

Self-compassion



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What is Self-Compassion?



Compassion for Others

Three components of self-compassion (Neff, 2003)



Mindfulness vs. Over-identification

- Allows us to “be” with painful feelings as they are
- Avoiding extremes of suppressing or running away with painful feelings



Self-Kindness vs. Self-Judgment:

- Treating self with care and understanding rather than harsh judgment
- Actively soothing and comforting, supporting and protecting oneself
- Desire to alleviate suffering (any pain or emotional discomfort – large or small)



Common humanity vs. Isolation

- Seeing own experience as part of larger human experience not isolating
- Recognizing that life is imperfect (us too!)



Physiological underpinnings of self-criticism

Threat defense system



Cortisol and adrenaline

Physiological underpinnings of self-compassion

Mammalian care-giving system

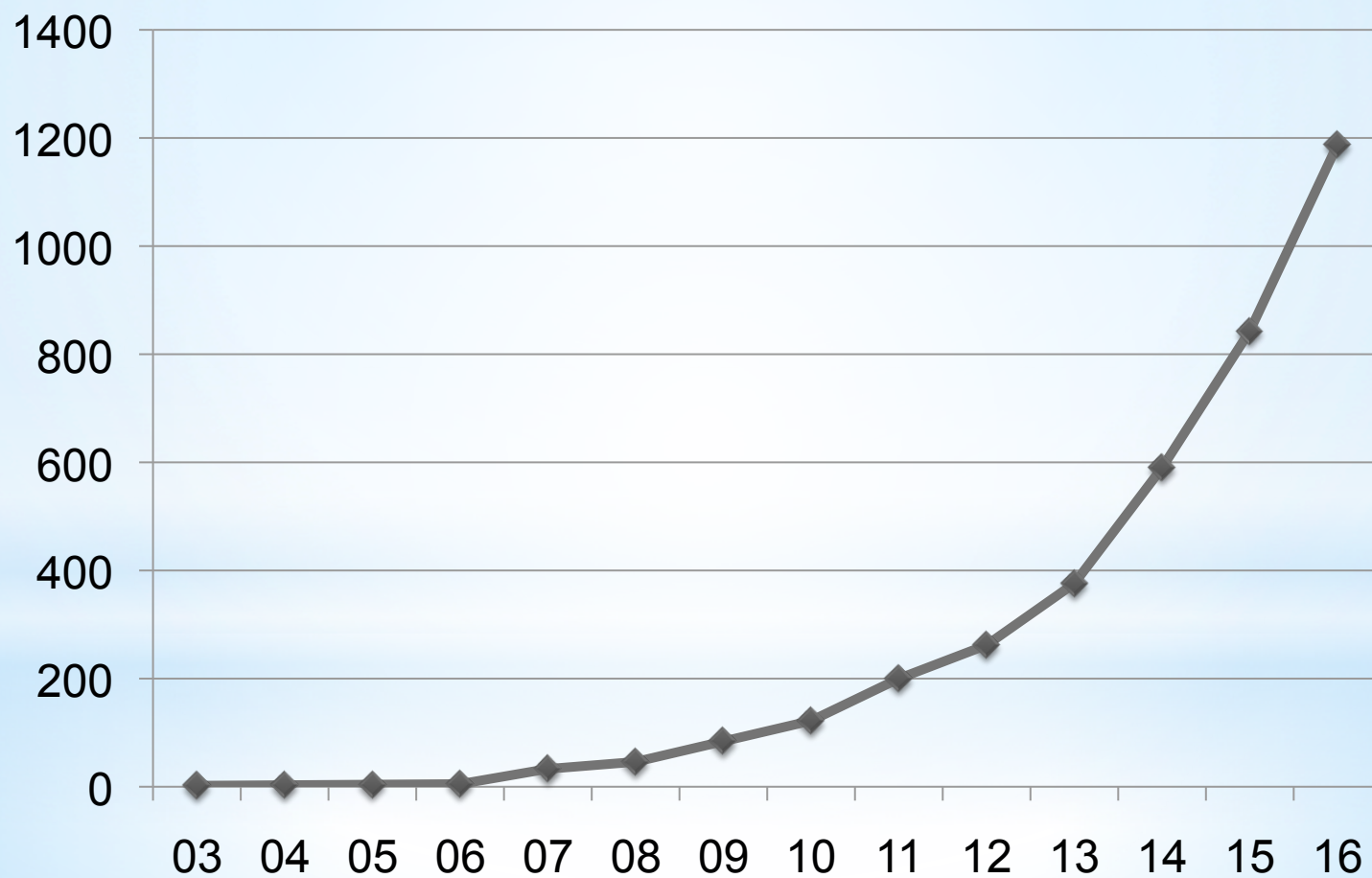


Oxytocin and opiates

5 main misgivings about self-compassion

- *Is a form of self-pity*
- *Means weakness*
- *Will undermine motivation*
- *Will lead to self-indulgence*
- *Is selfish or narcissistic*

Peer-reviewed journal articles examining self-compassion (N=1188)



Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003)

Self-Kindness Subscale: I try to be understanding and patient toward those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Self-Judgment Subscale: I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.

Common Humanity Subscale: I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.

Isolation Subscale: When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.

Mindfulness Subscale: When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.

Over-identified Subscale: When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.

Misgivings are Misconceptions

Self-Compassion linked to:

(Self-pity?) Less rumination and self-focus

(Weak?) More strength, coping and resilience

(Complacent?) More motivation and persistence

(Self-indulgent?) More health behaviors

(Selfish?) More giving relationship behavior

Self-compassion linked to well-being

Reductions in:

Anxiety, depression, stress, perfectionism,
shame, body dissatisfaction, disordered eating



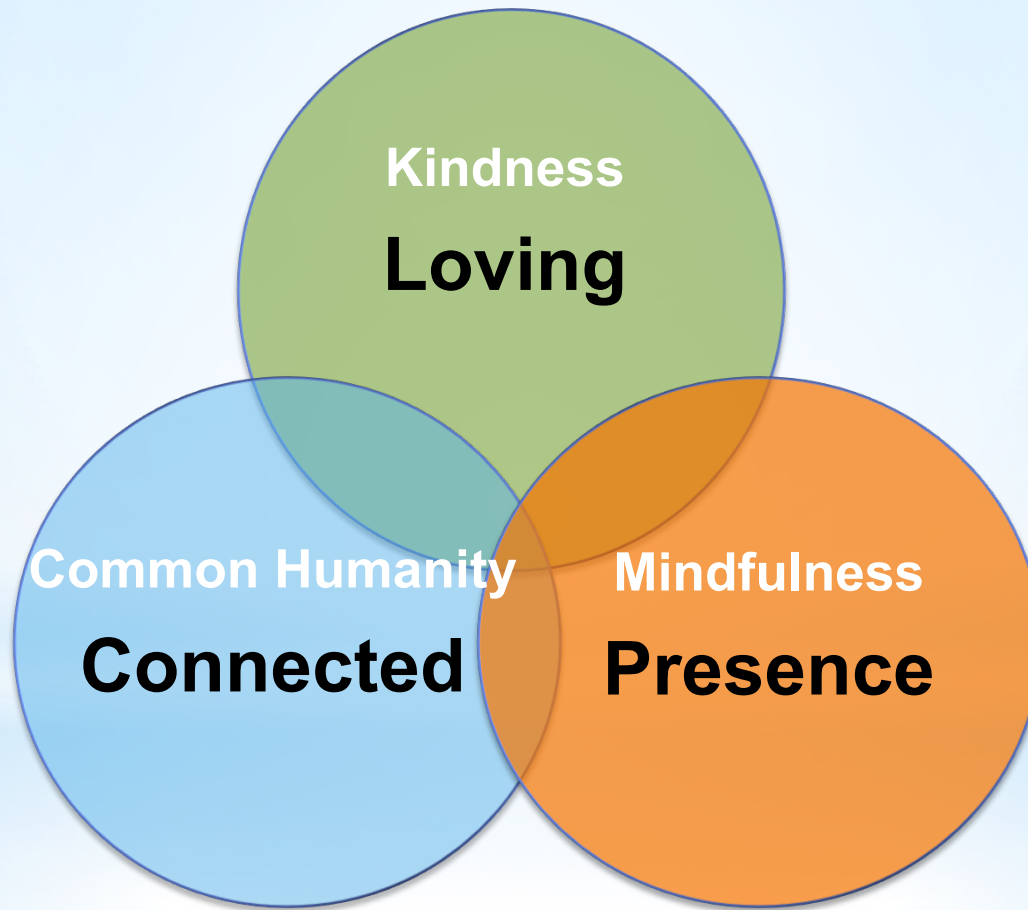
Self-compassion linked to well-being

Increases in:

Life satisfaction, happiness, self-confidence,
body appreciation, immune function



Three components of self-compassion



Can self-compassion be taught?



Mindfulness-Based Approaches



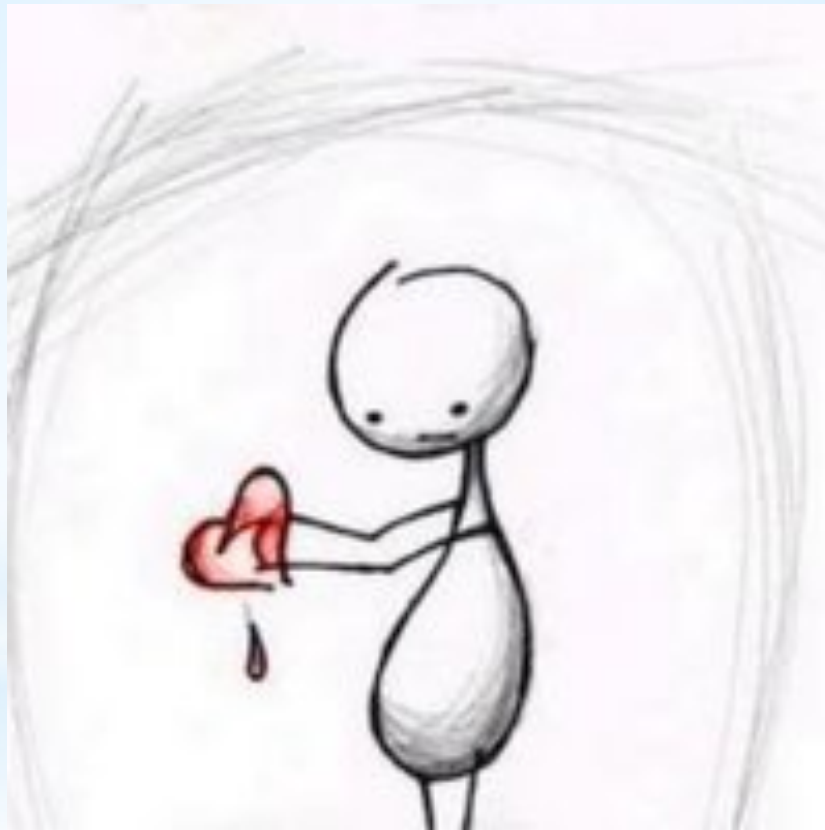
- MBSR, MBCT and ACT have all been shown to increase self-compassion
- Self-compassion appears to be a key mechanism of program effectiveness

Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC)



- 8 week program designed to teach self-compassion skills using a variety of practices
- RCT found MSC increases self-compassion, compassion, mindfulness, wellbeing
 - Skills maintained one year later
- Adapted for teens – Making Friends with Yourself

Resistance to Self-Compassion



Backdraft



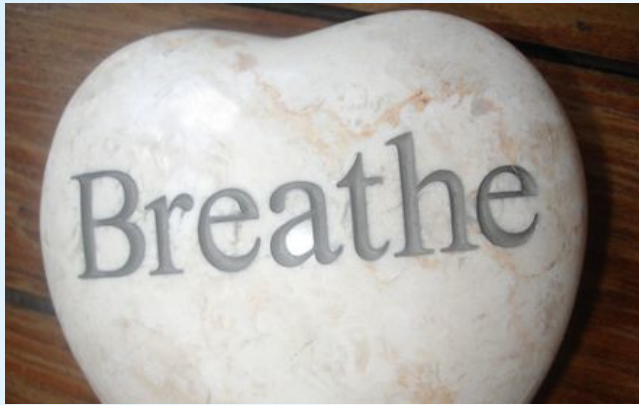
Backdraft

- Difficult emotions that can occur as part of self-compassion practice
- Necessary part of the transformation process

“When we give ourselves unconditional love, we discover the conditions in which we were unloved.”

“Love reveals everything unlike itself.”

How to deal with backdraft



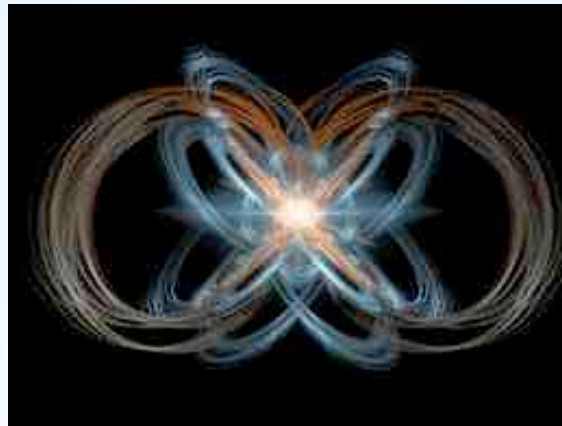
*What is the difference between
mindfulness and self-compassion?*

Mindfulness vs. Self-Compassion

- Mindfulness accepts painful **experience** without resistance, “being” with things as they are
- Compassion wishes the **experiencer** to be free from suffering, “active” comfort and soothing



Paradox of self-compassion



*In a moment of struggle,
we give ourselves compassion not to feel better
but because we feel bad*

Self-compassion provides the emotional safety needed to mindfully open to our pain



Mindfulness and compassion: A beautiful dance



Self-compassion calculator, videos,
research articles, guided meditations and
exercises, online training available at:

www.self-compassion.org

Information on MSC and MSC teacher
training available at:

www.CenterforMSC.org