



The Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery

The Brief Non-Suicidal Self-Injury Assessment Tool (BNSSI-AT)

Developed by:
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How to Interpret this Document: This document shows main questions as well as sub-questions, as indicated in colored text. The response option that triggers a sub-question will appear in color (most are blue, though other levels of sub-questions also appear in red). The sub-question that relates to that response option appears immediately below and is in the same color as the response option that triggers the sub-question. If more than one sub-question follows from this one response option, the additional sub-questions appear below in the same color. If a sub-question has another sub-question within it, the same pattern follows (the response option that triggers the sub-question is in a color that matches the color of the text of the sub-question below) though it will be in a different color from the first sub-question.

Citation: Whitlock, J.L., Exner-Cortens, D. & Purington, A. (2014). Validity and reliability of the non-suicidal self-injury assessment test (NSSI-AT). *Psychological Assessment* 26(3): 935-946.

Primary and secondary NSSI characteristics

A. Forms

1. Have you ever done any of the following ***with the purpose of intentionally hurting yourself?***¹
 - Severely scratched or pinched with fingernails or other objects to the point that bleeding occurs or marks remain on the skin
 - Cut wrists, arms, legs, torso or other areas of the body
 - Dripped acid onto skin
 - Carved words or symbols into the skin
 - Ingested a caustic substance(s) or sharp object(s) (Drano, other cleaning substances, pins, etc.)
 - Bitten yourself to the point that bleeding occurs or marks remain on the skin
 - Tried to break your own bone(s)
 - Broke your own bone(s)
 - Ripped or torn skin
 - Burned wrists, hands, arms, legs, torso or other areas of the body
 - Rubbed glass into skin or stuck sharp objects such as needles, pins, and staples into or underneath the skin (not including tattooing, body piercing, or needles used for medication use)
 - Banged or punched *objects* to the point of bruising or bleeding
 - Punched or banged *oneself* to the point of bruising or bleeding
 - Intentionally prevented wounds from healing
 - Engaged in fighting or other aggressive activities with the intention of getting hurt
 - Other _____
 - No, I have never purposefully injured myself

2. Are there any other ways that you have physically hurt or mutilated your body with the purpose of intentionally hurting yourself?
 - Yes; please specify
 - No

¹ Note: We advise against use of a behavior-based NSSI screening item with secondary school students. Single item measures, while slightly less effective, are preferred in this population. We piloted this measure: "Have you ever hurt your body (e.g. cut, carve, burn, scratch really hard, punch) on purpose but without wanting to end your life?" with freshmen college students and found a similar NSSI rate as with our behavior based item.

B. Functions

3. How true are the following statements about why you hurt yourself? Please select the most accurate response.

I hurt myself...	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
...to feel something				
...because my friends hurt themselves				
...as a self-punishment or to atone for sins				
...to get a rush or surge of energy				
...to deal with frustration				
...to cope with uncomfortable feelings (e.g., depression or anxiety)				
...in hopes that someone would notice that something is wrong or that so others will pay attention to me				
...so I do not hurt myself in other ways				
...because it feels good				
...to deal with anger				
...to get control over myself or my life				
...to shock or hurt someone				
...to avoid committing suicide				
...because I get the urge and cannot stop it				
...to relieve stress or pressure				
...to change my emotional pain into something physical				
...because of my self-hatred				
...because I like the way it looks				
...as a way to practice suicide				
...as an attempt to commit suicide				
Other, please describe				

4. In the above question, you indicated that you intentionally hurt yourself with the intention of practicing or committing suicide. Was practicing or attempting suicide the **primary** reason you intentionally hurt yourself?
- Yes
 - No
 - I am not sure

If only these items are indicated or if #4 is answered yes, we exclude these individuals from the NSSI track and recode as no NSSI²

² We have also run surveys where we indicate self-injury without suicidal intent in the screening item rather than eliminating suicide as a function at this juncture. Including suicide function here, however, allows for analysis of intention consistent with NSSI as part of a self-harm continuum.

C. Recency and Frequency (and age of onset and cessation)

5. The following questions ask about your experience with intentionally hurting yourself. We know that this can be a difficult issue to think and talk about. Please note that there are web links on the bottom of every page and at the end of the survey with contact information you can use if you feel like you want to talk with someone. There is also a distraction button you can use to take a break if you start to feel triggered or at all uncomfortable. The information you provide about this topic will be used to help others who intentionally hurt themselves. It will take about 15 more minutes to complete this survey. Thank you in advance for your time and honesty.

~~~~~ When was the last time you intentionally hurt yourself in one of the ways listed in the previous question?

- Less than 1 week ago
- Between 1 week and 1 month ago
- Between 1 and 3 months ago
- Between 3 and 6 months ago
- Between 6 months and 1 year ago
- [Between 1 and 2 years ago](#)
- [More than 2 years ago](#)

5a. [How likely are you to intentionally hurt yourself again?](#)

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not sure
- [Somewhat unlikely](#)
- [Very unlikely](#)

5b. [How old were you the last time you self-injured?](#)

6. Approximately on how many total occasions have you intentionally hurt yourself?
- Only once
  - 2-3 times
  - 4-5 times
  - 6-10 times
  - 11-20 times
  - 21-50 times
  - More than 50 times
7. If you had to estimate the total number of occasions you have intentionally hurt yourself, what would you estimate?<sup>3</sup>
8. On approximately how many days have you injured yourself in the past year?
9. How old were you the first time you intentionally hurt yourself?

### **D. Wound Locations**

10. On what areas of your body have you intentionally hurt yourself?
- Wrists

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<sup>3</sup> We include this as well as the item above because it is preferable to work with the continuous data generated by this item but often less accurate since individuals with many self-injury incidents cannot often recall number of incidents. Including both provides both options.

- Hands
- Arms
- Fingers
- Calves or ankles
- Thighs
- Stomach or chest
- Back
- Buttocks
- Head
- Feet
- Face
- Lips or tongue
- Shoulders or neck
- Breasts
- Genitals or rectum
- Other; please specify

***E. Habituation and Perceived Life Interference***

11.

| How true are each of the following statements for you?                                                                  | Strongly disagree (1) | Somewhat disagree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Somewhat agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| I have had to intentionally hurt myself more deeply and / or in more places on my body over time to get the same effect |                       |                       |                                |                    |                    |
| I want to stop intentionally hurting myself altogether, but have trouble stopping                                       |                       |                       |                                |                    |                    |
| I will not need help from someone to stop intentionally hurting myself altogether - I can do it on my own               |                       |                       |                                |                    |                    |
| Nothing else works as well as intentionally hurting myself to calm me down or give me relief                            |                       |                       |                                |                    |                    |
| I have had to fight the urge to start intentionally hurting myself again                                                |                       |                       |                                |                    |                    |

|                                                                            |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| When I have the urge to intentionally hurt myself it is easy to control it |  |  |  |  |  |
| The fact that I intentionally hurt myself is a problem in my life          |  |  |  |  |  |

12. The fact that I intentionally hurt myself interferes with: (Please check all that apply) (this could be asked in Likert-type format)

- Relationships which are important to me
- My ability to complete school or work obligations
- My ability to take care of myself (eat right, exercise, etc.)
- My ability to engage in hobbies or things that I like to do
- My self-worth / self-esteem
- The clothing I wear
- Other; please specify
- It does not interfere with my life in any way