



Understanding Self-Harm Behavior

In-Service Training

Course Description

This course provides an essential understanding of self-harm, including its definition, risk factors, and the individuals who are most susceptible. Participants will explore the cycle of self-harm, motivations behind the behavior, and how to recognize the various forms and warning signs. The course emphasizes trauma-informed approaches to supporting children and youth who self-harm, ensuring sensitive and effective care. Additionally, it covers how to access appropriate resources and follow established protocols during a self-harm incident, empowering participants to respond effectively and responsibly.

Learning Objectives

- Define self-harm and describe who is susceptible to self-harm.
- Describe the cycle of self-harm and the motivations.
- Recognize the warning signs, the forms of self-harm and the injuries.
- Support children/youth who self-harm in a trauma-informed way.
- Access resources and follow policies and procedures when a self-harm incident occurs.

Key Messages

Understanding Self-Harm: Self-harm refers to intentional, self-inflicted injury, and it is important to recognize who may be at risk. Understanding the cycle of self-harm and its underlying motivations is crucial in identifying and supporting individuals who engage in such behavior.

Recognizing Signs and Forms of Self-Harm: It's essential to identify warning signs, recognize different forms of self-harm, and understand the range of injuries involved. Early recognition can lead to better intervention and support.

Supporting with Care and Following Protocols: Supporting individuals who self-harm should be done in a trauma-informed way, ensuring sensitivity and safety. It's also important to know how to access the right resources and follow established policies and procedures during self-harm incidents.

Resources

'Self-Care' Resources

AFKA – Caregiver Support Team: Link to reach out to the AFKA Caregiver Support Team if you have questions or need support. <https://afkaonline.ca/programs/caregiver-support-program/>

Alberta Health Services – Mental Health Services: Mental health programs & services available in Alberta. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page14063.aspx>

Family Resource Networks – Supporting Alberta families: Resources and tips for Alberta families. <https://www.alberta.ca/family-resource-networks#jumplinks-2>

'Course' Resources

Centre for Suicide Prevention – Self-Harm and Suicide: Article about the link between self-harm and suicide. https://www.suicideinfo.ca/local_resource/self-harm-and-suicide/

MyHealth.Alberta.ca – Non-Suicidal Self-Injury in Children: Article and resources to support children.
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=ac18551>

MyHealth.Alberta.ca – Self-Harm and Youth: Article and resources to support youth.
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/alberta/Pages/self-harm-and-youth.aspx>

The Skeletons in My Closet: Video by Dr. Stephen Lewis. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G17iMOw0ar8>

Government of Canada – Suicide, self-harm, and suicide-related behaviours in Canada: Key statistics: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/mental-health/suicide-self-harm/>