

Department of Psychology

2018-2019 Distinguished Lecturer Series



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TALK: Taking a deeper look: Some considerations about the psychodynamics of suicide behaviours

ABSTRACT

In this theoretical presentation, I discuss a psychoanalytic-focused and personal understanding of suicidal behaviours, from the perspective that this view is incomplete and that suicidal behaviours are complex and difficult to understand and predict. I emphasize psychological pain in a general sense as a unifying element in the understanding of this phenomenon; psychological pain that leads to an experience of intolerability or that results from it. I will describe several elements that I regard as central to the understanding of suicidal behaviours in a psychodynamic perspective: a set of internal characteristics that can be put within the scope of a depressive functioning of personality; the denial of anxiety; the anguish of death; and impulsivity and acting-out as a form of denying or mitigating / “handling” psychological suffering. I formulate the question: “How can we solve an internal paradox: there seems to be a lack of psychological energy in depressive functioning, but at the same time a certain amount of energy is needed to commit suicide!?” Baechler described several different types of suicide, including playful and aggressive ones, and I will also attempt to discuss their psychological meaning.

BIOGRAPHY

Rui C. Campos received his doctoral degree in Psychology in 2007 from the University of Évora, Portugal. His dissertation focused on the conceptualization and assessment of the depressive personality. Rui is a registered clinical and health psychologist and a psychotherapist with the Portuguese Psychologist Board. He is a tenured assistant professor of clinical psychology at the University of Évora. He has taught psychological assessment and psychopathology in the Department of Psychology, Social Sciences School, since 2000. Rui received his clinical training in the late 1990s at Saint Mary’s Hospital, Lisbon, Portugal. Rui has also worked several years as a clinical psychologist in the community through the University of Évora. He is a member of the Portuguese Suicidology Society and is the chairman of the research unit: Risk, Health and Well-being of the Research Centre in Education and Psychology, University of Évora. His main research interests are psychological variables associated with suicidal behaviours and the construction and adaption of psychological measures. He has also published a number of papers focusing on Blatt’s perspective of the dimensions of relatedness and self-definition

Friday, March 15, 2019 - 2:30 P.M.
Kinesiology 101