

## DCIU Interconnected MTSS Framework March 2024 Awareness Campaign

### Mental Health Literacy: Self-Injury Awareness

#### Social Media Resources

Below are sample social media posts around the first March awareness campaign of Mental Health Literacy, with a focus on self-injury awareness. Self-Injury Awareness Day, or SIAD, is a global awareness event celebrated on March 1. It draws attention to self-injury or self-harm in the hope of helping people who practice it get the help they need. This is a great opportunity to re-emphasize that hope is real, and change is possible, and to encourage anyone struggling with this to reach out, speak up, and take that brave step towards a healthier tomorrow.

This campaign includes a PSA, social media posts about self-injury awareness, and resources to help address the issue. The YouTube link for the PSA is included below. DCIU will be posting this information across its social media platforms and is pleased to share this material with districts so that they may do the same.

#### Post #1: PSA

Every year, countless individuals struggle with emotional pain so intense, it feels unbearable. In their search for relief, some turn to self-injury. But self-injury is a sign of deeper issues, not a solution. Let's break the silence on self-injury. If you or someone you know is struggling with self-injury, please don't hesitate to reach out for help. You are not alone, and there is hope. Remember, choosing to ask for help is a sign of strength. Let's come together to support each other in times of need.



<https://youtu.be/WBS2J-sxCgE>

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**Post #2:**

**If you or someone you know is struggling with self-harm, please know:**

- **You're Not Alone:** If you're struggling, remember, you're not the only one. Many of us have faced similar battles.
- **To Seek Support:** It's okay to ask for help. Reach out to friends, family, or a trusted adult. Schools often have counselors who are there to support you.
- **There are other ways to Cope:** Explore positive ways to cope with stress and emotional pain. This could be through art, music, sports, or talking to someone you trust.
- **You are stronger than you know!**

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**Post #3**

Sometimes, individuals use self-injury as a coping mechanism to deal with emotional pain, intense anger, or frustration. It's important to know that self-injury is a sign of distress and not a bid for attention. If you or someone you know struggles with this, listen without judgment, educate yourself and others, and promote positive mental health. Remember, you're not alone. There is help. Just keep moving forward.

Just keep  
moving  
forward.

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## Newsletter Blurbs

DCIU is also pleased to provide these newsletter blurbs around the theme of mental health with an emphasis on the connection between sleep and mental health, to be used in communications to your communities, whether through email, newsletters, blogs, or other channels.

### **For Families and Community:**

#### ***Understanding Self-Injury: Raising Awareness to Foster Compassion and Support***

This month, we spotlight a sensitive yet critically important topic: Self-Injury Awareness. Our goal is to foster understanding, offer support, and create an environment where everyone feels safe to express their feelings and seek help without judgment.

Self-injury, or self-harm, refers to a person harming themselves on purpose as a way to deal with difficult feelings, overwhelming situations, or experiences. It's a sign that someone is struggling emotionally and needs support and coping mechanisms to deal with their pain. Self-injury can take many forms, including cutting, burning, or any other means of causing harm to oneself. It's important to understand that self-harm is not a mental illness itself but a behavior indicating a need for coping skills to deal with distress. It can be related to various issues, including anxiety, depression, stress, or trauma.

Recognizing the signs of self-injury is the first step toward helping someone who may be struggling. Signs include unexplained injuries, wearing long sleeves or pants in hot weather, withdrawal from

friends or family, and behavior changes. If you notice these signs in yourself or someone else, it's important to approach the situation with compassion and understanding.

To offer support, provide a safe space for individuals to share their feelings and experiences; encourage consultation with healthcare professionals who specialize in mental health; educate yourself and others; and encourage the development of healthy ways to cope with stress and emotional pain, such as through exercise, art, or talking to someone they trust.

Finally, numerous resources are available for students and families dealing with self-injury. School counselors, mental health professionals, and community organizations can provide support, education, and therapeutic options. Remember, reaching out for help is a sign of strength.

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## **For Educators:**

### ***"Understanding Self-Injury: Raising Awareness to Foster Compassion and Support"***

As educators, our role extends beyond academic instruction; we are also pivotal in the emotional and psychological well-being of our students. March 1 marks Self-Injury Awareness Day, an opportune time to shed light on an issue that affects a significant number of young people in our schools.

Self-injury, or self-harm, refers to a person intentionally causing harm to themselves as a way of dealing with difficult feelings, painful memories, or overwhelming situations. This behavior is often misunderstood and can be challenging for educators to address.

Awareness and understanding are the first steps towards supporting students who may be struggling. Here are some key points for educators:

- **Recognize the Signs:** Self-injury can take various forms, including cutting, burning, or hitting oneself. Be alert to unexplained bruises or cuts, frequent "accidents," and students wearing long sleeves in warm weather to cover injuries.
- **Create a Supportive Environment:** Foster an atmosphere of trust and respect in your classroom. Encourage open conversations about emotions and stress management, without singling out individuals.
- **Respond Appropriately:** If you suspect a student is self-harming, approach the subject with care and empathy. Avoid judgment and express your concern for their well-being. It's important to refer the student to a school counselor or mental health professional.
- **Educate:** Incorporate mental health education into your curriculum. Educating students about emotional wellness, coping strategies, and where to find help can empower them to seek support.
- **Collaborate with Parents and Caregivers:** Work together with the student's family and healthcare providers to create a network of support.



Our awareness and actions can make a profound difference in the lives of students dealing with self-injury. By educating ourselves and approaching this sensitive topic with compassion and understanding, we can help guide our students toward healthier coping mechanisms and a brighter future.

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## Resources

<https://medlineplus.gov/selfharm.html>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/self-injury/symptoms-causes/syc-20350950>

<https://nationaltoday.com/self-injury-awareness-day/>