

# MANAGING SELF INJURY IN THE CLASSROOM

## **Important Facts:**

- Self-harm is a coping behavior for managing emotions
- Injuries need to be taken seriously as a cry for help it will not pass
- The behavior doesn't indicate a psychological illness
- Not an indication of a desire to commit suicide

## **Warning Signs a Student Maybe Injuring:**

- Consistently wearing unseasonably warm clothing
- Consistent presence of cuts, bruises, or burns
- Student is withdrawn and goes out of his way to not be noticed
- Emotional instability, may experience angry outbursts, visible anxiety
- Has sores that take a long time to heal

## **What to do if You Suspect a Student is Injuring:**

- Express your concerns to the campus counselor
- Discretely observe the student in various settings
- Be sure not to overlook his presence, greet him to maintain a connection
- Attempt to engage him in positive interactions in the class and on campus
- Find authentic opportunities to give him affirmations
- Make note of your concerns/ observations and continue to talk with campus counselor and/or administrator

## **How to Respond if a Student Discloses She is Injuring:**

- Stay calm
- Don't get overtly emotional with anger, fear, shock, or sadness etc..
- Listen carefully
- Be aware of your limitations and don't attempt to practice outside of your qualifications
- Don't ask questions outside of the injuring behavior
- Explain ways that you are able to help them
- Validate their feelings
- Refer her to the school nurse to evaluate injuries
- Make a report to your school administrators and implement your campus action plan

## **Student Needs:**

- An advocate
- Someone who cares
- To be noticed everyday
- To be treated with respect and kindness
- To know that they count and what they do matters
- To feel connected to the school community

