



AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

Self-Harming Behaviors Response Protocol

Agnes Scott College (ASC) has coordinated specific wellness and safety services in order to serve students dealing with cutting, burning, hair pulling, or other forms of self-harming behaviors. We utilize a multidisciplinary team approach, as this is considered a best practice for intervention of self-harm-related concerns on college and university campuses. The team consists of representatives from the fields of health, psychology, student life, and office of disability services who work collaboratively with the student toward stated goals.

What is self-harm?

Self-harm is the overarching term used to refer to a wide variety of problematic behaviors related to self-injury and is defined as the intentional, direct injuring of body tissue most often done without suicidal intentions. These types of behaviors may include cutting, burning, banging or hitting body parts, and/or hair pulling. The motivations for self-harm vary; it may be used as a coping mechanism for anxiety, depression, stress, emotional numbness, sense of failure, low self-esteem or perfectionism.

For more information about self-harm or how to recognize the signs and symptoms, please refer to the Mayo Clinic's information page at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/self-injury/DS00775>

Intervention Team

ASC takes a multidisciplinary team approach to working with enrolled students experiencing self-harm to assist them in their treatment and recovery efforts. A multidisciplinary team approach is most beneficial to students because it maximizes services and support through coordinated care with the goal of students regaining wellness and succeeding academically, socially and emotionally. This approach may involve the student attending counseling sessions (individual and group appointments as available and appropriate).

Once a student presents to or initiates contact with a team member, the team member will work with the student to identify what goals the student would like to work toward. The team will work collaboratively with the student to determine treatment options, course of treatment, and recommendations for continued care, taking into account the student's individual goals. Once a plan is created the student is responsible for scheduling and attending these appointments. It is important to be proactive scheduling these meetings to guarantee being seen. Recovery from engaging in self-harm behaviors must be a top priority to the student and the student should understand that at times adjustments to the student's academic and co-curricular plan may be necessary in order to incorporate treatment recommendations.

Intervention Team Members

- Wellness Center – 404.471.7100*
 - Executive Director, Wellness Center
 - Director, Counseling and Psychological Services
 - Clinical Director, Student Health
 - Student Support Coordinator, Wellness Center
- Director, Residence Life - 404.471.6408
- Assistant Athletic Director and Director of Sports Medicine - 404.471.6496
- Coordinator, Disability Services - 404.471.6174
- Associate Dean of Students - 404.471.6075

**this line can be utilized to connect with any member of the Wellness Center listed above:*

The above individuals will meet on a regular basis once the need arises. The team may consult with others on an as-needed basis depending on the circumstances and needs of the student.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality means that information shared by a student with medical providers, mental health providers, and individuals serving on the intervention team cannot be revealed to any other individual without express written permission of the student. These individuals are prohibited from breaking confidentiality unless there is an imminent threat of harm to self or others.

Because an atmosphere of trust is vital when assisting a student who has disclosed personal information, all efforts will be made to ensure that a student's privacy is maintained. However, there may be occasions in which confidentiality is not always possible or appropriate. The College has the responsibility to balance the requests for confidentiality with our institutional responsibility of ensuring a safe educational environment and workplace. Thus, depending on the level of threat to the student's health and well being, on some occasions successful treatment may require the cooperation and involvement of the student's family and/or guardian. The student will be encouraged to share information regarding treatment with their family member and/or guardian in instances deemed appropriate by the team. When it is believed that a student's health and well being is in jeopardy, the family member and/or guardian will be notified and involved in the referral process to a more intensive treatment program. Additionally, under these circumstances emergency personnel may need to become involved in order to ensure the safety of the student.

Identification and Referral

Any student concerned about self-harming behavior, or related issues can consult with the Intervention Team by initiating contact with a member of the team.

Any member of the Agnes Scott College community (faculty, staff or student) who has concern about a particular student can consult with a team member. The team member will discuss the signs and symptoms noticed, give advice about how to talk to the student of concern and discuss how to refer the student for an assessment. The College considers this a best practice for referral of a student.

If the concerned party is uncomfortable approaching the student about a referral for an assessment, or the efforts have been unsuccessful, a team member may intervene on their behalf. Once the team member is able to verify and document the concerns and there is an indication of potential significant risk to self, the student will be notified and asked to schedule an appointment to meet with a team member for an initial assessment.

If the student is unresponsive to the request (e.g., doesn't respond to email or telephone calls, etc.) or if it is determined during this process that there is a significant and immediate risk to self, the Intervention Team will consult directly with the Dean of Students representative and/or emergency medical personnel.

Additional resources regarding self-harming behaviors can be found at
www.mayoclinic.com/health/self-injury/DS00775
www.selfinjury.com