

# Interpersonal Psychotherapy Acute Crisis (IPT AC) for deliberate self-harm/poisoning: Results from a 2 year pilot study



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## Acute Crisis

Self-harm/poisoning has been a major health problem in the UK for 50 years (Collinson et al, 2014) and is on the increase in young people (Tyrell et al, 2016). Many individuals present at emergency departments. There is growing evidence of the suitability of IPT for managing such acute distress (Tang et al, 2009; Heisel et al, 2009; Arcelus et al, 2014; and Carrilho et al, 2015). Interpersonal Psychotherapy Acute Crisis (IPT-AC) aims to reduce patient distress and risk of self-harm and suicidality, whilst improving help-seeking from the individual's natural network and assisting them in gaining appropriate access to other services.

## IPT-AC: A 4 Session Model

### Assessment phase: Sessions 1 and 2

1. Diagnosis
2. Psycho-education
3. Explanation of IPT-AC
4. Sick role
5. Interpersonal inventory
6. Focus and formulation
7. Contract

### Work phase: Sessions 2-3

1. Goals according to the focus area (interpersonal role transition, interpersonal role dispute, grief)
2. Facilitating the use of support

### Termination: Sessions 3-4

1. Explicit discussion of the ending
2. Preparation for managing independently and managing future crisis
3. Plans for appropriate referral to other services

## Methodology

IPT-AC model was developed and used to train a number of staff over 2 days. The intervention was delivered over a 2-4 week period with patients presenting in acute distress with an episode of self-harm/poisoning to the ER in Edinburgh, Scotland. 3 nurse therapists already working in the ER delivered the intervention after training and on-going supervision. Treatment was offered as soon as possible after presentation/assessment.

### Sample

Male/ female aged 18+ in acute psychological distress with self-harm/poisoning were given the option of participating. The episode was precipitated by some interpersonal crisis: grief, conflict, or transition.

### Evaluation

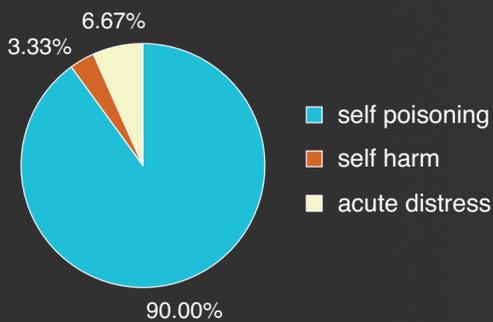
1. Assessment of *depressive symptoms* using the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9; Kroenke et al, 2001). The questionnaire is widely used in UK primary care as an indicator of the severity of depression.
2. Assessment of *distress* using the CORE-10, a brief outcome measure comprising 10 items drawn from the CORE-OM (a 34-item assessment and outcome measure that is widely used in the NHS in the UK and psychotherapy in general).

## Results

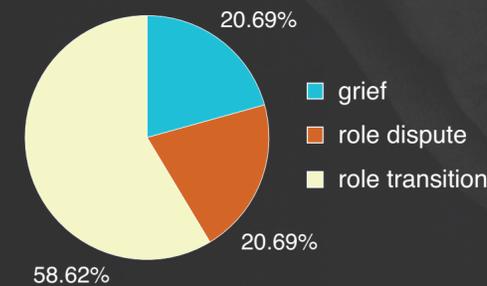
30 patients received the 4 session intervention, 21 females and 9 males (n=30) aged 18-58 (mean=37.5, SD=13.51). 76.7% people reported experiencing mental health difficulties in the past, with 23.3% people reporting no previous difficulties.

**Our analyses show that four sessions of IPT AC was associated with a significant reduction in depressive symptoms and core distress when pre and post treatment scores were compared. Further, anecdotal evidence from staff delivering the intervention suggests that IPT AC appears to reduce subsequent attendances in the emergency department in those who have received the intervention compared to those who have not. An RCT is planned to examine the effectiveness of the intervention compared to standard care.**

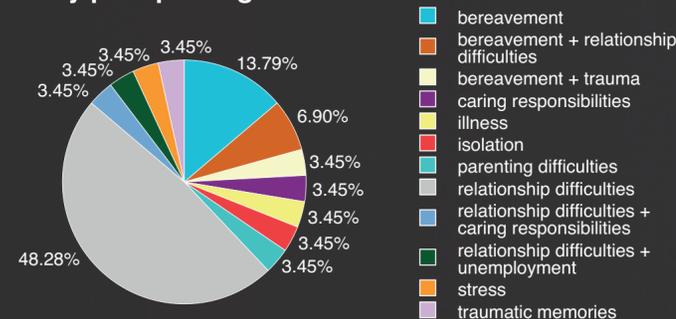
### Presenting problem



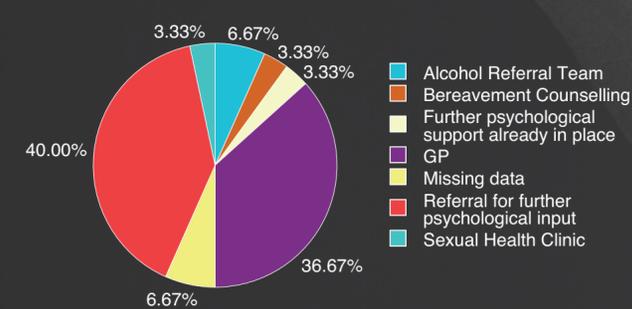
### Focus area



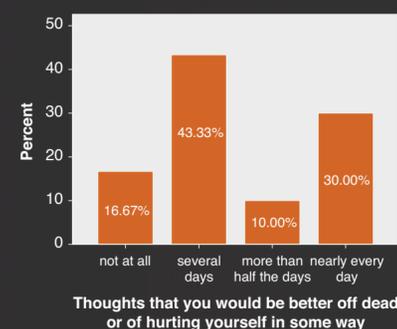
### Key precipitating factors



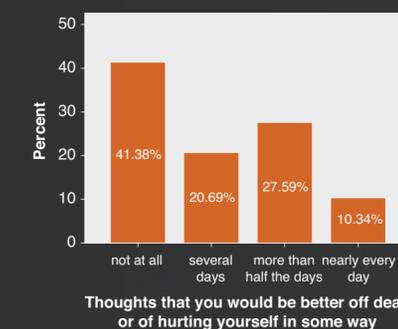
### Post IPT AC



### Suicidal ideation at baseline



### Suicidal ideation end of treatment



## 'Mask' by a participant

There are times in life when all I ask.  
Is time and room to remove the mask  
For happy is how people want you to be  
And what I want but they don't help me

I feel like a slave who's there to be  
Used but abused whenever they see  
Fit to use me and then discard  
Wearing the mask can be very hard

Friendship goes more ways than one  
For if it does not, it'll soon be done  
For the times you take you should also give  
Something back to make your friend live.

Now if you occasionally think of me  
The change will be big and clear to see  
The mask will come off and in its place  
Will be my happy, smiling face.