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**Psychology of subculture: Phenomenology and Contemporary  
Tendencies of Development**

**SUICIDE AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE- COMPLEX  
PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISM IN OUR MODERN WORLD**

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*Abstract*

This article is concerned with analyzing the issue of suicide among the young generation. According to the WHO (World Health Organization), nearly one million people a year die from suicide, which is the second leading mortality factor among persons at the age of 15-29. Suicide is complicated from a social and psychological perspective, an indication of a personal crisis that a young person is unable to deal with by himself. Professionals are dealing with these issues in their practice, more and more. This issue also has changed in accordance with the modern subculture of internet and social networks. What causes a young person to make such an irrational decision? In what areas of his life do we need to examine in order to find the answer? This article is trying to answer this question from theoretical and practical aspects. While depressive and other psychopathological diseases are signal symptoms of suicide, the majority of those suffering from depression do not demonstrate suicidal tendencies. A deep feeling of loneliness and its compensation through social networks, that is widespread among self-deprecating young people, is one of the impulses potentially leading to suicide within the framework of a modern subculture. Do expressions of impulsiveness such as piercing and tattoos that are popular nowadays also be a sign of dangerous behavior and self-harm? What role does family play in making such an irrational, impulsive, and fatal decision? All of these aspects will be discussed in this article.

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**Keywords:** Youth suicide, modern sub-culture, impulsivity, loneliness, depression, social network.



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## **1. Introduction**

After many years of work as a military psychologist in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), my goal both personally and professionally was to prevent potential suicides among young recruits. Military service in Israel is compulsory for both young men and women when they reach the age of eighteen.

Without divulging exact figures, it should be noted that the number of suicides in IDF over the past decade have reduced significantly due to public awareness, providing special training for commanders and, of course, incorporating additional specialists namely, psychologists and psychiatrists in the system.

Age factors, separation from the family and the familiar environment, the availability of weapons are all contributing factors in making the terrible, impulsive, ambivalent and irrational decision to take your own life. What is behind this decision? What are the factors pushing a young person to attempt suicide? What areas of behavior should be investigated? What questions should be asked to prevent a potential suicide attempt? I will try to answer these questions by referring to theoretical material and personal experience.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Without a doubt, suicide is an affliction of the modern subculture of society in general and young people in particular. WHO (World Health Organization) estimates that about one million people worldwide die from suicide every year, which is 16 of every 100,000 of the total population, or, one death every 40 seconds. Moreover, according to WHO's projections, by 2020 the suicide mortality rate will increase to one case every 20 seconds. Over the past 45 years, the number of suicides worldwide has increased by 60%, especially among young people. As a result, suicide has become the second leading cause of death among people aged 15-29.

## **3. Research Questions**

- What psychological mechanism is behind this decision?
- What are the factors pushing a young person to attempt suicide?
- What areas of behavior should be investigated during the clinical interview?
- What questions should be asked during the interview to prevent a potential suicide attempt?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of this study are:

- To analyse the professional literature to identify reasons that bring young people to attempt suicide.
- To present the factors as a complex mechanism.
- To provide practical suggestions based on professional literature and professional experience and research in order to prevent a possible suicide.

## 5. Research Methods

In this current study, the following methods were used:

- The Literature review;
- interpretative phenomenological analysis;
- interdisciplinary and comparative analysis

## 6. Findings

As a rule, suicide is a complex socio-psychological mechanism, indicating an individual crisis that a young person is unable to cope with alone.

### 6.1. Suicide and psychopathology

The connection between depressive states and suicide attempts is both obvious and proven. In modern society, the incidence of these or other depressive disorders during a person's life increases dramatically and can reach 20-25%. According to rough estimates, between 5% and 10% of depressed patients try to commit suicide (Litman, 1995). In addition, there is a similar correlation between attempted suicide and another psychopathology, namely alcohol abuse, drug use and schizophrenia; therefore, during clinical interviews you should be able to determine whether these psychopathologies or addictions are present. It should be noted that the vast majority of those suffering from these aforementioned diseases do not exhibit suicidal tendencies.

### 6.2. Expressions of affect and suicide

After asking questions that determine the mood of a young person, his affective state should be ascertained. The intensity of such affects as anger, hopelessness, despair and guilt are a possible impetus for making a potential decision about suicide (Hendin, 1991). The author of the article proposes to differentiate between hopelessness, in which a person resigns himself to some hopeless situation, and despair, in which humility is simply impossible. It is important to note that if a diagnosis of affect, which is detected by observing the behavior of a person and his reactions, is still possible, then, one can only naturally ask about mood concluding that there is a connection between these two parameters of the personality status.

### 6.3. Loneliness and suicide

A deep feeling of loneliness and the inability to recall positive images of people and positive events often characterize borderline patients. In addition, they can trigger another push towards a tragic decision to commit suicide (Maltsberger & Goldblatt, 1996). For this reason, an important component in the formation of the overall picture of the life of a young person is social activity. Inquiries regarding the number of friends and social relations, their quality, as well as the subjective assessment of a place in society and in the company of people, possible discomfort caused by a sense of social anxiety, will be more than appropriate and shed the necessary light on the question asked earlier.

#### **6.4. Loneliness on the social networks**

It is important to remember much time of a young person's life in modern society is experienced on the Internet, namely in social networks. Sometimes the time spent on the network exceeds any other action outside the Internet. In the American classification of psychiatric diseases, DSM-V is proposed to designate Internet addiction as a separate disease, along with other types of addictions. It is not coincidental that experts compare Internet addiction with addiction to drugs and alcohol, pointing to similar brain processes in both cases. If the definitions themselves are examined, then the paradox is obvious. Our life on the Internet is deemed "online"; in other words, we are interactive and connected, and life outside the Internet is "offline", that is, turned off.

Why do people use social networks? One of the explanations for this phenomenon of the modern subculture may be in the dichotomy. Extroverts use social networks as an added alternative platform for self-promotion, and a method of making new acquaintances. Unlike extroverts, the emotionally unstable people, introverts, are trying to find an alternative online community, to compensate for their failures, social anxieties and loneliness in everyday life (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012). Are the social networks meant for these people, serving as the alternative and safe space they rely on? Expressing their positions, which are imbued with uncertainty, anxiety, depressive states, negativism, people with low self-esteem are met with resentment in regard to their expectations. Strangers criticize and reject them, while friends remain indifferent (Forest & Wood, 2012). Mass rejection on social networks and no hope for acceptance may serve as additional factors in deciding to commit suicide. That is why it is advisable to ask about the hobbies of a young person not only in their everyday life, but also in social networks, they are part of?

#### **6.5. External expressions of impulsiveness**

An additional criterion in finding that a person's personality is possibly prone to suicide; is his clothing and appearance. Particular attention should be paid to piercing and tattoos, that despite their popularity, possible risk cannot be overlooked. According to most existing theories, impulsiveness is the main reason for tattooing (Kertzman, Kagan, Vainder, Lapidus, & Weizman, 2013). Moreover, the presence of massive and numerous tattoos and piercing in young people is directly related to the most extensive repertoire of risky and dangerous behavior namely: drug use, alcohol abuse, turbulent sexual activity, malnutrition and suicide (Kagan, 2014). The subject of the tattoos themselves can assist the clinician in unraveling the secret meaning or the message that the young man wishes to convey to his environment.

#### **6.6. The role of family in the decision to attempt suicide**

Finally, everything begins and ends with the family, which is the main resource of support in the life of a young person. It is necessary to find out what the relations structure is between a person and a significant environment for him. It is possible that one of the resources failed, was lost, or, even unconsciously ignores or wishes the person dead (Maltzberger, 1988). Moreover, based on the famous works of Freud (1917) "Mourning and Melancholia" and Menninger (1933) "Psychoanalytic aspects of suicide" describing the place of aggression and death instinct aimed at his own Ego, it makes sense to ask the question: "Whom did he want to kill in himself, a young man from his inner circle, whose suffering he so desired (Maltzberger & Goldblatt, 1996)?"

## 7. Conclusion

This article is concerned with analyzing the issue of suicide among the young generation. According to the WHO (World Health Organization), nearly one million people a year die from suicide, which is the second leading mortality factor among persons ages 15-29. Suicide is a complex social and psychological mechanism, a sign of a personal crisis that a young person cannot cope with alone. What spheres of human activity should be engaged to prevent a potential suicide attempt? This article is trying to answer this question from theoretical and practical aspects. While depressive condition is a signal symptom of suicide, the majority of those suffering from depression do not demonstrate suicidal tendencies. A deep feeling of loneliness and its compensation through social networks, that is widespread among self-deprecating young people, is one of the impulses potentially leading to suicide within the framework of a modern subculture. A person's appearance, piercing and tattoos that are popular nowadays are also likely to manifest a dangerous behavior. Finally, what role does family play in making such an irrational, impulsive, and fatal decision? Certain reasons were described that can be presented as a complex mechanism that begins in the family and is expressed in affect, external appearance, loneliness, expression on the social networks, and in different psychopathologies.

Despite all the research and everything that has been done during many through many years of experience and diverse theoretical material on this topic, it is unfortunately impossible to predict with certainty the suicide of any person. "When people ask me why one depressive patient commits suicide, and nine others do not, I answer that I just don't know" (Litman, 1995, p.135).

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