Self-harm, Substance Abuse and Age: Relatedness to Sexually Abusive Behaviors Toward Others by Juveniles

Tara K. Cossel
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/psychologypres

Part of the Psychiatry and Psychology Commons

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/psychologypres/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Psychology, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Presentations, Conferences, Speeches: Department of Psychology by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
Self-harm, Substance Abuse and Age: Relatedness to Sexually Abusive Behaviors Toward Others by Juveniles

Tara K. Cossel
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Introduction

The present study analyzes three factors as they relate to functioning: self-harm, substance abuse and age. Research has shown girls exhibit higher levels of bullying (Herren, Amreich, Budenz, Fontaine, & Maughan, 2008). Little research has been done to analyze specific behaviors toward others among adolescents who self-harm.

Dembo, Van, Schneider, & Wandham (1987) found a positive correlation between antisocial orientation and illicit drug use. Further research was done to understand the nature of bullying and functioning of juveniles who abuse substances. Johnson (1998) found a history of substance abuse in the majority of families of children who engaged in sexually abusive behaviors. Juvenile substance abuse may also be correlated with children who engage in sexually abusive behaviors.

Previous research suggests age may be a factor in functioning. In a study on bullying, aggressive victims became less prevalent and passive victims and bullies became more prevalent with age (Hanish, & Guerra, 2006). Additionally, inappropriate sexual behaviors may decrease with age. Sexual harassment of same- and opposite-sex peers has been shown to increase over early adolescent years and level off in later high-school years (Peppler, Craig, Connolly, Vale, McManus, & Jang, 2006).

The purpose of this exploratory study is to examine the relation among self-harm, substance abuse and age as they relate to functioning. Specifically, juveniles’ sexually abusive behaviors toward others and behaviors toward others at 12 months were analyzed.

Method

Participants:
Participants in this study were juveniles meeting the criteria for serious emotional disturbance and required multi-agency involvement. These juveniles range in ages from 10.76 to 19.98 years. There were 283 males and 139 females with a mean age of 14.437 years and overall functioning. For sexually abusive behaviors toward others, the results show young juveniles who abuse substances engage in more sexually abusive behaviors if they self-harm. For participants in older age groups, sexually abusive behaviors toward others regardless of self-harm. Additionally, there was no difference in sexually abusive behaviors toward others for youth in age group 3 between those who self-harm and those who do not self-harm.

Results

To examine how self-harm, substance abuse and age relate to sexually abusive behaviors toward others, between groups ANOVAs were performed with follow-up analyses using the LSD procedure (p = .05).

Limitations of this study include initial and ongoing equivalence, as well as small sample sizes for some conditions. Future research should attempt to increase power by having more adequate sample sizes for each condition.

Also available at: http://works.bepress.com/tarakc/7