

SELF-HARM IN 16-25 YEAR OLDS IN BRIGHTON AND HOVE

AIM: TO DISCOVER THE PERCEPTIONS AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AS WELL AS EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

**RIGHT
HERE**

A mental and emotional wellbeing project for 16-25 year olds in Brighton and Hove

This research on self-harm was designed and delivered by the Right Here Research & Evaluation team with support from our co-ordinator at each stage. We are a voice for young people as all volunteers are aged between 16-25 years. As a young person led project we are empowered by being central in decision making and work we carry out.

Report available online from 1/12/13: www.right-here-brightonandhove.org.uk/research or call Kim Moore on 01273 222562

YOUNG PEOPLE

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the common perceptions and assumptions about self-harm?
2. What understanding do you have about self-harm?
3. How would you feel if someone you knew had self-harmed or was self-harming?
4. Are you aware about the help and services available?

MAIN FINDINGS

These young people didn't usually feel confident about how to react to self-harming behaviours in other young people. There was also a substantial lack of awareness about relevant services for young people.

Unsure where to get professional help

What if it's too big for you to help?

Scared to go to adults

If someone finds out (about self harm)...they can turn a molehill into a mountain

People [who I tell] may feel they have to tread on eggshells

I can't deal with this

CONCLUSIONS

- A **new guide on self harm** is needed for young people to use and direct their peers. This would include services available, website links and information about self-harm in young people.
- There is a need for **more easily accessible information** for young people so those who are self-harming and those who are concerned about their peers have a more holistic knowledge and understanding on this matter.
- Young people had a great deal of knowledge of issues surrounding self-harm within their peer group, but there is a **lack of understanding** of what to do and where to go as a result of attempts to support.
- These findings suggest a more **universal approach** would be beneficial to **educate** young people about self-harm using various forms of media.

METHODOLOGY

The Right Here Research & Evaluation Team were commissioned by the Brighton and Hove Young People and Self-Harm Working Group (professionals from services across the city with a common concern about the increasing prevalence of self-harm across the city) to carry out research on self-harm in young people.

Article reviews on national and international academic findings were written to collate previously suggested most effective interventions for self-harm in young people.

Our volunteers attended a training day on Young People and Self-Harm.

Formulated aims, research questions and developed structured group interview questions.

Facilitated focus groups both with young people and professionals based in educational and medical settings.

Collated and analysed our data to uncover common themes.

Organised findings and completed report.

Research findings feedback to Brighton and Hove Young People and Self-Harm Working Group and created support guide for young people.

PROFESSIONALS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are your perceptions and assumptions about self-harm?
2. What knowledge do you have about self-harm?
3. Do you feel you know how to respond to a student or patient disclosing their own or a peer's self-harm?
4. How aware are you about the help and services available?

MAIN FINDINGS

Our research suggested that educational and medical professionals who work with young people would like self-harm related training/further training in this area. They felt this would increase their confidence and expertise in responding to self-harm in young people.

Generally the more you know, the more understanding you can be

Suicide training is helpful... but do I know enough?

Experience in Mind really helpful...would like more (training) with young people who have experienced self harm*

Not long enough amount of training

Why are they asking me and what do they want me to do?

I don't know enough about self harm to help

*Experience in Mind was a youth-led project that developed resources and delivered training to professionals, but has ended.

CONCLUSIONS

- **Training/further training** in young people and self-harm would enhance the levels of confidence in professionals in their response to young people.
- Some professionals were particularly interested in self-harm training involving the input of young people who had **personally experienced self-harm** to enable them to gain more insight and understanding.
- Our findings supported in particular **one academic article** which our team reviewed: Timson, D; Priest, H & Clark-Carter, D (2012). Adolescents who self-harm: Professional staff knowledge, attitudes and training needs. *Journal of Adolescence*, 1-8.
- Further research should investigate how the concept of training/further training would translate to **professionals in other work settings** across Brighton and Hove.