Self-Compassion Versus Self-Esteem as Predictors of Resilience and Well-Being

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Introduction

• Self-compassion is an emotionally positive attitude toward the self that enhances mental health factors, life satisfaction, optimism, and well-being (Barnard & Curry, 2011; Neff, 2003b; Raes, 2010).

• Much research has been conducted on self-esteem, its benefits and pitfalls, and how it differs from self-compassion

• Yet to be examined how the two constructs differ when specifically addressing resilience factors.

• This project aimed to identify differences in the relationships between self-compassion, self-esteem, and various factors associated with mental health.

• Self-compassion may play a role in predicting physical and psychological well-being in both the short and long-term (Hall, Row, Wuensch &, Godley, 2013).

Methods

Participants

• 139 participants completed online self report measures
   • Age range from 18-61 years
   • 83.5% (*n*=116) were female
   • 81% of participants (*n*=112) were Caucasian
   • 87% (*n*=62.6) were unmarried
   • 42% (*n*=30.2) were college graduates
   • 78% (*n*=56.1) employed full-time

Procedure

• Participants recruited on-line using electronic advertisements, postings via email listservs, and word of mouth

• Self-report measures were completed using Qualtrics online survey system

Measures

• Self-Compassion Scale (SCS; Neff, 2003a)
• Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1979)
• Connor Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10; Campbell-Sills, Forde, & Stein, 2009)
• The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985)
• The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire II (AAQII; Bond et al., 2011):
• The Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegan, 1988)

Hypotheses

• Self-compassion and self-esteem will positively correlate with each other and with resilience and factors of well-being

• Self-compassion will be a more powerful predictor of resilience and other factors of well-being than self-esteem

Analyses

• Hypotheses were tested using Spearman's Correlations and Multiple Regression Analyses

Results

Correlations *p < 0.01*; Table 1
• As self-compassion increased, resilience, satisfaction with life, and positive affect increased and psychological inflexibility decreased

• As self-esteem increased, resilience, self-compassion, positive affect, and satisfaction with life decreased and psychological inflexibility increased

Regressions *p < 0.001*; Table 2
• Self-compassion more strongly predicted higher resilience and psychological flexibility

• Self esteem more strongly predicted lower positive affect and life satisfaction and higher negative affect

Discussion

• Resilience and well-being may be more strongly influenced by internally derived resources
   • Reflects theoretical differences between self-compassion and self-esteem
   • Self-compassion offers a more adaptive and psychologically healthy way of relating to oneself due to inherently stable foundation of positive self-regard (Neff, 2011)
      • Examines suffering through a nonjudgmental, connected, understanding lens and supplies coping mechanisms to effectively deal with life's challenges (Neff, 2003a; Neff & Tirch, 2013)
   • Self-esteem is highly contingent on things such as approval and performance, making it unstable, resistant to change, and easily threatened by perceived success and failure (Kernis, 2005; Swann, 1996)

• Those who respond in a more self-compassionate way to stressors may be more likely to be resilient

Discussion, continued

• Positive relationship between psychological flexibility and self-compassion consistent with previous literature
   • Self-compassion and psychological flexibly are both multidimensional constructs that incorporate mindfulness, an expanded sense of self, and commitment to valued aims (Tirch, Schoendorff, & Silberstein, 2014)

Strengths & Limitations

• Further clarifies functions of self-compassion and uses a non-collegiate sample

• However, only self-report and sample predominantly Caucasian females

Future Directions

• Need for experimental designs to examine causal effect of self-compassion on well-being in more diverse sample

Table 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SCS	-	-.692*	.617*	.473*	-.733*	.497*	-.546*
2. RSES	-.692*	-	-.619*	-.542*	.662*	-.520*	.590*
3. CDRISC	.617*	-.619*	-	.349*	-.534*	.625*	-.449*
4. SWLS	.473*	-.542*	.349*	-	-.521*	.319*	-.332*
5. AAQ II	-.733*	.662*	-.534*	-.521*	-	-.465*	.570*
6. PANAS POS	.497*	-.520*	.625*	.319*	-.465*	-	-.293*
7. PANAS NEG	-.546*	.590*	-.449*	-.332*	.570*	-.293*	-

Table 2	SCS β	RSES β
CDRISC	.423*	-.333*
SWLS	.237*	-.384*
AAQ II	-.502*	.302*
PANAS POS	.287*	-.355*
PANAS NEG	-.290*	.406*