



Economic
and Social
Research Council



Developing a new self-harm assessment tool for autistic adults with and without mild intellectual disability

ESRC DTP Joint Studentship

University of Nottingham and University of Birmingham

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). One of 14 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

We are now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Joint Studentship at the University of Nottingham (where the student will be registered) and the University of Birmingham to commence in October 2020.

Self-harm has traditionally been conceptualised very differently in autism compared to the general population, which has led to this behaviour being overlooked by researchers and clinicians. Research shows that autistic adults are at increased risk of experiencing self-harm, as conceptualised in the general population, compared to non-autistic adults. Yet, there is very little research exploring self-harm in autism, and no studies included autistic people with co-occurring intellectual disability (ID).

A key barrier to developing self-harm in autism research, is lack of validated tools available to assess self-harm in autistic adults, with and without ID. The current PhD will therefore identify and adapt a self-harm assessment tool originally developed for the general population, for autistic adults with and without co-occurring mild ID. The PhD student will be trained in a range of research methods to achieve this, including systematic review, meta-analysis, interviews, measurement development and evaluation.

The PhD student will be joining a supervisory team with a strong track record of world leading research in mental health, self-harm, and suicide in autism and ID. Dr Cassidy leads the [mental health in autism](#) research program at the [School of Psychology, University of Nottingham](#) where the PhD student will be primarily based. Dr Cassidy's work focuses on developing new assessments, theories and interventions to understand and prevent depression, self-harm and suicide, in partnership with autistic adults. Dr Richards is a Lecturer and Clinical Psychologist, based at the University of Birmingham and will provide secondary supervision for the candidate. [Dr Richards leads a team](#) focusing on clinical difficulties, including sleep, self-harm and behaviours that challenge, experienced by people who are autistic and/or who have neurodevelopmental disorders, particularly those who have severe intellectual disability and genetic syndromes. The PhD student will benefit from a range of world-leading expertise and state-of-the-art facilities

across two research teams, and will join a community of existing PhD students and research assistants/fellows.

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Joint Studentship application form [available online here](#) along with a one-page covering letter and two-page CV, and e-mail these to natasha.langley@nottingham.ac.uk. Shortlisted applicants will also be required to provide two references.

Application deadline: Monday 2nd March 2020

Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP

Our ESRC studentships cover fees and maintenance stipend and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available only to successful applicants who fulfil eligibility criteria. To check your eligibility, visit: www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/

Informal enquiries about the research or School of Psychology prior to application can be directed to sarah.cassidy@nottingham.ac.uk