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**IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS PREVENTION OF
SELF- DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR IN ADOLESCENCE**

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a critical role in the prevention of self-destructive behavior in adolescence, a period marked by significant emotional, psychological, and social changes. Adolescence is often accompanied by heightened emotional sensitivity, identity exploration, and a quest for independence, making individuals more vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and self-destructive tendencies, including substance abuse, self-harm, and risky behaviors. EI, defined as the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively, serves as a protective factor in navigating these challenges. High emotional intelligence equips adolescents with the skills to cope with negative emotions such as anger, sadness, and frustration, reducing the likelihood of turning to self-destructive behaviors as a coping mechanism. Adolescents with strong EI are better able to identify their emotions and understand the root causes, enabling them to seek appropriate support or engage in healthier coping strategies, such as mindfulness or problem-solving. Moreover, EI fosters empathy, allowing adolescents to build stronger social connections and support networks, which are crucial during times of emotional distress. These connections provide a buffer against feelings of isolation, which can often lead to self-destructive behavior. Furthermore, emotional intelligence promotes self-regulation, which is the ability to control impulsive behaviors and delay gratification. This is particularly important during adolescence when the brain's executive functions are still developing, making impulsivity more likely. Adolescents with high EI are better equipped to pause, reflect, and choose responses that align with their long-term well-being, rather than succumbing to immediate, harmful impulses.