

Abstract

Mental health stigma can be detrimental to an individual's well being, as well as the help they may receive. Self-stigma is present when an individual endorses the societal stigmas related to mental illness and questions their ability to effectively interact with the world around them. Predictors of self-stigma include poor emotional or social resiliency and maladaptive coping strategies, all of which are related to poor distress tolerance (Livingston & Boyd, 2010, Corrigan, 2004). As such, one would expect that those who perceive negative emotional experiences as intolerable would be more likely to endorse self-stigmatizing beliefs about their own mental illness. However, no previous empirical study has examined this association. Thus, the purpose of the current study was to examine the association between mental illness related self-stigma and distress intolerance. I hypothesized that those who are more intolerant of distress would be more likely to endorse self-stigmatizing attitudes. As part of a larger study assessing distress intolerance and related constructs, participants (n = 54) completed measures examining distress intolerance and mental health self-stigma. Participants were included if they endorsed having been diagnosed with a mental illness. Results of the study indicate there is a statistically significant and clinically meaningful positive association between scores on the SSMIS-SF and DTS, suggesting there is a relationship between the two constructs.

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