



## Self-Injury: Teachers

### What to do if you suspect a student is Self Injuring themselves

#### **DO:**

1. Try to approach the student in a calm and caring way.
2. Accept him/her although you do not accept the behavior.
3. Let the student know how much you care about him/her and believe in his/her potential.
4. Understand that this is his/her way of coping with the pain that he/she feels inside.
5. Know the school's protocol for who to go to—school counselor, social worker, and/or nurse.
6. Offer to go with that student to see the professional helper.
7. Listen!! Allow the student to talk to you. Be available.
8. Discover what the student's personal strengths are and encourage him/her to use those strengths.
9. Help him/her get involved in some area of interest, i.e., a club, sport, peer program, or outreach project. Another option is to encourage them to volunteer at a local animal shelter or wildlife sanctuary, help an older person at a nursing home, tutor a young child after school, or mentor a child with low self-esteem.

#### **DON'T**

1. Say or do anything to cause the student to feel guilt or shame, i.e., "What did you do to yourself?" or "Why did you do that?"
2. Act shocked or appalled by his/her behavior.
3. Talk about their self-injury in front of the class or around his/her peers.
4. Try to teach him/her what you think he/she should do.
5. Judge the student even if you do not agree with him/her.
6. Tell the student that you won't tell anyone if he/she shares self-harming behaviors with you.
7. Use punishment or negative consequences if a student does self-injure.
8. Make promises to the student that you can't keep.