Non-suicidal self-injury: web portal, e-learning and research to generate effective treatments

Plet S¹,², Marcatto F¹,², Tognolli G¹

¹Ergologica, Studio Associato, Trieste; ²Università degli Studi di Trieste, Italy

Keywords: Non suicidal self-injury, e-learning, web portal development, clinical intervention, treatment development

Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is the deliberate, self-inflicted destruction of body tissue without suicidal intent. Despite increasing attention to NSSI in research and clinical fields, a lot of unanswered questions still exist. In fact, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) recognized NSSI for the first time as a condition, but it also stated that further studies are required for future official adoption. For example, the etiology and the underlying mechanisms of NSSI have yet to be clarified, and evidence-based clinical interventions that directly target this maladaptive behavior are needed [1].

In order to address these issues, we have started the “Non-suicidal self-injury: web portal, e-learning and research to generate effective treatments” project. This project, funded by the National Board of Italian Psychologists, is aimed at enhancing our understanding of NSSI and at promoting the development of better treatments, through the creation of a network of Italian and international researchers and clinicians working on this topic. This aim will be facilitated by the creation of a web portal where researchers and clinicians can share their ideas, and receive e-learning courses on NSSI. We choose a multimedia online training because it is an effective, easily accessible, and affordable training method in disseminating additional knowledge to community mental health providers (for example, see 2). Moreover, a section of the web portal will be dedicated to inform about the NSSI parents, teachers, and other professional figures working with adolescents, as a way to sensitize them to this condition and to inform them about the best available therapies.

We believe that enhancing research on NSSI and, at the same time, building a specific training for Italian clinicians, will contribute to improve the development of effective treatments of NSSI in Italy.
