

Abstract

The research dissertation focuses its attention on people who deliberately harm themselves.

This behaviour is explored using a qualitative phenomenological approach. There is an emphasis on the factors that may influence deliberate self-harm, and an interest in the individuals' emotional needs.

Three women and two men were interviewed to achieve an exploration of their insight regarding a range of self-injurious behaviour, and to consider what they felt their emotional needs to be in relation to this behaviour.

All participants were found to be insightful and able to articulate awareness regarding their emotional needs.

Significant themes arising from the individual interviews were analysed from a group perspective, and then considered in the context of the literature review. Areas of difference and commonality were then discussed.

The implications for Gestalt psychotherapy are then discussed, as well as possible options for further research.