

Abstract Sarah Knowles, RASPH Seminar, 13th February 2008, 1pm

Self Harm in Undergraduates: The Importance of Depression and Emotion Focused Coping

Psychological distress experienced by young adults represents a major health concern (Morrison & O'Connor, 2004). Suicidal behaviour is a particularly serious problem which continues to be an issue on university campuses (Westfield et al 2005). It is often found that depression is the most reliable predictor of suicidal behaviour and intent, with differences on other variables disappearing once depression is statistically controlled (Boergers et al 1998, Lewinsohn et al 1993). However, as clearly not all depressed individuals self harm, the predictive utility of depression for self harm is limited. This talk will report the findings of an online study conducted with 150 undergraduates, which found that emotion focused coping and depression together best predict self harm. Results are interpreted within Chapman et al's Experiential Avoidance Model and Williams' Cry of Pain Model.