

Soothing images as a well-being tool: thematic analysis of adolescents' understanding of Soothe

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Research has shown the relevance of self-compassion as a predictor of mental well-being, benefiting against negative psychological outcomes in adolescents. In psychotherapy, individuals have reported difficulties in generating mental imagery, hence this study presents external visual imagery as a trigger of soothing feelings, in the hopes of cultivating self-compassion. **Aims:** How soothing images can be used as a well-being tool for adolescents? To answer: a) gain in-depth understanding of how soothe is understood and b) experience by adolescents, and c) to understand how images can trigger soothing feelings. **Method:** Thematic analysis was carried out with narratives from Project Soothe, with a total of 111 participants from 12 to 18 years old. Secondary data corresponds responses from a survey of project Soothe, while primary data correspond to 4 focus groups. **Results:** Soothe can be understood as a complex matrix, mixing feelings of calm, relaxation, ease and detachment. Underling there are two schemes: self-soothe and being soothe. It is achieved by disconnection from other and/or the self, and by establishing and maintaining close relationships with others. Physical sensations appear to call forth soothing feelings. In everyday life, soothing is experienced in two spectrums: Detachment-Connection and Nature-Comfort. For images to trigger soothing feelings a relationship between memories/imagination and the soothing experience/feeling was found. **Conclusions:** Soothing images access to textured feeling memories of others who have soothe, triggering mental representations attached to memories/feelings. As a well-being tool, soothing images must consider sensory modalities and viewpoint in the imagery, developmental consideration are also needed.

Key words: self-compassion, soothe, visual imagery, adolescents