

The Intersection of Suicide and Self-Injury: Addressing Nonsuicidal Self-Injury in School Settings

Suicide Prevention Conference, December 5, 2016
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Preface/Warnings

- I talk really fast – it's not because I'm nervous, it's just the way I talk
- I have a macabre sense of humor – I apologize for any unintentional crassness
- Please ask questions along the way – I want this presentation to meet your needs

In what ways do you engage in self-harming behaviors?

What adaptive coping mechanism serves the same function as your self-destructive habit?

What is nonsuicidal self-injury?

- ▣ Deliberate or intentional destruction of body tissue ***without suicidal intent***
- ▣ Other common labels include deliberate self-harm, parasuicidal behavior, self-mutilation, and self-directed violence (CDC)
 - ▣ A note about use of the term “cutter”
- ▣ Self-harm as an umbrella term
- ▣ I use “self-injury” for the sake of brevity and concision

Four Primary Functions of NSSI

- ❑ Emotion regulation
- ❑ Anti-numbness
- ❑ Anti-suicide
- ❑ Self-punishment
- ❑ **Interpersonal Influence*

NSSI and Suicidal Ideation

- Suicidal ideation has four “parts” or “levels”
 - Thoughts of wanting to die
 - Non-specific thoughts of killing self
 - Suicide plans
 - Intent to die
- Somewhat reductive, but helpful for conceptualization and communicating with adolescents

Functional Perspective of NSSI

Functions

Intrapersonal
Functions

Interpersonal
Functions

Reinforced through
negative reinforcement

Reinforced through
positive reinforcement

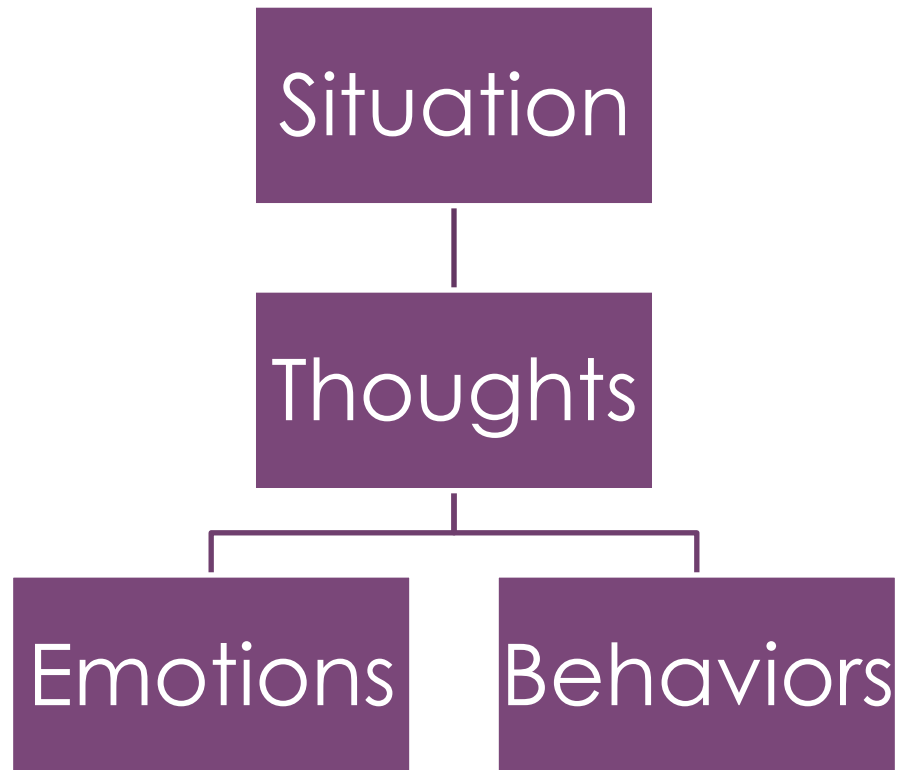
Emotion
Regulation

Self-
punishment

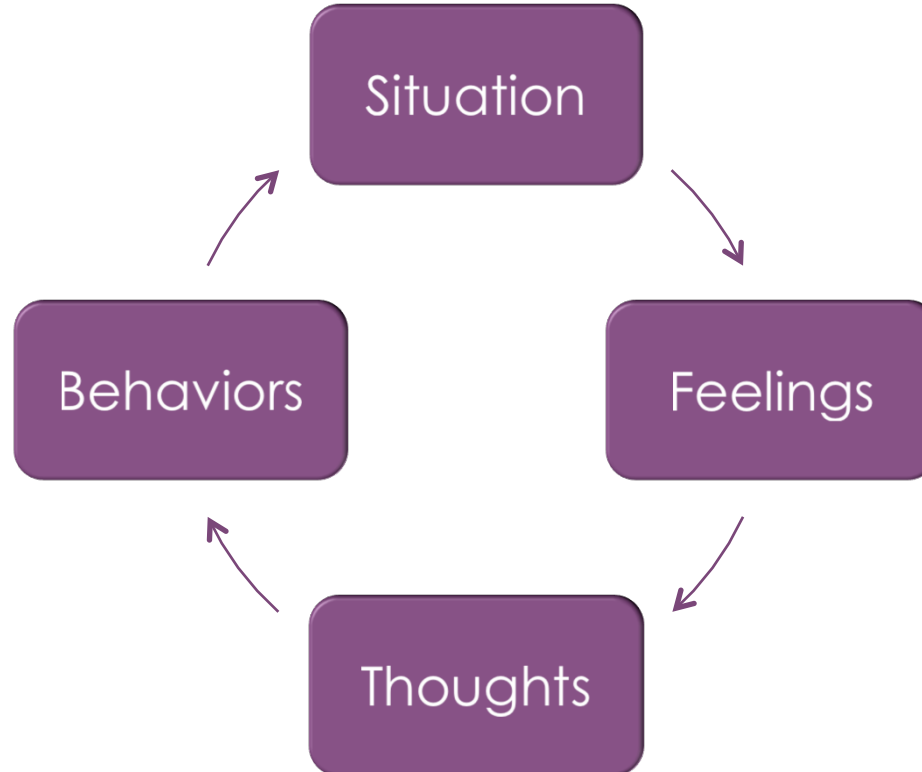
Peer bonding

Interpersonal
Influence

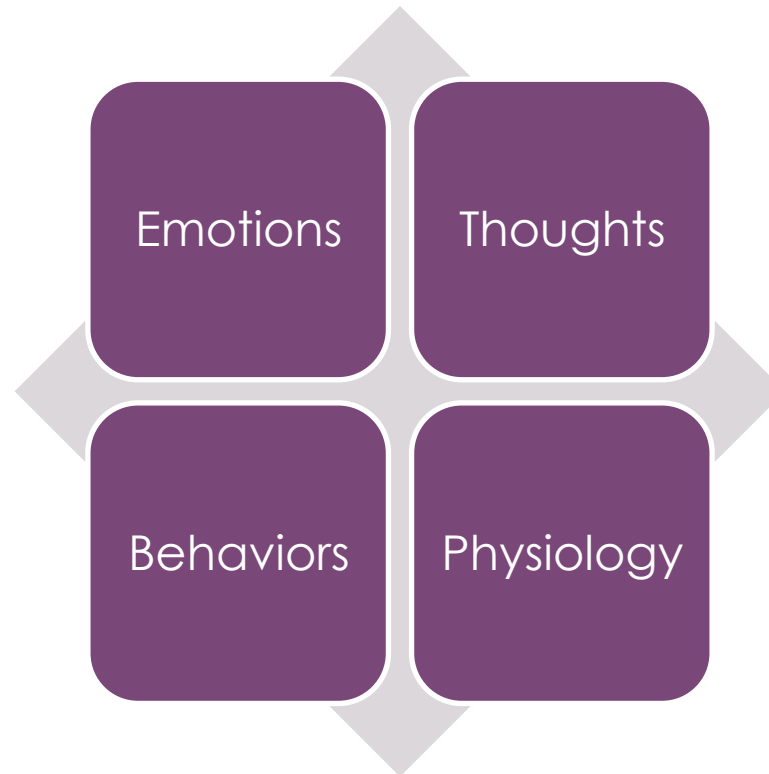
Traditional Cognitive Model



Experiential Cognitive Model



Interrelationships Between E-T-P-B



Levels of Thoughts

Automatic thoughts

A light gray downward-pointing arrow is positioned to the right of the 'Automatic thoughts' box, pointing towards the 'Intermediate beliefs' box.

Intermediate beliefs

A light gray downward-pointing arrow is positioned to the right of the 'Intermediate beliefs' box, pointing towards the 'Core beliefs' box.

Core beliefs

Parent Psychoeducation

- ▣ Don't freak out – respond with emotional neutrality
- ▣ Find the function
- ▣ Reflect, validate, and *then* problem-solve
- ▣ Addressing guilt vs. shame
 - ▣ Guilt can be **constructive** because it motivates us to change our behavior
 - ▣ Shame is always **destructive** because it contributes to feelings of worthlessness

Parent Psychoeducation (cont.)

- Why individuals engage in self-injurious and suicidal behaviors
- How parents and family members can help
 - Creating environments of emotional safety
 - Setting boundaries for physical safety
 - Effective consequences for self-injurious behaviors
- What happens during therapy and how it works

Questions?

Comments? Concerns? Sarcastic remarks?

Shameless Self-Promotion

- Utah Center for Evidence Based Treatment (SLC)
 - Email: michael.riquino@ucebt.com
- University of Utah College of Social Work
 - Email: michael.riquino@socwk.utah.edu
 - Parent study email: selfinjurstudy@gmail.com

Online Self-Injury Resources

- ❑ **Cornell Research Program** www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu
- ❑ **To Write Love On Her Arms** www.twloha.com
- ❑ **S.A.F.E. Alternatives** www.selfinjury.com
- ❑ **Secret Shame** www.selfharm.net
- ❑ **The Trevor Project** www.thetrevorproject.org
- ❑ **Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network** www.rainn.org

Self-Injury Book Resources

- ▣ *The Oxford Handbook of Suicide and Self-Injury*
- ▣ *Treating Self-Injury* by Barent Walsh
- ▣ *Bodily Harm* by Karen Conterio and Wendy Lader
- ▣ *A Bright Red Scream* by Marilee Strong
- ▣ *Helping Teens Who Cut* By Michael Hollander
- ▣ *Cutting* by Steven Levenkron
- ▣ *Bodies Under Siege* by Armando Favazza

Suicide Prevention Resources

- **Hope4Utah** www.hope4utah.org
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center** www.sprc.org
- **Prevention Lifeline** www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness** www.nami.org
- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** www.afsp.org
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** www.samhsa.org