

## **Protocol for Responding to Students Self Injury**

### **Part 1: Awareness of Self-Injury**

- The principal will review this divisional Protocol for Responding to Student Self-Injury on an annual basis with all school staff members.
- The principal will be in support of training opportunities for staff members in regards to student self-injurious and/or suicidal behaviours.
- Each school should have a Designated Team familiar with processes related to the initial stage of assessment and referral of students engaging in self-injury for further mental health services.
- Designated team members may include guidance counsellors, ESS school psychologists and social workers, principals and vice principals. Teams may also include other school staff.
- It is mandatory that all staff members refer a student they suspect is engaging in self-injurious behaviour to a designated team member.
- Staff members are encouraged to directly ask youth who they suspect are engaging in self-injury, if they are harming themselves. This conversation should happen in a calm, and caring manner in a private setting. If staff members are uncomfortable asking about self-injury, they should personally bring the student to a designated team member to continue the conversation for the initial assessment.
- **If the situation is an emergency 9-1-1 must be called immediately.**

### **Part 2: Difference Between Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) and Suicidal Self-Injury**

- There is a difference between non-suicidal and suicidal self-injury.
- Non-suicidal self-injury is the intentional and direct injuring of one's own body without suicidal intent.
- Suicidal self-injury is the intentional and direct injuring of one's own body with suicidal intent.

### **Part 3: Self-Injurious Behaviours**

- Examples of self-injurious behaviours may include cutting, scratching, burning, laxatives, ingesting a medication in excess of the prescribed or generally recognized therapeutic dose, ingesting a recreational or illicit drug or alcohol as a means to harm, ingesting a non-ingestible substance or object, choking or asphyxiation, banging your head.
- Warning Signs could include:
  - Visible signs of self-injurious behaviour (for example, cuts, bruises, rope marks, burns)
  - Change in baseline behaviour (t-shirt to long sleeves),
  - Evidence of self-injury in writing and/or artwork,
  - Social media posts,
  - Verbal comments,
  - Pre-occupation with methods of self-injury,
  - Information shared by peers, parents, guardians, self-disclosure
- The youth should be assessed by a Designated Team member in private to determine level of risk;
- Offered immediate support, assistance, and follow-up.

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