Non-suicidal self-injury among elementary-aged children: Educators’ experiences and professional development needs

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Research suggests that non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) occurs among elementary-aged children. Although it remains unclear to what extent elementary school educators encounter NSSI among their students, and how they respond.

**Online researcher-developed questions:**

- Knowledge and understanding of NSSI
- Reasons for which students engage in NSSI
- Professional development needs regarding NSSI response
Analyses & results

65.1% of educators have dealt with NSSI and feel ill-equipped to respond

1. **Perceived reasons for NSSI engagement:** Stressors, emotion regulation, mental health challenges, social expression, external influences

2. **Professional development needs:**
   - **Access to training**
     - How to identify NSSI
     - How to effectively intervene with students engaging in NSSI
     - How to communicate about NSSI to students
   - **Resources (educational and community)**
   - **Schoolwide protocol for responding to NSSI**
Elementary school educators are faced with responding to NSSI among students, despite reporting a lack of training, clear guidelines, and feeling ill-equipped. Educators want **training, resources, and professional development to more effectively respond to NSSI engagement.**

**Need for professional development and training within schools:**

i. Importance of first response to NSSI disclosure

ii. Challenge common NSSI misconceptions

iii. Importance of a schoolwide protocol: guidelines, resources for support, and designated trained interventionists

Thank you

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