

Self-compassion and Mental Health amongst Individuals Seeking Psychotherapy: A Comparison between Individuals with and without Substance Use Problems

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Research has documented that self-compassion is related to depression, anxiety and stress and that self-compassion may be an important factor in understanding mental health outcomes. This research project aimed to further examine the relationship between self-compassion and mental health by exploring potential differences in this relationship in individuals with and without substance use difficulties. A questionnaire based study was conducted with two groups: clients seeking psychological treatment for alcohol and other drugs and clients seeking treatment for other psychological concerns. For both groups, there was a relationship between self-compassion and symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress. However, the results also showed that, for people without alcohol and substance use difficulties, the positive aspects of self-compassion played a protective role, whereas this was not as influential for people who do have alcohol and substance use difficulties. This study adds to previous research on self-compassion and substance use, confirming and clarifying the role that self compassion plays in the experience of psychological distress.