm concerned about you and want to be sure you have the support you need"
 - b. "I'm worried about you. I've seen these scars on yours arms and I think you might be hurting yourself."
3. If there is a fresh wound or injury, follow your school's protocol for referring students who need immediate attention by office personnel (in person or a phone call is recommended).
4. Immediately notify the school psychologist or school counselor of the situation.

Office Personnel/School Nurse

1. Give direct care to any wounds.
2. Ensure that the school counselor or school psychologist follows up with the student.



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School Counselor, School Psychologist, Administrator (Point Person)

1. When meeting with a student, always maintain an empathetic and non-judgmental attitude.
2. Determine if the student questionnaire is appropriate. The student can fill it out on their own or the point person can fill it out after a conversation with the student. Pay special attention to the last part of question #3. **If the student indicates that they intentionally self-injure in an effort to practice or attempt suicide, proceed with a Suicide Risk Assessment Level 1.**
3. Determine the student's risk and the need for parental involvement and/or the need to engage outside resources.
 - a. **Low Risk:** Students with little history of self-injury, a generally manageable amount of external stress, at least some positive coping skills, and some external.
 - b. **High Risk:** Students who report frequent or long-standing self-injury practices, who use high lethality methods, and/or who are experiencing chronic stress with few positive supports or coping skills.
4. Work with student to come up with strategies for handling stress and for checking in with the point person or another on-site trusted adult during times where they may begin to feel at risk for self-injury. (See Student Self-Harm Coping Strategies & Resources handout)
5. If parents are contacted, provide them with both community and web-based resources (see Parent Fact Sheet & Resources handout). Urge them to seek outside counseling and support for their child. Request a Release of Information to the school so that the point person may communicate with any outside professionals who are assisting the student. Follow up in 1-2 weeks after initial parental contact.

Note:

"The American School Counselor Association requires confidentiality between students and counselors except in event that the student is at risk for harm. **The literature surrounding self-injury suggests that elementary or secondary school staff should inform parents about their child's self-injuring behavior even if it is deemed that the child is not an immediate threat to himself or herself.** In making this decision, the point person should account for all factors surrounding the student's situation, not just the severity of the injury. The student should be advised in advance of this and allowed to be present during the conversation. **It is the legal responsibility of the school to notify parents of their child's self-injury.** If a parent of a student who is self-injuring does not make any effort to seek outside counseling or help for their child, their behavior may be seen as neglectful. The school does have the responsibility to report parental neglect to the local child protection agency". (<http://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/non-suicidal-self-injury-in-schools.pdf>)



Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) Assessment*

1. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Name: _____ ID: _____ School: _____

DOB: _____ Age: _____ IEP/504? _____ Grade/Teacher _____

Parent/Guardian #1 name/phone # (s): _____

Parent/Guardian #2 name/phone # (s): _____

Screener's name: _____ Position: _____

Contact Info: _____

2. INCIDENT INFORMATION

Date/Time of Incident _____

Description of Incident:

3. ACTION TAKEN: (such as parent contact, additional support, outside referral, report to CPS/SRO)

4. **PARENT CONTACT:** Y/N _____ When _____ If no, why not? _____

5. RECOMMENDATIONS/FOLLOW-UP:

