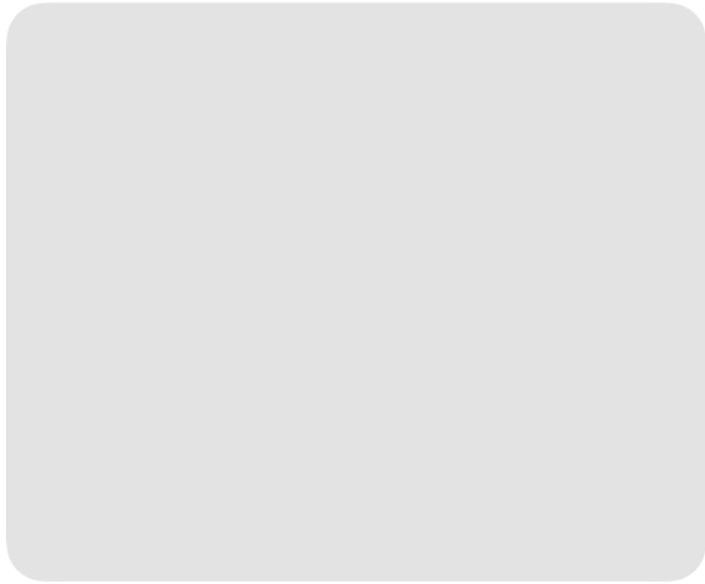


Talking To Students About Self-Injury: Adapted from The International Consortium on Self-Injury in Educational Settings

WHAT WORKS	WHAT DOES NOT WORK
<p><b>USING A CALM, LOW-KEY TONE AND APPROACH.</b> This involves a calm and empathic approach that does not convey judgement of any kind.</p>	<p><b>OVERREACTING</b> can convey that you are uncomfortable with the discussion. This may shut down future conversations.</p>
<p><b>RESPECTFUL CURIOSITY.</b> Conveying you want to understand a student’s experience helps them feel understood</p>	<p><b>INTERROGATING</b> Asking questions in an interrogating manner can invalidate a student’s experience</p>
<p><b>ACKNOWLEDGING STUDENTS MAY NOT BE READY TO STOP</b> For many students, self-injury may be their only means of coping.</p>	<p><b>JUMPING IN TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM</b> While this often comes from a good place and a desire to help, trying to “fix” the problem can come across as not listening to or hearing what the student has to say.</p>
<p><b>FOCUS ON THE STUDEENT’S OVERALL WELL-BEING</b> Helps you learn about what they are burdened by</p>	<p><b>ASKING TOO MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SELF INJURY</b> Detracts from what underlies the self-injury</p>
<p><b>VALIDATE</b> That self-injury serves a purpose and you want to understand their experience</p>	<p><b>QUESTION</b> What is wrong with them</p>

In talking to student’s use the terms student’s use to refer to their self-injury. It can validate their experience by demonstrating that you are actively listening to what they are saying. If the student refers to “my cutting,” then the following: “Can you tell me a bit more about your cutting. I’d like to understand what your cutting does for you.” Keep in mind that how you respond to someone who self-injures is important. Although some people may have initial strong reactions, and this is often understandable, it is important that responses be calm and understanding. It is important for students to have an opportunity to share their story without feeling pressured.

Finally, validate how hard it can be to talk about self-injury. The student may feel that it is a violation of their privacy or a betrayal if someone has told on them. This should be acknowledged and validated. Letting a student know that you appreciate their willingness to talk about this and acknowledging that you understand and is not easy to do so will be helpful.



**USE THE STUDENT'S LANGUAGE**

Using the terms students use to refer to self-injury can validate their experience by demonstrating that you are actively listening to what they are sharing.