Perfectionism, Interpersonal Problems, and Suicide Ideation: An Investigation of the Perfectionism Social Disconnection Model
Chang Chen¹, Xiaolei Deng¹, Paul Hewitt¹, Pola Halhweg¹, Momoko Sato¹, Olesha Rather¹, Gordon Flett²
¹University of British Columbia, ²York University

INTRODUCTION

- A growing body of empirical evidence supports the notion that perfectionism is a risk and maintaining factor for various psychological problems, including depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and suicidal behaviours (see Hewitt & Flett, 2002; O’Connor, 2007 for reviews)
- Despite the robust association between perfectionism and suicidality (O’Connor, 2007), especially Socially Prescribed Perfectionism (SPP; i.e., the perception that others require perfection of oneself), there is a paucity of research on theoretical models that account for the perfectionism-suicide link.
- Perfectionism Social Disconnection Model (PSDM; Hewitt et al., 2006) provides a promising theoretical framework in which the role of perfectionism in suicidal behaviours may be understood in terms of maladaptive interpersonal styles/behaviours and the ensuing social alienation or disconnection that are associated with these perfectionistic behaviours.
- Therefore, the present study aimed to achieve a better understanding of the relationship between interpersonal perfectionism and suicidality by investigating several key dimensions of the PSDM using a sample of university students.

METHODS

Participants & Procedure
- 217 undergraduate students (147 women and 70 men) participated at Time 1; 164 participants (116 women and 49 men) returned 2 months later to complete Time 2 questionnaires; 24% attrition rate.
- Participants ranged in age between 17 and 29 (M=18.70, SD= 1.66); 51% East Asians and 38% Caucasians at both Time 1 and 2.

Time 1 Measures

- Trait Perfectionism
  - Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991)
  - Socially Prescribed perfectionism (SPP)
- Perfectionistic Self-Presentation Styles
  - Perfectionistic Self-Promotion
  - Non-display of imperfection

Time 2 Measures

- Social Disconnection (Time 2)
  - Alienation Scale (AS; Jessor & Jessor, 1977)
  - Social Isolation Items (SII; Dean, 1961)
  - De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale (DRLS; De Jong Gierveld & Kamphuis, 1985)
  - Social Hopelessness Questionnaire (SHQ; Flett et al., 1993)
  - UCLA Loneliness Scale (LS; Russell et al., 1978)

- Social Connection

- Suicide Ideation Questionnaire
  - Suicide Ideation Questionnaire (SIQ; Reynolds, 1987)
- Multisource Suicidal Behaviour Measure (MSBM; Paykel et al., 1978)
- Suicidal Behaviours Questionnaire (SBQ; Linehan, 1996)

- Interpersonal Problems
  - Inventory of Interpersonal Problems
    - Circumplex Version (IIP-C; Alden, Wiggins, & Pincus, 1980)
  - 8 subscales: Domineering; Vindictive; Cold; Socially Inhibited; Nonassertive; Overly Accommodating; Self-Sacrificing; Intrusive

- Implications & Limitations
  - Our results are particularly relevant to the assessment and treatment of suicide risk among young adults who present with elevated levels of interpersonal perfectionism.
  - Increasing awareness of and directly targeting maladaptive interpersonal behaviour and a lack of social connectedness may be key in reducing suicidal risk among highly perfectionistic individuals.
  - Future Directions: Replication of the study using measures of social disconnection other than self reports, e.g., informant report; Testing of the PSDM may be generalized to other demographic groups (e.g., older adults, adolescents, etc.).

RESULTS

Figure 1. Path Diagrams for Proposed Models

Table 1. Fitting Indices for Proposed Models

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<th>Model</th>
<th>X²/df</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
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<td>.11</td>
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<td>.82</td>
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<td>.12</td>
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Contact: Chang Chen, Ph.D. student, Clinical Psychology, chang.chen@psych.ubc.ca