

Caring youth-parent relations can be vital to preventing adolescent suicide attempts

February 11 2015



Credit: SnapDoc/Flickr

Positive relations between youth and their parents can be key to preventing adolescent suicide attempts, according to the University of British Columbia (UBC) research.

Suicide is the third-leading cause of adolescent death worldwide, and is responsible for a quarter of all adolescent deaths in Canada. The research examines the link between parental bonding - a term describing the quality of a parent-child relationship - and a history of suicidal thoughts and attempts.

Numerous studies suggest that positive parental relationships reduce

adolescents' risk of experiencing depression, loneliness and suicide. "However, it has been unclear whether positive adolescent-parent relations protect against suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts or both," says Boaz Saffer, the study's lead author and a graduate student in clinical psychology at UBC. "This is a crucial distinction, given that most people who think about suicide do not act on their thoughts."

The research used two U.S.-based samples: adolescent psychiatric patients and [high school students](#). Parental bonding was divided into two categories: [parental care](#) and parental overprotection. The patients and students completed several questionnaires measuring parental care and overprotection, as well as other known suicide risk factors such as loneliness, [emotional distress](#), and self-worth.

Results indicated that adolescents with a history of suicide attempts reported lower parental care than non-suicidal adolescents and adolescents with a history of suicidal thoughts. The other variables assessed - parental overprotection, loneliness, emotional distress and self-worth - were no different in those who made suicide attempts compared to those who only thought about suicide.

"These findings indicate that caring parent-adolescent relationships reduce the likelihood that suicidal thoughts lead to [suicide attempts](#)," says Saffer. "Therefore, increasing parental care might represent an important opportunity to reduce suicide risk in adolescents, especially in adolescents already experiencing [suicidal thoughts](#)."

More information: Clarifying the Relationship of Parental Bonding to Suicide Ideation and Attempts, [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10 ... /slt.12146/abstract](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/sltb.12146/abstract)

Provided by University of British Columbia

Citation: Caring youth-parent relations can be vital to preventing adolescent suicide attempts (2015, February 11) retrieved 18 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-02-youth-parent-vital-adolescent-suicide.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.