**American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position**

“Professional school counselors recognize and distinguish individual and group differences and strive to value all students and groups equally. Professional school counselors advocate for the equitable treatment of all students in school and in the community.”

**Self-Injury and *The Professional School Counselor and Equity for All Students* ASCA Position Statement**

School counselors must be aware of student differences and notice inequalities in how students are served. Self-injury does not affect all students in the same way. While the prevalence of self-injury is equal among races, ethnicities, and SES, the prevalence of reporting indicates inequality (Shallcross, 2013; Croyle, 2007). Caucasian students are far more likely than students of other races or ethnicities to report self-injury for themselves or a friend. This means that Caucasians students are receiving more support in recovering from self-injury than students of other backgrounds.

In order to serve all students, school counselors must investigate where the inequalities are in the school system. Students are more likely to report self-injury if they have an established relationship with a trusted adult. Thus, school counselors need to make a concerted effort to reach non-Caucasian students and earn their trust.

Recommendations for reaching out to non-Caucasian students:

* Establish relationships with cultural brokers (ELL teacher, multicultural club leader, etc.)
	+ Educate these adults about self-injury so they can serve as referral agents
* Make the school a more welcoming environment for these students
	+ Wall art and welcome signs in non-English languages
	+ Regularly leading classroom guidance lessons in ELL classes or multicultural clubs
* Establishing relationships with families from other cultures
	+ New families night at school
	+ Assess for needs of families and have events to help meet these needs
	+ Be proactive in contacting these families and establishing a relationship

Although self-injury does not vary in prevalence by ethnicity, race, or SES, self-injury is more prevalent among LGBTQ identifying students. It is the duty of the school counselor to learn the reason for this inequality and address it.

* Are these students bullied in my school?
	+ Address bullying and create a safer environment for these students
	+ Address hate language whenever possible
* Do these students know that I am an ally?
	+ Make sure that my office is a safe zone for these students
* Does the school climate feel unsafe or unwelcoming for these students?
	+ Make the environment more inclusive. Make sure LGBTQ students see themselves represented in posters, and inclusive language.
	+ Do not assume a student’s gender or sexual orientation
	+ Make sure there is a club (such as a Gay-Straight Alliance) where students can feel like they have a voice
	+ Advocate for gender-neutral restrooms