

**Centennial Honors College
Thomas E. Helm Undergraduate Research Day 2024**

ABSTRACT

Major: Psychology

Podium

Faculty Mentor(s): Jonathan Hammersley

Associations Between Avoidant Coping Styles and Interpersonal Indicators of Suicidality

Mitchell White

In 2007, Joiner outlined three indicators of suicidality: acquired capability, thwarted belongingness, and perceived burdensomeness. The first has to do with the individual's experiences, while the latter two are interpersonal indicators that seem permanent and uncontrollable to the individual (Joiner, 2007). This is consistent with the mentality of those who display avoidant coping mechanisms. Specifically cognitive avoidance, the practice of ignoring or simply not interacting with prominent stressors, and acceptance/resignation, or conceding to and stopping attempts to confront the stressor. Although there have been studies in the past to find associations between cognitive avoidance and anxiety and depression, none have found correlations between cognitive avoidance and Joiner's interpersonal indicators of suicidality (Blalock & Joiner 2019).

For this study, 116 participants were recruited from a Midwestern university. Participants self-reported their responses to the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ15; Van Orden et al., 2012), Moos' (1997) Coping Response Inventory, and other information such as caffeine and tobacco use. The results indicate that the interpersonal factors of perceived burdensomeness & thwarted belongingness are moderately but significantly correlated with the avoidant coping styles of cognitive avoidance and acceptance/resignation until trait depression and neuroticism are controlled as covariates - then these correlations disappear. Furthermore, trait depression and neuroticism were significantly and highly correlated with both interpersonal indicators of suicidality (Pearson r s = .5 to .67) as well as cognitive avoidant coping styles. This may imply that interpersonal needs and coping styles are better captured by trait depression and personality measures.