ID-145 INCLUDED IN S56-CHAN

THE ROLE OF SELF-COMPASSION, ATTACHMENT, INTERPERSONAL FUNCTIONING, AND THE USE OF SOOTHING IMAGERY IN DEPRESSION

Speaker: Stella Chan, University of Edinburgh

Author(s)
Imogen Marsh, University of Edinburgh
Angus Macbeth, University of Edinburgh
Kate Macintosh, University of Edinburgh
Matthias Schwannauer, University of Edinburgh
Angela McLaughlin, University of Edinburgh
Fiona Ashworth, Anglia Ruskin University
Kevin Power, NHS Tayside

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Self-compassion has been shown in a meta-analysis to be associated with psychopathology with a large effect size. However, research has been mostly focused on adult non-clinical populations. It is less clear whether self-compassion has an equally important role in adolescent mental health and clinical populations. This talk will present novel data from a series of four studies on self-compassion.

Method

Study 1 is an empirical study investigating the link between self-compassion and depression in adolescents, as well as its relationships with key psychological variables (attachment, interpersonal relationships, and fear for self-compassion). Study 2 is a meta-analysis that examined the association between self-compassion and psychological distress (depression, anxiety, stress) in studies using adolescent samples. Study 3 is a clinical study that examined self-compassion, attachment, and social relationships in individuals diagnosed with depression and anxiety recruited from a primary care service in Scotland. Finally, Project Soothe combines research and public engagement, aiming to collect a bank of soothing images from the public. Soothing imagery has been widely used in Compassion Focused Therapy; this project explores what type of images people find soothing and how this may influence mood and psychological wellbeing.

Results

Study 1 replicated the link between self-compassion and depression in adolescents with a moderate effect size. However structural equation modelling yielded a poor fit with our hypothesised model. Study 2 identified 11 studies examining self-compassion in adolescent samples (mean age 19); a significant inverse relationship between self-compassion and psychological distress was found with a large effect size. The result was unaltered after publication bias was accounted for. Study 3 has just completed data collection with N > 70. Preliminary analyses suggest a significant correlation between self-compassion and depression and anxiety in this clinical sample, but with only a small effect size. Mediation analyses are underway. In Study 4, Project Soothe has collected 350 images from the public (age range 15-78; 85% Female; 80% from Europe) with 70% around the theme of natural landscape and 12% animals. Validation studies are currently underway to explore the impact of these soothing images on mood and psychological wellbeing.

Discussion

Results from Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that self-compassion plays an equally important role in adolescent mental health as in adults. This is not surprising given the importance of self-identify formation in this developmental stage. Study 3 indicates that while self-compassion is associated with depression and anxiety in clinical population, the effect size is much weaker than that previously found in a meta-analysis that was dominated by non-clinical samples. The images collected in Project Soothe have high external validity and can be developed for future use in research and psychotherapy.

Conclusion

Self-compassion plays an important role in psychopathology, both in adolescents and adults. These are encouraging results for the development of third wave therapies such as Compassion Focused Therapy that aims to boost psychological wellbeing by enhancing self-compassion. Project Soothe further highlights the advantages of involving the public in research.