

## **I Can't Escape the Scars, Even If I Do Get Better": A Discourse Analysis of Adolescent Talk About Their Self-Harm During Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy Sessions for Major Depressive Disorder**

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**Abstract :** There has been a pronounced increase in societal discourses around adolescent self-harm, yet there is a paucity of literature examining adolescent talk about self-harm that accounts for the sociocultural context. The objective of this study was to explore how adolescents with Depression talk about their self-harm engagement in consideration of both socio-cultural discourses and the therapy context during Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) sessions. Utilizing a sample from the Improving Mood with Psychoanalytic and Cognitive Therapies study, discourse analysis was carried out on audio-recorded CBT sessions. The study established three groupings of results: (a) adolescent positioning as stuck in self-harm engagement; (b) adolescent positioning as ambivalent in the talk about ceasing self-harm; and (c) adolescent use of stigma discourses in self-harm talk & constructions of self-harm scars. These findings indicate that clinician awareness of adolescent use of language and discourse may inform interventions beyond Manualized CBT strategies. These findings are highly relevant in light of research that demonstrates CBT treatment for adolescent depression does not effectively address concurring self-harm and given that self-harm is the most significant risk factor predictive of subsequent suicidal behaviours.

**Keywords :** adolescence, cognitive-behavioral therapy, discourse, self-harm, stigma

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