



Self-Injury: Understanding Self-Injurious Behaviour

Virtually Facilitated In-Service Training

Course Description

As a caregiver, who is caring for children and youth who have experienced trauma, loss and grief, you may experience caring for a young person who uses self-harm or self-injury to cope with emotional distress. Self-harm/injury is a common way for youth to manage their emotions, even though it is an unhealthy way to cope. By understanding the emotions and the cycle of self-injury, the caregiver can be prepared to be supportive and empathetic while advocating for services. As well, it is important to have a good knowledge of appropriate policy and procedure which will need to be followed during incidents of self-harm/injury.

Learning Objectives

- Define self-injury and self-harm.
- Discover who is susceptible to self-injury.
- Recognize the warning signs and injuries.
- Understand the self-injury cycle.
- Recommend therapy and understand therapeutic techniques.
- Administer policy and procedure set out by the ministry of Children and Family Services.

Key Messages

- Self-harm/injury is a common way for youth to manage their emotions, albeit an unhealthy way to cope. Self-injury works.
- By understanding the emotions and the cycle of self-injury, the caregiver can be prepared to be supportive and empathetic while advocating for services.
- Appropriate policy and procedure needs to be used during incidents of self-harm/injury.

Guided Discussion Questions

1. How are you providing a safe space for children/youth to express their feelings of anger or sadness so they can learn to manage their emotions in a healthy way?
2. What would you do if you discovered that a child/youth was engaging in self-injury?

Resources

Resource one: Self-injury information and support:

Link: www.psyke.org

Resource two: LifeSIGNS – Self-Injury Guidance & Network Support:

Link: www.lifesigns.org.uk/

Resource three: Alberta Resources:

Link: www.ementalhealth.ca/Alberta/Self-harm-including-Selfcutting/index.php?m=heading&ID=95etc.

Resource four: Community Helpers Program: Using an anonymous survey, local peers take a two-day training to support a youth who self harms or has suicidal ideation. The peers are usually in the community around the youth. This was developed by Alberta Health Services and is available in the following areas: Calgary, Cochrane, Edmonton, Lac la Biche, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Banff, Jasper, Fort McMurray, Slave Lake and High Level. For some information on the program visit

Link: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/news/Page12510.aspx>.