**Classroom Guidance Lesson – Background Information**

Classroom guidance lessons are an important way to empower students with the skills and information they need to combat self-injury on a school wide level.

When leading a classroom guidance lesson, it is important to avoid glamorizing self-injury. Glamorizing self-injury can lead to social contagion.

A classroom guidance lesson on self-injury should focus on the following ideas.

* Focus #1
  + Identify signs of emotional stress in self/others
  + Identify risk factors for SI in self/others
  + Reasoning
    - Important to empower students with the information they need to identify self-injury.
* Focus #2 – Peer Intervention Training
  + Students learn the importance of their role as referral agents
  + Reasoning:
    - Peers have an important role as referral agents. Among school counselors, 67% find out about a student’s self-injurious behaviors through peer-report. Only half of students feel comfortable talking to school staff about a personal problem. Students must learn their role as referral agents.
* Focus #3 - Prevention
  + Social skills training – especially conflict resolution
  + Basic coping skills and stress management techniques
  + Reasoning
    - A lack of emotion regulation skills and positive coping skills is a major trigger to self-injure. If teens are empowered with these skills, then they might be less likely to self-injure.

The lesson included in this resource guide meets the following qualifications:

* Appropriate for grades 6-12
* Focus #1 – Students learn about self-injury and how to identify it
* Focus #2 – As a wrap-up discussion, students explore how they can help a friend who self-injures
  + **Note:** In this stage of the guidance lesson, I would make sure to emphasize that the student should talk to the school counselor if the student learns that her friend is self-injuring. I would state, “Self-injury is often a sign of deeper emotional issues. Saving a life is more important than saving a friendship.”
* Focus #3 - Students explore coping skills and ways to manage stress