

## THE ONE WHO FLEW OVER THE TV SET: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF MENTAL ILLNESS ON TELEVISION

R. Leary and G. Warren  
Ithaca College, Dept. of Psychology  
Ithaca, NY 14850

This study is a continuation of a presentation given by R. Leary and M. Bryant titled, *Criminal Minds and Looney Toons*, at the 2016 ECSC. Prior studies have shown that television has a powerful influence on the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of both adults and children, including what viewers know about a wide range of concepts and issues from what they see (and don't see) on TV programs. Our study includes a content analysis of 530 shows randomly sampled to represent the CRETV archive taped from 2011-2016. Coders were trained to record the type of incident (eg. addiction, suicide, depression), the context and reaction to the incident (eg. serious, humorous, negative, serious), and the demographic information of the individuals (eg. race, age, gender). We expanded the scope of our analysis and reformed our methodology to ensure greater reliability. Our results showed that the portrayals of mental illness on television don't reflect real life data on what kinds of illness is prevalent or what types of people are afflicted.