

Suicide & Self-Harm
Research North West

SSHare NoW

7th Annual Conference



Keynotes Speaker:
Ann John

Professor Ann John opened the conference with an inspiring keynote exploring the critical links between school exclusions, absences and self-harm. Highlighting the power of data linkage, she emphasised how integrating datasets can provide invaluable insights into the challenges faced by vulnerable young people. Her message underscored the importance of flipping the narrative on school attendance – shifting from blame to understanding – and prioritising support systems to protect those most at risk.

Keynote Speaker:
Sharon McDonnell

Dr Sharon McDonnell, delivered a compelling keynote on strategies for people bereaved by suicide. Having led Europe's largest study to date, which included 7,158 participants affected by suicide, she emphasised that the impact of suicidal loss extends beyond immediate family members to include friends of the deceased, revealing a new dimension in bereavement support. Her research calls for enhanced multi-disciplinary collaboration in postvention services, highlighting the need for substantial restructuring of current support systems to address the broader community's needs.



Keynote Speaker:
3 Dads Walking

3 Dads Walking (Mike Palmer, Andy Airey and Tim Owen) were the final keynote of the morning providing a ‘message of hope’ to raise awareness of suicide amongst children and young people. Suicide is the biggest killer of those under 35 in the UK and following the loss of their three daughters, Sophie, Emily and Beth, the 3 Dads have embarked on a campaign to raise awareness of suicide risk among children and young people, support services on offer, as well as the important role schools have in suicide prevention. 3 Dads spoke about their ‘Walk of Hope’ in 2024 which has generated over

£1Million for PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide, this has enabled the charity to accelerate its growing plans. In 2023, PAPYRUS extended the opening hours of its suicide prevention helpline from 9am to midnight to a 24/7 service, as well as opening more offices across the country.

They discussed their work with Parliament to push for suicide prevention education to be compulsory in schools, as well as their work in support of the LJMU MAPSS, school-based suicide prevention trial.

For more information:
www.3dadswalking.uk

Current Research

The RELATE Trial

Dr Peter Taylor focused on the feasibility of Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) for individuals who self-harm, offering valuable insights into this relational approach to treatment.

Rapid Access to Brief Suicide Prevention

Prof Pooja Saini looked at how rapid access to brief psychological prevention strategies have lowered the number of admissions to hospital, self-harming behaviours and suicide attempts.

NCISH – Suicide-related internet use

Lana Bojanic presented her work, looking at suicide related internet use (SRIU). Her findings included how individuals of all ages utilise the internet to find suicide methods, as well as pro-suicide groups. Her findings highlighted how if clinicians enquire about SRIU it may have a link with suicide methods.

Autism and suicide

Dr. Mirabel Pelton presented her research on autism and suicide, revealing that autistic individuals are three times more likely to engage in suicidal behaviors. Her comprehensive meta-analysis demonstrated that this trend holds true across different ages, geographical regions, and diverse populations. These findings underscore the urgent need for further research into this high-risk group.



Pecha Kucha inspired presentations

ECRs were invited to present their work as 5 Pecha Kucha style minute presentations.

A total of 10 ECRs showcased their work:

Joy Wyche - Adolescent Self-Harm to Improve Relational Expertise (ASPIRE)

Dr Molly McCarthy & Sio Wynne -School Based Suicide Prevention Programme (MAPPS)

Salma Shalaby - VR in Story Telling for Suicide Prevention Among 18-30 Year Olds (Canaries Experience)

Rashmi Liyanage & Sio Wynne - Suicide Prevention Evaluation Merseycare

Tara Chauhan - Stakeholder attitudes on access to psychological therapies for self-harm, and the potential value of brief self-harm interventions

Pauline Rivart - Trends in suicide methods in mental health patients between 2000-2021

Vanessa Macintyre - How do individuals describe their awareness of the consequences of suicide?

Xingyu Wang - The relationship between attachment styles and suicidal behaviours

Olivia Hendriks - Suicide risk amongst menopausal women

Each of the ECRs presentations were fascinating, and provided an insight into the important work going on across each of the universities involved in the conference.

Well done to this year's winner - Pauline Rivart!



Panel Discussion

A 45-minute panel discussion focused on suicide and self-harm prevention for high-risk groups, including children and young people (CYP) and immigrants/migrants. The panel featured seven professionals, including researchers, PhD students, and charity trustees from 3 Dads Walking and the Martin Gallier Project. A key theme was the accessibility of mental health support.

A youth worker highlighted that some CYP struggle to engage with clinicians due to power dynamics, prompting calls for clinician education and mental health campaigns.

An early career researcher from Edge Hill University announced the inclusion of suicide prevention as a compulsory module in teacher training programs, aligning with the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2023)



For immigrants/migrants, cultural and language barriers were discussed as challenges to accessing support. To address this, PAPYRUS highlighted their ‘Language Line,’ a translation service supporting over 240 languages.

In summary, the panel emphasized improving accessibility for vulnerable groups, with key actions including Edge Hill’s teacher training initiative and PAPYRUS’ translation services.

Thank you to everyone who attended the 7th Annual SSHaRe NowWConference, thank you to all of our speakers and guests.

