

To the Children's Commissioner,

I am very interested in your request for submissions on the issue of self harm and suicidal behaviour in children.

As someone who has worked with children and young people as a teacher, youth worker and currently as a school counsellor, I have long been concerned by the levels of non-suicidal self injury (NSSI) and suicidal ideation displayed by children. This interest led to me choosing NSSI as my research topic when I completed my retraining in 2012. Given the ethical issues, I could not research the topic directly, but was given approval by the NSW Dept of Education to research secondary teachers' perceptions of this behaviour in adolescents and the resulting thesis is attached.

You have posed a range of questions where there is particular interest. My paper contains a lot of relevant data and information relevant to the areas of interest (specifically questions: 1, 2, 3, 5 and 9) and you are welcome to use this material if you find it helpful.

My current concern is that NSSI has continued to evolve as a maladaptive behaviour and is becoming much more common among younger children in upper primary and their motivations are slightly different to anything in the extant literature. This is an area that currently needs to attract some research in my point of view.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this topic as I continue to remain very interested in this issue and its impact on the community.

With best wishes