

## CONTENTS

	Page No.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i-ii
CONTENTS	iii-viii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ABSTRACT	x-xi
CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1-13
1.1 Suicidal behaviour	1
1.2 Suicide and self Harm worldwide	2
1.3 Suicide and self-harm in Sri Lanka	4
1.4.1 Objectives of the research	6
1.4.2 Overview of the research approach and methods	7
CHAPTER 2: SELF-REPORTED CIRCUMSTANCES OF DELIBERATE SELF-HARM	14-45
2.1 Introduction	14
2.1.1 Self-harm in South Asia	14
2.1.2 Studies on DSH in Sri Lanka	15
2.1.2.1 Methods of DSH	15
2.1.3 Risk factors for DSH	15
2.1.3.1 Interpersonal difficulties	16
2.1.3.2 Previous episodes of DSH	16
2.1.3.3 Exposure to self-harm of others	17
2.1.3.4 Psychiatric illnesses	17
2.1.4 Cognitive and Emotional States	18
2.1.4.1 Premeditation	18
2.1.4.2 Stated intention	19
2.1.4.3 Emotions	19
2.1.4.4 Alcohol intoxication	20
2.1.5 Retrospective feelings of DSH patients	20

2.2	Study objectives	20
2.3	Method	21
2.3.1	Subjects	21
2.3.2	Interview protocol	22
2.3.3	Follow-up interview	23
2.3.4	Sample size	23
2.3.5	Pilot study	24
2.3.6	Analysis	24
2.3.6.1	Quantitative data analysis	25
2.3.6.2	Qualitative data analysis	25
2.4	Results	25
2.4.1	Socio-Demographic characteristics of the sample	25
2.4.2	Self-reported circumstances of DSH	26
2.4.2.1	Interpersonal dynamics of circumstances preceding DSH	26
2.4.2.2	Perceptions of the positive consequences of self-harm	31
2.4.2.3	Narrating the experience of self-harm	32
2.4.2.4	The aftermath of DSH	34
2.4.2.5	The banality of self-harm	35
2.5	A case vignette	36
2.6	Discussion	39
2.7	Conclusion	43
CHAPTER 3: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO SELF-HARM		46-67
3.1	Introduction	46
3.1.1	Follow-up of DSH patients	46
3.1.2	Understanding DSH in Sri Lankan context	47
3.1.3	Responding to DSH	48
3.1.4	Aftercare for DSH patients	49

3.2	Present study	50
	3.2.1 Method	50
3.3	Analysis	51
3.4	Results	51
	3.4.1 Immediate responses triggered by DSH	52
	3.4.1.1 Family care during hospitalization and immediate effects of DSH	52
	3.4.2 Addressing needs of self-harming individuals in the community	53
	3.4.2.1 Measures to address needs of the self-harming Individual	53
	3.4.3 Negative consequences of self-harm	54
	3.4.3.1 Negative responses and psychosocial recovery of the participants	55
	3.4.4 Coping with the aftermath of DSH	56
3.5	A case vignette	56
3.6	Discussion	59
3.7	Conclusion	63

CHAPTER 4: TRENDS OF SUICIDE AND DELIBERATE  
SELF-HARM IN CHILDREN AND  
ADOLESCENTS

		68-85
4.1	Introduction	68
	4.1.1 Prevalence of suicides in adolescents	68
	4.1.2 Self-harm among adolescents	69
	4.1.3 Methods of suicide and DSH among adolescents	70
	4.1.4 Suicide and DSH in Sri Lankan adolescents	71
4.2	Study objectives	71
	4.2.1 Method	72
	4.2.1.1 Setting	72
	4.2.1.2 Procedure	72

4.3	Analysis	74
4.4	Results	74
4.4.1	Sample characteristics	74
4.4.2	Changes in fatal and nonfatal DSH over time	74
4.4.3	Age and fatal and non-fatal DSH	74
4.4.4	Age, gender and DSH	75
4.4.5	Methods of fatal and nonfatal DSH	75
4.4.5.1	Overdoses of medication	76
4.4.5.2	Change in substances used for self-poisoning	76
4.4.6	Fatal DSH	77
4.4.7	Characteristics of treatment of DSH patients at Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya	77
4.5	Discussion	77
4.6	Conclusion	80

## CHAPTER 5: SELF-REPORTED CIRCUMSTANCES

	OF ADOLESCENT SELF-HARM	86-113
5.1	Introduction	86
5.1.1	Problems/precipitants of adolescent DSH	86
5.1.2	Motivations for adolescent DSH	87
5.1.3	Psychological factors associated with adolescent self-harm	88
5.1.3.1	Psychological characteristics	88
5.1.3.2	Self-harm by family and friends	89
5.1.3.3	Previous episodes/ repetition of DSH	90
5.2	Present Study	91
5.2.1	Method	91
5.2.2	Subjects	92
5.2.3	Instruments	92
5.3	Analysis	93
5.3.1	Quantitative data analysis	93
5.3.2	Qualitative data analysis	94

5.4	Results	94
5.4.1	Characteristics of the sample	94
5.4.1.1	Socio-Demographic characteristics of the sample	94
5.4.1.2	Characteristics of DSH episodes	95
5.4.2	Self-reported circumstances of DSH	95
5.4.2.1	Interpersonal dynamics of circumstances preceding DSH	95
5.4.2.2	Self-harm as leverage for changing the other	101
5.4.2.3	Adolescents' accounts of their actions immediately preceding the self-harm	101
5.4.2.4	Aftermath of DSH	103
5.4.2.5	The banality of self-harm in the lives of adolescents	105
5.5	A case vignette	106
5.6	Discussion	108
5.7	Conclusion	111
CHAPTER 6: MOTHERS' RESPONSES TO THEIR DAUGHTERS' DSH		114-128
6.1	Introduction	114
6.1.1	Parental emotional response to adolescent DSH	115
6.1.2	Parents' concerns following a DSH episode of their child	115
6.2	Present study	117
6.2.1	Method	117
6.3	Analysis	118
6.3.1	Qualitative data analysis	118
6.4	Results	119
6.4.1	Making sense of girl's self-harm in the context of family	119
6.4.1.1	The daughter's DSH came as a shock to the mother	119
6.4.1.2	The daughter's DSH represented a failure to consider the needs of the family	121

6.4.1.3	Reasons for DSH are outside the girl's control	122
6.4.1.4	DSH was a 'foolish act' done without proper thinking	123
6.4.1.5	Efforts to reintegrate the daughter in to the family	124
6.5	A case vignette	125
6.6	Discussion	128
CONCLUSIONS		130-135
BIBLIOGRAPHY		136-152
Attachment no.1	Ethical approval letter for study one and two	
Attachment no. 2a	Consent form	
Attachment no. 2b	Consent form	
Attachment no. 3	Interview protocol for the initial interview	
Attachment no. 4	Interview protocol for the follow-up interview	
Attachment no. 5	Ethical approval letter for amendments	
Attachment no. 6	Ethical approval letter for study three, four and five	
Attachment no. 7	Form used for recording information in patient records	
Attachment no. 8	Consent form for adolescents and their parents	
Attachment no. 9	Interview protocol for adolescents and their parents	
Attachment no. 10	Publications, Abstracts and Presentations	

## LIST OF TABLES

		page
Table 1.1	Suicide rates per 100,000 population by country, year and sex	11
Table 2.1	Age & Gender distribution of the sample	44
Table 2.2	Occupations of the subjects	44
Table 2.3	Ethnicity, marital status & family income of the sample	45
Table 3.1	Family communication pertaining to self-harm	64
Table 3.2	Family communication regarding antecedents of DSH	64
Table 3.3	Participants' anticipated versus actual treatment from the family	65
Table 3.4	Supportive measures taken by families and close associates	66
Table 3.5	Adjustments reported by participants	67
Table 4.1	Hospital admissions for DSH categorized by year and gender	81
Table 4.2	Age distribution of the sample	82
Table 4.3	Methods of self-harm used by boys and girls	83
Table 4.4	Type of medications used by those who overdosed	84
Table 5.1	Age & gender distributions of the subjects	113
Table 5.2	Duration of problem/circumstances preceding DSH as reported by adolescents	113

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	Suicide in Sri Lanka 1950-2007	12
Figure 1.2	Distribution of suicide deaths across the age span	12
Figure 1.3	Common methods used for suicides by men & women, 2008	13
Figure 4.1	Case fatality rates for girls and boys by year	84
Figure 4.2	Admissions of girls and boys in 2001 and 2007	85
Figure 4.3	Change in the substances used for non-fatal DSH over time	85