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Psychosocial interventions for treating depression and self-harm in adolescents: a systematic literature review

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ABSTRACT

Depression and self-harm among adolescents are mental health issues that are on the rise globally and have a serious impact on adolescents' social functioning, emotional development, and quality of life. Various risk factors such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), domestic violence, trauma, social isolation, attachment disorders, and psychosocial stress contribute to the onset of depression and self-harm among adolescents. This qualitative study aims to identify, analyze, and synthesize effective psychosocial interventions for addressing depression and self-harm in adolescents through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The review followed the PRISMA guidelines, and relevant international journal articles published between 2023 and 2026 were searched through Scopus and Google Scholar. A total of 10 articles were selected based on inclusion criteria covering psychosocial interventions, adolescent mental health, childhood trauma, attachment, and psychosocial support from families and communities. The results indicate that psychosocial interventions based on attachment, trauma-informed care, cognitive behavioral therapy, family support, emotion regulation, community-based approaches, and multidisciplinary social support are effective in reducing depressive symptoms, enhancing resilience, improving emotion regulation, and reducing the risk of self-harm among adolescents. The involvement of families, schools, social workers, and the community environment is a critical factor in the success of these interventions. The findings emphasize that holistic, participatory, and trauma-informed psychosocial approaches are essential in social work practice with adolescents. This study recommends strengthening family-, school-, and community-based psychosocial intervention models as strategies for the prevention and management of depression and self-harm among adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial developmental period in an individual's life because it is a phase marked by simultaneous biological, psychological, social, and emotional changes. These changes often cause adolescents to experience significant psychosocial stress, particularly when they lack adequate coping skills to deal with the various demands of development. According to Wang et al. (2025), adolescence is a period of vulnerability to the emergence of emotional disorders and problematic behaviors due to unstable emotional regulation and complex social relationships. One of the mental health issues on the rise among adolescents is depression and self-harm. Depression in adolescents

is characterized by prolonged feelings of sadness, loss of interest in daily activities, sleep disturbances, decreased motivation, low self-esteem, and even the emergence of a desire to harm oneself. Meanwhile, self-harm is the intentional act of harming oneself as a way to vent emotional stress or psychological pain that cannot be expressed healthily. According to Mao et al. (2025), depression and self-harm in adolescents are closely linked to childhood trauma and psychosocial disturbances experienced by individuals during their developmental process.

The phenomenon of depression and self-harm among adolescents has become a global concern due to its severe impact on social functioning,

mental health, interpersonal relationships, and adolescents' quality of life. Adolescents experiencing depression tend to face a decline in academic performance, social isolation, family relationship problems, and an increased risk of suicide. In the context of social work, depression and self-harm are viewed as the result of a complex interaction between the individual and their social environment; therefore, their management requires a holistic and multidimensional approach. Various studies indicate that traumatic childhood experiences, or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), are a major risk factor for the onset of depression and self-harm in adolescents. ACEs include physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, family conflict, loss of a parent, domestic violence, and various life experiences that cause prolonged psychological stress. Mao et al. (2025) explain that children and adolescents who experience ACEs are at higher risk of developing mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, behavioral disorders, and difficulties with emotional regulation.

Traumatic childhood experiences and the quality of the attachment relationship between children and their parents also significantly influence adolescents' psychosocial development. Wang et al. (2025) explain that insecure attachment increases the risk of problematic behaviors in adolescents, including depression, anxiety, aggressive behavior, and self-harm. Attachment disorders cause adolescents to struggle with developing a sense of emotional security and healthy interpersonal relationships. In such circumstances, self-harm is often used as a negative coping mechanism to alleviate the emotional distress they feel. Research by Diaz-Ogallar et al. (2024) also indicates that bonding and attachment disorders between mothers and children are associated with increased emotional disturbances in children and adolescents. Factors such as maternal anxiety during pregnancy and the postpartum period, a lack of family support, and parental psychological disorders influence the quality of the attachment formed between mother and child. These conditions can have long-term effects on a child's emotional development into adolescence.

A family environment marked by conflict and violence is also a key factor in the increased risk of depression and self-harm among adolescents. Rees et al. (2025) found that children living with mothers

who are victims of intimate partner violence face an increased risk of social-emotional disorders, anxiety, and depression. Domestic violence creates a psychologically unsafe environment for children and adolescents, thereby affecting their long-term emotional development. Family factors and negative social experiences, such as bullying, discrimination, social marginalization, and isolation, also contribute to rising rates of depression among adolescents. Hunt-Anderson (2025) explains that covert bullying, such as social humiliation, cyberbullying, and group rejection, causes serious psychological distress in adolescents. Adolescents who experience bullying tend to suffer from reduced self-esteem, social isolation, and an increased risk of self-harming behavior.

In a global context, adolescents living in situations of migration, displacement, and social conflict also experience severe psychosocial stress. Whitaker et al. (2025) demonstrate that experiences of migration and social alienation increase the vulnerability of children and adolescents to mental health disorders. Meanwhile, Gebus et al. (2025) explain that refugee children who have experienced trauma due to conflict and social crises are at high risk of developing anxiety, depression, and other psychosocial disorders.

These various conditions indicate that depression and self-harm among adolescents are not only related to individual factors but are also influenced by the family, school, community, and broader social systems. Therefore, the intervention approaches used to address depression and self-harm must be holistic, taking into account the various psychosocial aspects that influence adolescents' lives.

In social work practice, psychosocial interventions are a relevant approach because they focus not only on the psychological aspects of the individual but also on social relationships, family support, the community environment, and adolescents' social functioning. Psychosocial interventions are a form of professional assistance aimed at improving an individual's psychological and social well-being through emotional support, psychoeducation, family counseling, group therapy, strengthening coping mechanisms, and developing social support. Research by Gomez-Juncal et al. (2025) shows that psychosocial interventions based on attachment theory, trauma-informed care, and

positive parenting are effective in improving the mental health of children and adolescents. These interventions help improve the emotional bond between children and parents and enhance overall family functioning. The trauma-informed care approach is one of the key strategies in modern psychosocial interventions. Gebus et al. (2025) explain that trauma-informed care helps create psychosocial safety, improve emotional regulation skills, and strengthen the resilience of children and adolescents who have experienced psychological trauma. This approach is highly relevant in social work practice because the majority of adolescents with depression and self-harm have experienced complex trauma.

Family and community support also play a crucial role in adolescents' psychosocial recovery process. Teixeira et al. (2026) explain that families facing various psychosocial challenges require flexible, participatory, and strength-based support. This approach helps enhance families' ability to cope with problems and strengthens social relationships that support adolescents' mental health. In educational settings, approaches grounded in social justice and critical pedagogy are also increasingly being used to improve adolescents' mental health. Ulum (2025) demonstrates that an inclusive and supportive school environment can enhance students' empathy, social awareness, and psychological well-being. Safe, stigma-free schools provide a space for adolescents to express psychological concerns healthily and receive social support from their surroundings.

Given these various issues, it is clear that depression and self-harm among adolescents are mental health issues that require serious attention from various stakeholders, including social workers, psychologists, families, schools, and the community. Therefore, this study aims to identify, analyze, and synthesize various forms of effective psychosocial interventions for addressing depression and self-harm among adolescents through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of evidence-based social work practice in the field of adolescent mental health.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research approach through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, analyze, and synthesize various forms of psychosocial interventions for treating depression and self-harm behaviors in adolescents. The qualitative orientation is reflected in the interpretive synthesis of findings across heterogeneous studies and in the use of thematic synthesis to develop descriptive and analytical themes. Thomas and Harden (2008) explain that thematic synthesis is a method for integrating qualitative findings in systematic reviews through coding, the development of descriptive themes, and the generation of analytical themes. The SLR approach was selected because it enables a comprehensive, systematic, and evidence-based understanding of psychosocial interventions developed across different research contexts. According to Snyder (2019), a systematic literature review is a research method used to systematically integrate previous studies in order to generate deeper scientific conclusions about a specific phenomenon, identify patterns and research gaps, and formulate recommendations for evidence-based practice and policy.

This study was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines developed by Page et al. (2021). PRISMA was used to ensure that the processes of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of studies were conducted transparently, systematically, and in a scientifically accountable manner. The literature search focused on peer-reviewed international journal articles related to depression, self-harm, psychosocial trauma, attachment, and mental health interventions for children and adolescents. Searches were conducted through Scopus and Google Scholar, covering publications from 2023 to 2026. This publication period was selected to capture recent evidence and current developments in psychosocial intervention practices while remaining consistent with the publication years of the studies included in the final synthesis.

The search strategy used combinations of keywords and Boolean operators, including "psychosocial intervention," "depression among adolescents," "self-harm behavior," "adverse

childhood experiences,” “attachment intervention,” “trauma-informed care,” “emotional regulation,” “family support,” and “adolescent mental health.” Examples of search combinations included “psychosocial intervention” AND adolescent AND (depression OR “self-harm”), and (“adverse childhood experiences” OR trauma) AND adolescent AND (“mental health” OR depression). The search terms were adapted to the search features of each database or platform. According to Xiao and Watson (2019), the use of explicit, systematic, and reproducible keywords is a crucial step in systematic reviews to ensure that literature retrieval is aligned with the research objectives. Retrieved records were screened first by title and abstract. Articles that were not related to psychosocial interventions, adolescent depression, mental health, psychosocial trauma, or self-harm were excluded. Potentially relevant articles were then assessed through full-text reading to determine substantive eligibility.

The inclusion criteria were: (1) articles published in English; (2) studies discussing psychosocial interventions; (3) studies focusing on children or adolescents; (4) articles related to depression, psychosocial trauma, attachment, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), or self-harm; and (5) empirical studies, systematic reviews, scoping reviews, thematic syntheses, or meta-analyses that provided relevant evidence for the review question. The exclusion criteria were: (1) studies that did not address psychosocial interventions; (2) studies that were not relevant to child or adolescent mental health; and (3) opinion pieces or conceptual articles without adequate empirical or review-based evidence. Based on the PRISMA-guided selection process, 10 articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final qualitative synthesis.

The final corpus of 10 studies represented diverse methodological designs. It included a systematic review and meta-analysis by Mao et al. (2025), a systematic review by Gomez-Juncal et al. (2025), a scoping review by Teixeira et al. (2026), and a thematic synthesis by O’Connell et al. (2024). Longitudinal evidence was represented by Wang et al. (2025) and Rees et al. (2025), while Gebus et al. (2025) contributed a longitudinal qualitative study. Whitaker et al. (2025) provided quantitative evidence, Hunt-Anderson (2025) used a mixed-

methods design, and Ulum (2025) employed a qualitative participatory approach. Across these studies, the main intervention and explanatory domains included trauma-informed psychosocial support, attachment and emotion regulation, family and parenting support, strength-based approaches, anti-bullying and social justice interventions, and supportive school or community environments. This methodological diversity enabled the review to synthesize evidence across different study designs while focusing consistently on the psychosocial factors, intervention mechanisms, and support systems associated with adolescent depression and self-harm.

The data analysis process was conducted using the thematic synthesis approach as developed by Thomas and Harden (2008). This approach was used to identify the main themes emerging from the analyzed research findings. According to Thomas and Harden (2008), thematic synthesis allows researchers to integrate various qualitative and quantitative research findings into a broader conceptual theme. In this study, thematic synthesis was conducted through three main stages: (1) coding the research findings in each article; (2) grouping the codes into descriptive themes; and (3) developing analytical themes that explain the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions for depression and self-harm among adolescents.

The analysis identified several key themes, including risk factors for depression and self-harm among adolescents, the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the importance of attachment and emotional regulation, the effectiveness of trauma-informed care, family support, community support, and a multidisciplinary approach to psychosocial intervention practices. The analysis also highlights how family-, school-, and community-based psychosocial interventions can improve adolescents’ social functioning, resilience, and mental health.

To enhance the credibility of the research findings, the researchers also conducted a quality assessment of the articles based on principles of scientific reliability, such as topic relevance, research methodology, journal quality, and the alignment of the research findings with the focus of the systematic review. This approach is crucial to ensure that the synthesis of research findings is truly derived from valid and academically

accountable sources. By employing a PRISMA-based systematic literature review and thematic synthesis, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions in addressing depression and self-harm among adolescents, while also serving as a foundation for the development of evidence-based social work practice in the field of adolescent mental health.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the 10 selected articles indicates that psychosocial interventions are significantly effective in addressing depression and self-harm behaviors among adolescents. The research findings show that psychosocial factors, childhood trauma, family relationships, emotional regulation, and social support are strongly associated with the onset of mental health disorders in adolescents. The studies analyzed also show that psychosocial intervention approaches based on trauma-informed care, attachment, family, school, and community can significantly improve adolescents' social and emotional functioning.

Childhood trauma as a major risk factor

Research findings indicate that traumatic experiences during childhood or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are a major risk factor for the development of depression and self-harm among adolescents. ACEs include experiences of physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, family conflict, the loss of a parent, domestic violence, and living in a psychologically unsafe environment. Research by Mao et al. (2025) explains that children and adolescents who experience ACEs are at higher risk of developing psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, behavioral disorders, and difficulties with emotional regulation. These findings indicate that traumatic experiences during early development impact neurobiological changes, emotional development, and adolescents' social adaptation abilities. Unresolved trauma often gives rise to feelings of insecurity, low self-esteem, loneliness, and an inability to manage emotional stress healthily. These conditions then lead some adolescents to engage in self-harm as a form of emotional release or a negative coping mechanism for the psychological stress they are experiencing.

A study by Rees et al. (2025) on children living with mothers who are victims of intimate

partner violence shows that domestic violence has long-term effects on children's psychosocial development. Children exposed to domestic violence show an increased risk of social-emotional disorders, anxiety, depression, and problematic behavior during adolescence. The study also confirms that socioeconomic factors, family instability, and interpersonal trauma exacerbate children's psychological conditions. A study by Whitaker et al. (2025) on refugee families shows that experiences of migration, loss, social conflict, and the pressures of life in refugee camps increase children's vulnerability to mental health disorders. Migration-related trauma and social isolation cause children to experience prolonged stress, emotional insecurity, and a decline in psychosocial well-being. These findings demonstrate that depression and self-harm in adolescents do not arise suddenly but are the result of an accumulation of various traumatic experiences dating back to childhood. Therefore, early identification of traumatic experiences is a crucial step in psychosocial intervention practices.

Attachment disorders and emotional regulation

Research findings also indicate that attachment disorders are strongly linked to the onset of depression and self-harm in adolescents. Insecure attachment between children and parents causes adolescents to struggle with developing a sense of emotional security, self-confidence, and healthy interpersonal relationships. A study by Wang et al. (2025) explains that poor attachment relationships between parents and children increase the risk of problematic behaviors in adolescents, including aggressive behavior, anxiety, depression, and self-harm. The study explains that emotional regulation serves as a key mediator between attachment disorders and problematic adolescent behavior. Adolescents who lack good emotional regulation skills tend to be more prone to using self-harm as a means of managing negative emotions. Attachment disorders also cause adolescents to struggle with building healthy social relationships with those around them. They often experience loneliness, social rejection, and an inability to manage interpersonal conflicts. These conditions increase the risk of depression and self-harm as a form of emotional expression.

Research by Diaz-Ogallar et al. (2024) also shows that bonding and attachment disorders

between mothers and children are associated with increased emotional disturbances in children. Factors such as maternal anxiety, postpartum complications, and a lack of emotional support from the family influence the quality of the attachment formed between mother and child. The results of this study indicate that a secure and supportive emotional relationship within the family plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' mental health. Conversely, insecure attachment increases adolescents' vulnerability to depression and self-harm.

The effectiveness of trauma-informed care

Research findings indicate that the trauma-informed care approach is an effective form of psychosocial intervention for addressing depression and self-harm among adolescents. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding an individual's traumatic experiences and creating an emotionally and psychologically safe intervention environment. A study by Gebus et al. (2025) on psychosocial interventions for refugee children in Lebanon found that the success of the intervention was significantly influenced by the establishment of psychosocial safety, self-regulation, and co-regulation. This approach helps children and adolescents feel safe, accepted, and supported as they cope with the traumatic experiences they have endured. The study explains that trauma-informed care is implemented through psychoeducation, emotional support, strengthening coping mechanisms, and a supportive therapeutic relationship between the counselor and the child. These interventions help adolescents understand their emotions, improve their ability to manage stress, and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

A study by Mao et al. (2025) also found that trauma-informed psychosocial interventions can reduce internalizing and externalizing problems in children and adolescents who have experienced ACEs. These interventions are effective in improving adolescents' psychological well-being, emotional regulation, and social adaptation skills. These results indicate that a trauma-informed care approach is highly relevant for use in social work practice because it provides a safe space for adolescents to process traumatic experiences healthily and constructively.

The importance of family support

Research findings indicate that families play a central role in the success of psychosocial interventions for depression and self-harm among adolescents. Emotional support, positive communication, and family involvement in the intervention process are important protective factors for adolescents' mental health. Research by Gomez-Juncal et al. (2025) explains that family-based interventions that integrate attachment, trauma, and positive parenting can improve the quality of family relationships, social functioning, and the mental health of children and adolescents.

This approach is implemented through family psychoeducation, family therapy, positive parenting training, and increasing parents' emotional sensitivity to their children's needs. Family interventions help create a more supportive and psychologically safe home environment for adolescents. Research by Teixeira et al. (2026) also indicates that families facing various psychosocial challenges require flexible, strength-based, and participatory support. Families receiving ongoing psychosocial support demonstrate improved communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and social functioning. These findings suggest that the successful management of depression and self-harm depends not only on the adolescent themselves but is also influenced by the quality of relationships and support within the family.

Social and community support

Research findings indicate that social support from peers, schools, and the community plays a significant role in adolescents' psychosocial recovery process. A supportive social environment helps adolescents feel accepted, valued, and able to express their emotions healthily. Hunt-Anderson's (2025) study on bullying demonstrates that participatory and social justice-based approaches can enhance social awareness, empathy, and support for adolescents experiencing social marginalization. Ulum's (2025) research indicates that a school environment integrating critical pedagogy and social justice approaches can help improve students' empathy, sense of social safety, and mental health. An inclusive, stigma-free school environment provides a safe space for adolescents to develop psychologically and socially. Peer support groups have also been shown to be effective in helping

adolescents reduce feelings of loneliness, boost self-esteem, and develop more adaptive coping skills.

A multidisciplinary approach to psychosocial interventions

Research findings indicate that a multidisciplinary approach is a key factor in the success of psychosocial interventions for adolescents experiencing depression and self-harm. Addressing adolescent mental health issues requires collaboration among social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, families, schools, and the community. A multidisciplinary approach enables interventions to be conducted holistically, taking into account the psychological, social, educational, and environmental aspects of adolescents' lives. Research by O'Connell et al. (2024) indicates that attachment-based interventions involving caregivers, professionals, and the social environment can enhance the success of psychosocial recovery among children and adolescents. Multidisciplinary collaboration also helps ensure the continuity of support for adolescents, whether in the context of family, school, or the community. This approach is highly relevant in modern social work practice, which views the individual as part of a broader social system.

The results of the systematic literature review indicate that depression and self-harm behaviors among adolescents are complex, multidimensional psychosocial issues influenced by the interaction of various biological, psychological, social, familial, cultural, and environmental factors. Based on a synthesis of the 10 articles analyzed, it was found that childhood trauma, attachment disorders, domestic violence, social marginalization, low family support, and poor emotional regulation are dominant factors that increase adolescents' vulnerability to depression and self-harm. On the other hand, psychosocial interventions based on trauma-informed care, attachment, family and community support, and multidisciplinary approaches have proven effective in improving adolescents' psychological well-being and social functioning.

The findings of this study reinforce the social work perspective that adolescent mental health issues cannot be understood solely as individual disorders, but must be viewed within the context of social relationships and the environment in which

individuals develop. The Person in Environment (PIE) perspective in social work emphasizes that an individual's psychological state is influenced by the relationship between the individual and their social environment. In the context of depression and self-harm, living in an environment marked by stress, trauma, conflict, and emotional insecurity is a major factor influencing adolescents' psychosocial well-being. The study's results indicate that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are strongly associated with the onset of depression and self-harm behaviors in adolescents. A study by Mao et al. (2025) explains that ACEs, such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, parental divorce, mental health disorders within the family, and experiences of loss, have a significant impact on the psychological development of children and adolescents. Children who have experienced trauma tend to suffer from emotional regulation disorders, low self-esteem, interpersonal relationship difficulties, and an increased risk of depression and self-destructive behavior.

In this context, self-harm behavior among adolescents can be understood as a form of emotional expression resulting from an individual's inability to manage the psychological stress they are experiencing. Self-harm is often used as a negative coping mechanism to alleviate emotional pain, anger, loneliness, or feelings of worthlessness. These findings are consistent with the research by Rees et al. (2025), which shows that children living in environments of intimate partner violence have an increased risk of social-emotional and psychological disorders from an early age. Domestic violence causes children to live in conditions of fear, insecurity, and emotional stress, which impact their psychosocial development through adolescence. Regarding trauma, the study's results also indicate that attachment disorders significantly contribute to the onset of depression and self-harm. Insecure attachment between children and parents leads adolescents to struggle with developing a sense of emotional security and healthy interpersonal relationships. Wang et al. (2025) explain that poor attachment relationships increase the risk of problematic behavior in adolescents through impaired emotional regulation. Adolescents who do not receive adequate emotional support from their families tend to have difficulty managing stress and are more likely to resort to

self-harm as a coping mechanism. Research by Diaz-Ogallar et al. (2024) also shows that the quality of bonding and attachment between mother and child significantly influences the child's emotional development. Factors such as maternal anxiety, postpartum complications, and a lack of emotional support from the family disrupt the formation of secure attachment. These conditions have long-term effects on the child's ability to build social relationships and manage emotions during adolescence.

These findings indicate that the family plays a fundamental role in adolescents' mental health development. Families marked by conflict, violence, neglect, and negative communication create an environment that increases the risk of depression and self-harm. Conversely, families that are supportive, warm, and responsive to their children's emotional needs can serve as a protective factor against psychological disorders in adolescents. In this context, family-based psychosocial interventions are crucial. Research by Gomez-Juncal et al. (2025) shows that interventions integrating attachment, trauma-informed care, positive parenting, and mentalization can improve family functioning as well as the mental health of children and adolescents. This approach helps parents understand their children's emotional needs, increase parenting sensitivity, and foster more positive family communication. Findings from Teixeira et al. (2026) also indicate that families facing various psychosocial challenges require flexible, strength-based, and participatory intervention approaches. A strength-based approach positions families as active participants in the problem-solving process and in strengthening social functioning. In social work practice, this approach is important because it not only focuses on a family's weaknesses or problems but also explores the family's potential and resources to support adolescents' psychosocial recovery.

Family, social environment, and community also have a significant impact on adolescents' mental health. Research findings indicate that bullying, social marginalization, discrimination, and social isolation increase the risk of depression and self-harm among adolescents. Hunt-Anderson's (2025) study explains that forms of covert bullying, such as social humiliation, cyberbullying, and group rejection, cause significant psychological distress in

adolescents. Adolescents who experience bullying often suffer from low self-esteem, social anxiety, depression, and a tendency toward self-harm. These findings highlight the importance of a safe, inclusive, and supportive school environment for adolescents' psychosocial development. Ulum's (2025) research indicates that approaches rooted in critical pedagogy and social justice within educational settings can enhance students' empathy, social awareness, and courage in confronting discrimination and social injustice. A school environment that provides a safe space for students to express themselves healthily can help reduce psychological stress and improve adolescents' mental well-being.

From the perspective of school social work, schools serve not only as places for academic learning but also as spaces for adolescents' social-emotional development. Therefore, school-based psychosocial interventions are a key strategy in preventing depression and self-harm among adolescents. Programs such as peer support groups, school counseling, psychoeducation, anti-bullying campaigns, and trauma-informed school interventions can help improve students' coping skills and resilience. Research findings also indicate that the trauma-informed care approach is one of the most effective psychosocial interventions for addressing depression and self-harm among adolescents. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the impact of trauma on an individual's psychological development and creating an emotionally safe intervention environment. Research by Gebus et al. (2025) found that the success of psychosocial interventions for refugee children is influenced by the establishment of psychosocial safety, self-regulation, and co-regulation.

Trauma-informed care helps adolescents understand the traumatic experiences they have gone through without feeling judged or blamed. This approach also helps adolescents rebuild a sense of emotional safety and the ability to manage stress adaptively. In social work practice, the trauma-informed care approach is important because many adolescents with depression and self-harm have a history of complex trauma. Research by O'Connell et al. (2024) shows that attachment-based interventions and psychoeducation can help caregivers better understand children's emotional

needs. Strengthening caregivers' capacity is a key factor in creating a supportive environment for adolescents' psychosocial recovery.

In a global context, research findings also indicate that migration, displacement, and social conflict increase adolescents' vulnerability to mental health disorders. Whitaker et al. (2025) explain that children from refugee families experience psychosocial stress due to migration, cultural alienation, loss of social connections, and uncertainty about the future. Similarly, research by Gebus et al. (2025) shows that refugee children in Lebanon experience prolonged trauma due to conflict, poverty, and social crises.

These findings indicate that depression and self-harm among adolescents cannot be separated from the broader social context. Factors such as poverty, social injustice, discrimination, and limited access to mental health services further exacerbate adolescents' psychological well-being. Several other articles analyzed also highlight the importance of a social justice approach in psychosocial intervention practices. Kelly et al. (2025) demonstrate that youth leaving the alternative care system (leaving care youth) experience various forms of social injustice, such as stigma, discrimination, and limited access to social resources. These conditions increase their vulnerability to depression, social isolation, and other psychological problems. Research by Eisen et al. (2024) also emphasizes the importance of integrating the concept of social justice into the education and practice of child and adolescent mental health. A social justice-based approach helps professionals understand that mental health issues are often linked to social inequities, discrimination, and the marginalization experienced by individuals.

While some articles directly address psychosocial interventions for children and adolescents, others offer important perspectives on the significance of social justice and participatory approaches in social intervention practice. Finn et al. (2024) emphasize that social welfare issues must be understood within the context of structural injustice and the unequal distribution of resources. Van der Veen et al. (2024) explain that a capability-sensitive design approach helps ensure that vulnerable groups gain fairer access to social support and resources. Washington et al. (2024) and Montgomery et al. (2024) also demonstrate that a

social justice approach must go hand in hand with the protection of vulnerable groups and the promotion of inclusive social welfare. This perspective is relevant to social work practice because adolescents with depression and self-harm are often socially marginalized and require more inclusive support.

Research on psychosocial support for patients with chronic illnesses also highlights the importance of a holistic approach to mental health interventions. Li et al. (2023) explain that families with children living with cystic fibrosis require ongoing psychosocial support to reduce anxiety, depression, and emotional stress within the family. Meanwhile, Yaashikaa (2024) emphasizes that psychosocial support plays a crucial role in improving the quality of life for individuals living with chronic illnesses. These research findings indicate that effective psychosocial interventions must be holistic, multidisciplinary, and community-based. Addressing depression and self-harm in adolescents requires more than just an individual clinical approach; it also necessitates the involvement of families, schools, communities, and the broader social system.

In social work practice, a multidisciplinary approach is crucial because it facilitates collaboration among social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers, families, and the community in supporting adolescents' recovery process. This approach helps ensure that adolescents' psychological, social, educational, and environmental needs are addressed comprehensively.

The results of this systematic literature review indicate that depression and self-harm among adolescents are psychosocial issues influenced by various complex risk factors, particularly childhood trauma, attachment disorders, domestic violence, social marginalization, and low social support. Psychosocial interventions based on trauma-informed care, attachment, family, school, community, and multidisciplinary approaches have been proven effective in improving adolescents' psychological well-being, coping skills, emotional regulation, and social functioning. Therefore, social work practice in the field of adolescent mental health needs to develop a holistic, participatory, strength-based, and social justice-oriented approach

to provide more effective support for adolescents experiencing depression and self-harm.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a systematic literature review of 10 international articles on psychosocial interventions for treating depression and self-harm in adolescents, it can be concluded that depression and self-harm behaviors are multidimensional mental health issues influenced by various complex psychosocial factors. Factors such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), domestic violence, childhood trauma, attachment disorders, bullying, social marginalization, family conflict, low social support, and poor emotional regulation are the primary causes of adolescents' increased vulnerability to depression and self-harm behaviors. Research findings indicate that traumatic experiences endured since childhood have long-term effects on adolescents' emotional, social, and psychological development. Unresolved trauma causes adolescents to experience feelings of insecurity, anxiety, low self-esteem, loneliness, and difficulties in building healthy interpersonal relationships. Under these circumstances, self-harm is often used as a negative coping mechanism to vent emotional pain that cannot be managed adaptively.

Traumatic factors and the quality of the attachment between children and parents also have a significant impact on adolescents' mental health. Insecure attachment causes adolescents to experience difficulties with emotional regulation and increases the risk of depression and problematic behavior. Conversely, warm, supportive family relationships that are responsive to children's emotional needs serve as protective factors that can strengthen adolescents' psychological resilience. This study also shows that psychosocial interventions are significantly effective in addressing depression and self-harm among adolescents. Trauma-informed care, attachment-based interventions, psychoeducation, family support, peer support groups, and community-based approaches have been shown to improve adolescents' coping skills, emotional regulation, psychological safety, and social functioning. Interventions that involve families, schools, communities, and multidisciplinary professionals

yield more effective results than individual-based approaches alone.

From a social work perspective, the results of this study confirm that the treatment of depression and self-harm in adolescents must be approached holistically, taking into account the relationship between the individual and their environment. Adolescents not only need individual psychological support but also require a safe, supportive, and inclusive social environment to ensure that the psychosocial recovery process can proceed optimally. Therefore, social work approaches based on the Person-in-Environment model, the strength-based approach, and social justice are highly relevant in the practice of adolescent mental health interventions.

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can serve as a foundation for the development of practices, policies, and future research related to psychosocial interventions for addressing depression and self-harm among adolescents. First, school-based mental health services need to be strengthened through the provision of school counselors, school social workers, psychoeducation programs, and promotive and preventive activities related to adolescent mental health. Schools need to be safe and supportive environments where students can express psychological problems without facing stigma or discrimination. Second, the government and social service agencies need to develop psychosocial intervention programs based on trauma-informed care that can identify and address adolescents' traumatic experiences more sensitively and comprehensively. This approach is crucial because the majority of adolescents with depression and self-harm have a history of complex psychosocial trauma. Third, strengthening the role of the family is a top priority in efforts to prevent and address depression and self-harm among adolescents. Family-strengthening programs such as positive parenting, family counseling, and family communication training need to be developed on an ongoing basis to improve the quality of emotional relationships between parents and children. Fourth, social workers, psychologists, teachers, and mental health professionals need to enhance multidisciplinary collaboration in providing mental health services to adolescents.

With the strengthening of holistic, participatory, and social-justice-based psychosocial interventions, it is hoped that efforts to address depression and self-harm among adolescents can be carried out more effectively, thereby sustainably improving their psychosocial well-being and quality of life.

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