



Health summit addresses new phenomenon in kids

By Bridget Nash, Staff Writer

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— As many as one in five children nationwide engage in self-injury as a way of dealing with their emotions.

Nationally recognized expert Wendy Lader, Ph.D., was in Enid Thursday presenting a health summit on the rising issue of self-injury.

“Self-injury is a growing phenomenon,” Lader said in a previous interview. “It’s not just in the big cities.”

During her presentation, Lader listed several types of self-injury, including cutting, burning, head banging, scratching, biting, interfering with wound healing, trichotillomania (pulling out hair), ingesting or injecting sharp objects or toxic substances, breaking bones, facial picking or skinning, amputation or blinding.

While self-injurers are not always suicidal, it is important to realize self-injuring actions can lead to suicide, Lader said.

Information provided by Lader during the presentation showed 28 percent to 41 percent of people who engage in self-injury report suicidal thoughts at the time of the episode.

Lader also presented information to the audience on differentiating types of self-injury, possible reasons for self-injury and the recent growth of the phenomenon and treatment options for individuals who self-injure.

The summit was attended by students and professionals alike who found the presentation enlightening and found there was new information to be learned on the subject.

“It was very helpful,” said Melissa McGinnis, who came with her Northwestern Oklahoma State University adolescent guidance counseling class.

Even those who work in the field of mental health learned new things at the seminar.

“This has actually heightened my awareness even more,” said Steve Atwood, clinical manager of behavioral health at Integris Bass Baptist Health Center. “Understanding how other disorders kind of play a part in self-injury.”

The attendants were impressed with the array of information given and also were impressed with Lader.

“She is an extremely knowledgeable speaker,” Atwood said. “She’s nationally known. It’s just been a pleasure.”

Lader has been featured on “Dateline NBC” and “20/20.” Ninety-five people attended the summit, sponsored by Bass and held at Autry Technology Center.

“It was a very nice audience,” Lader said.

Lader is creator of a national treatment center entirely for self-abuse, has authored a book on the subject and has been cited as an expert in the field on television broadcasts, news publications

and magazines.

For information on self-injury go to www.selfinjury.com.

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