

# PSYCHIATRY DISORDERS, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

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## UNDERSTANDING SELF-INJURY AND BEGINNING TO HEAL

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Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is a maladaptive behavior defined as deliberate self-inflicted harm to one's own body. Over the past 10 years, literature on NSSI has grown in light of the increased occurrences of self-injurious actions among those who suffer from mental illness. Increased prevalence of mental illness influences the construction of misconceptions regarding self-injury. One of the most common fallacies of NSSI is that self-injury only occurs in attention-seeking teenagers who suffer from Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). With growing research, presentations and empirical reviews mental health professionals gain more information on self-injury and influential factors of correlated mental health impairments. The more that is learned about NSSI, the better chance treatment modalities have at reducing the intensity of urges to self-harm and the frequency of self-injurious behaviors. The presentation is aimed to help: Distinguish between NSSI and deliberate self-harm (DSH); challenge myths and misconceptions surrounding NSSI; discuss the demographics and prevalence of self-injury; identify influential factors correlated with NSSI urges and behaviors; discuss signs and symptoms of self-injury and recognize different treatment modalities best aimed at treating NSSI.

## BIOGRAPHY

Lauren Colston is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in Maryland and Virginia. She is a nationally registered Health Service Psychologist who has been in the psychology field for approximately 14 years. She earned her Bachelor's Degree at North Carolina Central University where she began working at a therapeutic group home for at-risk adolescent girls. Her Doctoral and Master's Degrees in clinical psychology were acquired at The American School of Professional Psychology, Argosy University. After receiving her Master's in clinical psychology, she engaged in a yearlong pre-doctoral internship with Tarzana Treatment Centers working with adolescents and adults fighting substance addiction and mental health impairments. Prior to joining Dominion Hospital's clinical team in 2014, she administered psychological evaluations for juvenile offenders at DC Superior Court, provided school-based and intensive in-home therapeutic treatment and delivered Trauma-Focused CBT (TF-CBT) in East Los Angeles California. Currently she is the HEAL Program Manager at Dominion Hospital overseeing treatment for those who engage in non-suicidal self-injury.

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