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Among those who engage in NSSI, individuals with high ADHD symptomatology do so for affect regulation and self-punishment.

The Function of NSSI: Differences by ADHD Symptom Endorsement

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INTRODUCTION

- Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) appears as a condition for further study in the *DSM-5*.
- NSSI is the act of deliberately self-inflicting harm to the surface of one's skin without the intent of dying.
- Relief from negative emotions and escape from interpersonal problems serve as two common functions of NSSI.
- A risk factor for NSSI is impulsivity, which is a core feature of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); this suggests a potential link between the two.
- The current exploratory study focused on the function of NSSI in college students with and without elevated ADHD symptoms.

METHOD

- College students with a history of NSSI ($N=42$)
- Barkley Adult ADHD Rating Scale (BAARS) to determine ADHD symptoms
- Inventory of Statements About Self-Injury (ISAS)
- In-person, self-report survey format
- Participants were divided into 2 groups :
 - Elevated ADHD symptom (4+ symptoms on the BAARS)
 - Non-ADHD (3 or fewer symptoms on BAARS)

RESULTS

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes (Partial Eta Squared) with 95% Confidence Intervals for NSSI Rationale by ADHD Grouping

Rationale for engaging in NSSI	"Elevated ADHD Symptom" group	"Non-ADHD" group	Effect size (η_p^2)
Affect Regulation	4.05 (1.79)*	2.45 (2.28)*	.135
Interpersonal Boundaries	.60 (.99)	.55 (1.14)	.001
Self-punishment	3.35 (2.08)*	1.95 (2.21)*	.099
Self-care	.55 (.83)	.38 (.67)	.013
Feeling generation	2.15 (2.06)	1.41 (1.94)	.035
Anti-suicide	1.75 (2.29)*	.55 (1.53)*	.092
Sensation seeking	.45 (.89)	.18 (.39)	.040
Peer bonding	.15 (.37)	.05 (.21)	.032
Interpersonal influence	1.25 (1.52)*	.41 (1.01)*	.102
Toughness	1.05 (.99)*	.45 (.91)*	.093
Marking distress	1.90 (1.77)	1.05 (1.59)	.064
Revenge	.40 (1.23)	.14 (.47)	.021
Autonomy	.55 (.94)*	.05 (.21)*	.130

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

DISCUSSION

- As seen above, participants with elevated ADHD symptoms in the current study reported higher rates of engaging in NSSI for affect regulation, self-punishment, interpersonal influence, and autonomy.
- These preliminary results from our sample ($N=42$) suggest that reported function of NSSI may be based on ADHD symptomatology

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