

## Experiences of Self-Stigma Among Individuals Who Have Attempted Suicide.

7. Lived experience, survivors and postvention

**Mahmoud Azzam**<sup>1</sup>, Sara Lindström<sup>1</sup>, Åsa Westrin<sup>1</sup>, Annika Lexén<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Clinical Sciences, Lund, Psychiatry, Lund University, SE-221 84 Lund, Sweden. The Region Skåne Committee on Psychiatry, Habilitation and Technical Aids, Sweden.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health Sciences, Lund University, SE-221 00 Lund, Sweden

### Abstract text

Self-stigma and stigma have been identified as contributing factors to both suicide and repeated suicide attempts. While research on societal stigma and its impact on suicide is well-documented, knowledge about the significance of self-stigma among individuals who have attempted suicide remains limited. *The aim* of this study is therefore to explore the experience of self-stigma in individuals who have attempted suicide, using a qualitative research approach. By highlight their narratives, the study seeks to provide new insights and knowledge. *Methods:* The study was conducted within the framework of a randomized controlled trial of Attempted Suicide Short Intervention Program (ASSIP), in Sweden. Fourteen participants, aged 19–62 years (8 women and 6 men), who sought mental health care in Sweden following a suicide attempt, were included. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore participants' experiences of self-stigma, and the data were analysed using thematic analysis. *Preliminary Results:* Self-stigma among individuals who have attempted suicide manifests on two levels. On a societal level, participants perceive suicide attempts and mental illness as taboo subjects. On the individual level, participants' express that self-stigma, shaped by society's negative perceptions of suicide, results in intense feelings of shame and guilt. These feelings impair participants' willingness and ability to seek help. These preliminary findings emphasize the need for interventions that address self-stigma, foster self-acceptance, and encouraging help-seeking behaviors. While these results provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of self-stigma, further research is needed to determine its potential role in recurrent suicide attempts and long-term recovery trajectories.