

NSSI AND SOCIAL MEDIA: PUBIC HEALTH IN THE CULTURE OF ONLINE COMMUNITIES.

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Background: Non-Suicidal Self Injury (NSSI) is a dangerous, yet relatively common, behaviour among adolescents. Today's youth are also very active users of social media; a facet which undoubtedly has impacts on their mental health and overall wellbeing. Using the completed scoping review as a starting point, this paper will explore the development of a collaborative team and early results from our social media-based NSSI prevention program.

Aims: This scoping review aims to examine the literature regarding the impact of social media on adolescents' self-harm to inform social media-based prevention practices. Subsequently, our social media initiative aims to increase awareness of adolescent self-harm, improve knowledge, and promote reputable resources.

Method: A literature search was conducted for studies published between 2015 and 2020, across PubMed, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and Medline databases. Articles were included if they examined any association between social media involvement and NSSI behaviors among adolescents. In total, 57 papers were included in the review. Subsequently, findings of the review were translated into infographic materials formatted for social media posts.

Results: Social media can be used to both propagate and prevent self-harm behaviours among adolescents. Cyberbullying and social media dares/challenges increase the likelihood of such behaviours, while the sense of belonging created by online communities serves as a protective factor for youth. Social media presents a unique opportunity for intervention and information given its ubiquitous use among youth.

Discussion: Our knowledge on NSSI continues to grow but has many gaps. The newness and wide scale use of social media challenge our standard researcher approaches. In this presentation we reflect on the use of social media for the development of a response to the serious problem of NSSI. We further examine Instagram and Twitter as specific knowledge sharing platforms for NSSI facts, research findings, and mental health resources.

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Participants will increase their knowledge of adolescent self-harm and types of online content that individuals frequently view/take part in.
2. Participants will be able to comprehend the complex relationship of social media and self-harm in the lives of adolescents, and the ways in which this relationship can be used therapeutically to promote coping and support.

References

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