

Suicidal ideation in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in Scotland: the role of defeat and entrapment

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Introduction: LGBT youth are disproportionately affected by suicidal ideation and behaviours. However, the psychological processes driving this association are not yet known.

Aim: The current study aimed to test predictions, informed by the Integrated Motivational-Volitional Model of Suicidal Behaviour, concerning the role of feelings of defeat, entrapment, and suicidal ideation within an LGBT population. More specifically, the study aimed to 1) Determine whether LGBT young people in Scotland are at an increased risk of suicidal ideation relative to heterosexual adolescents 2) Investigate differences in levels in defeat and entrapment between LGBT and non-LGBT youth and 3) Test a hypothesised multi-step pathway between LGBT identity and suicidal ideation via perceptions of defeat and entrapment.

Methods: 565 high school students (aged 15-17; 54.2% female) from Scottish secondary schools completed an anonymous self-report survey assessing sexual orientation and gender identity, suicidal ideation, and feelings of defeat and entrapment.

Results: Of the young people who took part in the survey, 20.1% reported a history of suicidal ideation. LGBT youth demonstrated an increased likelihood of reporting suicidal ideation (OR=6.38, 95% CI: 2.74, 14.84, $p < 0.001$) compared to their heterosexual peers (58.2% LGBT youth vs. 17.6% heterosexual youth). Perceptions of defeat were elevated in the LGBT group ($M=27.05$, $SD=16.85$) relative to young people who did not identify as LGBT ($M=15.40$, $SD=12.13$). Perceptions of entrapment were also significantly higher in LGBT youth (20.72 , $SD=16.09$) than young people who identified as heterosexual ($M=8.57$, $SD=12.17$). LGBT status was significantly associated with suicidal ideation indirectly through defeat and entrapment.

Conclusion: These results support the hypothesised role of defeat and entrapment in explaining the psychological pathway to suicidal ideation in LGBT youth and provide novel insights into this relationship. Notably, suicide risk assessment, prevention and intervention efforts aimed at young people should consider defeat and entrapment as important modifiable clinical targets in young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Keywords: Suicidal behaviour; LGBT youth in Scotland; LGBT

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