

Self-Injury Help

Working with Students Who Self-Injure

What To Do

- Approach the student in an accepting, non-judgmental way. Believe that the student is truly doing their best to take care of themselves in that moment.
- Assess extent of current injury. Does this person need immediate medical attention or can they attend to their wounds themselves?
 - If necessary, call 911
 - If not, allow student to care for themselves
- Be direct and specific.
 - You can say something like, ***"Some of your friends (or other residents) have told me that you are (or have been) cutting (or burning, scratching, etc.) yourself. I know that people hurt themselves for a lot of different reasons and I am wondering if you'd like to talk about it?"***
 - If they are willing to talk, make sure you follow up with ***"Do you ever think about killing yourself?"***
 - ***"It sounds like you have a lot going on. I'd like to get you connected with someone who can help"*** is a good way to start a referral to the Counseling Center.
 - You can help the student contact the Counseling Center at 262-3180 .
- Remind the student of the resources that are available to help them (the Counseling Center, Student Health Services, etc.)

What NOT To Do

- Don't assume it's a suicide attempt. Don't assume it's not. Ask the student if they are suicidal, want to die, etc.
- Don't try to fix or cure them. Your role is to listen empathically, determine if an ambulance is necessary, and to follow protocol for emergency situations if needed.
- Don't allow a student to self-injure in front of you. Let them know you are willing to listen and to help, but you are not comfortable watching that.
- Don't lecture. People harm themselves for a variety of reasons, and for some it feels like the only way for them to cope with their current feelings/situation. Adding guilt or shame to their obvious emotional distress is not helpful.

*** You can always contact the Counseling Center with any questions. ***

Adopted from

https://www.dyc.edu/campus_life/services/counseling/ra_info/self_injury_help_tips.aspx

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