

Effect Of Compassion Focused Therapy On Self Compassion Among College Students

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The present study aims to know the effect of compassion focused therapy on self compassion among college students. Over the last 20 years, Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) has gained popularity as an emerging “third wave” intervention. Compassion is oriented towards perceiving and relieving oneself and others from suffering. Hence its development is beneficial for mental health. The study utilized a sample size of 60 students. The selection of participants for the study was made through random sampling from various colleges in Cuddalore district. The statistical test used for Independent sample t-test. Therefore it is concluded that self-compassion has been associated with well-being in adult samples, but has rarely been assessed in college students. Hence this study focuses on the effectiveness of Compassion Focused Therapy in enhancing self compassion among college students.

Keywords: clinical psychology, compassion, compassion focused therapy, self compassion, mental health, college students

Introduction

There is a growing body of research highlighting the role of compassion in mental health; a recent meta-analysis by MacBeth and Gumley (2012) concluded that increased self-compassion is linked to lower levels of mental ill health, while lower levels of self compassion are associated with higher levels of psychopathology. There has been a recent increase in research regarding self compassion since Kristin Neff (2003), a researcher from the University of Texas at Austin, operationalized the concept and created a scale to measure its constructs. CFT is a model of psychotherapy that places self-compassion at the core of its approach and was developed for individuals with trauma backgrounds struggling with psychological problems linked to self-criticism and shame (Gilbert, 2010). Introduce the concept of Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) and its origins, developed by Paul Gilbert as a method designed to help individuals foster self-compassion and mitigate self-criticism. Highlight the growing importance of mental health support among college students, who often face challenges like stress, self-doubt, and body image issues.

Self Compassion

Self-compassion has a rich history in Buddhist concepts and practices (Kornfield & Walsh, 1993) and has only recently been recognized in the West as an important psychological construct (Gillath, Shaver, & Mikulincer, 2005). Neff's (2003a, 2003b) conceptualization of self-compassion is derived from Buddhist thought and social psychology. Neff's research has been mostly conducted with her Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003a), which measures dispositional levels of compassion toward oneself and others. Neff defined self-compassion as 'being open to and moved by one's own suffering, experiencing feelings of caring and kindness toward oneself, taking an understanding, non-judgmental attitude toward one's inadequacies and failures, and recognizing that one's experience is part of the common human experience' (Neff, 2003). She described this construct as being composed of three interrelated and mutually-enhancing components: self-kindness, or treating oneself kindly rather than with harsh criticism; common humanity, entailing a recognition that we are integrally connected with others who are frequently experiencing similar struggles; and mindfulness, or maintaining perspective at challenging times by neither pushing away nor becoming overwhelmed with one's thoughts or feelings (Neff, 2003a). Others have emphasized that self-compassion is based in part on the notion that we are part of a common humanity; as such, we are necessarily aware of the suffering and needs of others (Baer, 2010).

Review of Literature

Frostadottir and Dorjee (2019) found that Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) resulted in significant increases in mindfulness and self-compassion and decreases in rumination, depression, anxiety, and stress. Furthermore, MBCT enhanced mindfulness for people who were initially high in rumination, whereas CFT enhanced mindfulness across the board. Wilson, et al. (2019) Examined whether self-compassion-related therapies, including compassion-focused therapy, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy, are effective in promoting self-compassion and reducing psychopathology in clinical and sub clinical populations and found that self-compassion-related therapies produced greater improvements in all three outcomes examined.

It is evident from the review that numerous studies have explored the effect of compassion focused therapy on self compassion in clinical and sub clinical population. However there appears to be a research gap specifically focusing self compassion on college students in Cuddalore district. Recognizing this gap, the researcher is motivated to address this gap and delve into current issue: effect of CFT on self compassion among college students.

Statement of the problem

College students face a significant amount of pressure due to academic, social and personal challenges, This often manifests in their mental health issues resulting in anxiety and depression. Compassion focused therapy offers a unique solution by helping individuals in enhancing self compassion and promotes a healthy mindset. However CFT has shown promising results in clinical populations, its effectiveness among college students not extensively studied.

Research Methodology

This study will employ a quasi experimental, pre test post test design to assess the impact of compassion focused therapy on self compassion.

Sampling: The study utilized a sample size of 60 students. The selection of participants for the study was made through random sampling from various colleges in Cuddalore district.

Tools used in the study

Self-compassion has been correlational using the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b), which is a 26-item self-report measure that focuses on the three components mentioned earlier (the instrument has six subscales, one for each component and one for each component's counterpart): self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, perceived isolation, mindfulness, and overidentification. Self-kindness involves treating oneself as one would a loving friend in the midst of his or her pain and suffering: with kindness, warmth, and genuine care. This is in contrast to attacking and being harsh, judgmental, and critical toward oneself in the midst of a failure or difficult experience (Neff, 2003b, 2009). Instead of engaging in self-flagellation, self kindness allows people to treat themselves gently and compassionately, despite their flaws and foibles. Common humanity is central to self-compassion and recognizes that all human beings are flawed, fractured, wounded, broken, and prone to make mistakes to some degree (Neff, 2003a). Keeping common humanity in mind during personal failure provides an invitation to bring compassion into one's experience. The converse of common humanity is the tendency to isolate oneself and feel alone in the midst of distress. Isolation tends to breed self judgment and feelings of disconnection from other human beings (Neff, 2003a, 2003b). Mindfulness is the last component of Neff's self-compassion trinity. Germer (2005) defined mindfulness as "awareness of present experience with acceptance". Mindfulness involves being aware of one's experience and seeing thoughts and feelings as separate from oneself in contrast to over identifying and fusing with them (Neff, 2003a). Mindfulness helps keep a balanced view of negative emotions and experiences while cultivating an open and flexible perspective (Neff, 2003a).

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 1 Comparison of pre test and post test scores of college students on self compassion

Experimental Group	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Pre test	40.13	9.12	4.433	0.001 Significant
Post test	51.06	9.96		

The details presented in table 1 indicate that in the experimental group the pre test and post test mean scores on self compassion were found to be 40.13 and 51.06 respectively. The corresponding standard deviations are 9.12 for pretest and 9.96 for post test. The calculated t

value is 4.43, statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests that there is a significant difference between pre test and post test scores in the experimental group in terms of self compassion. The result implies that in the post test the students' scores were higher on self compassion.

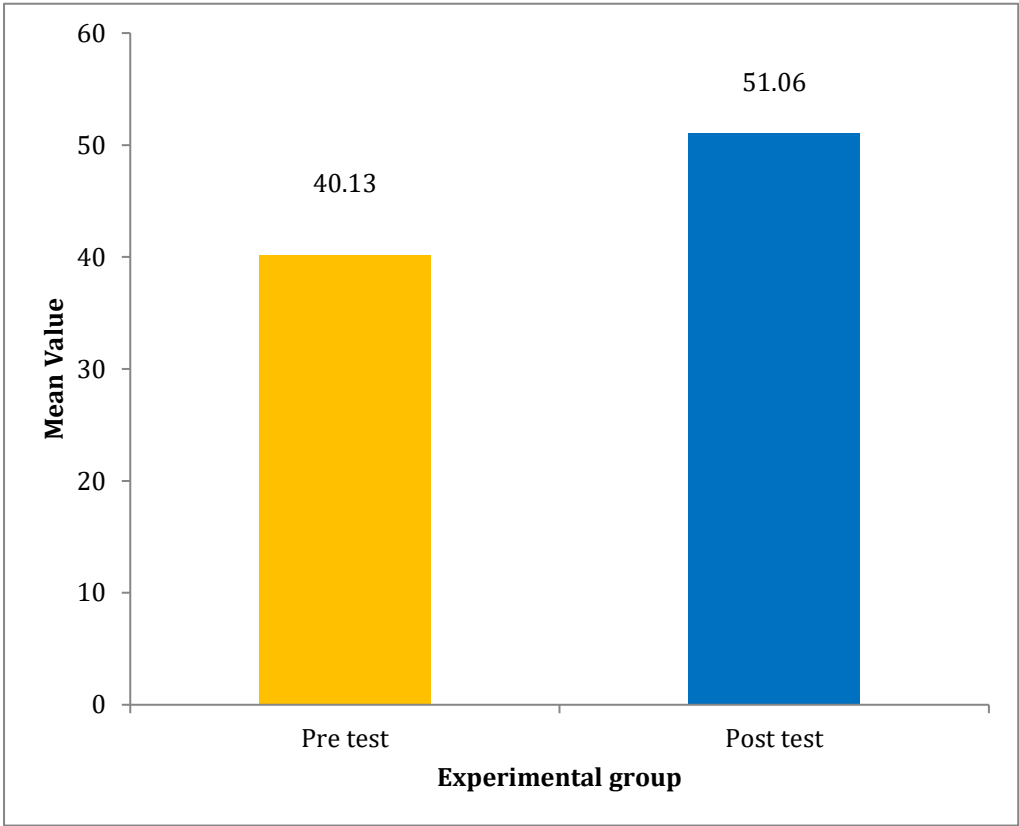
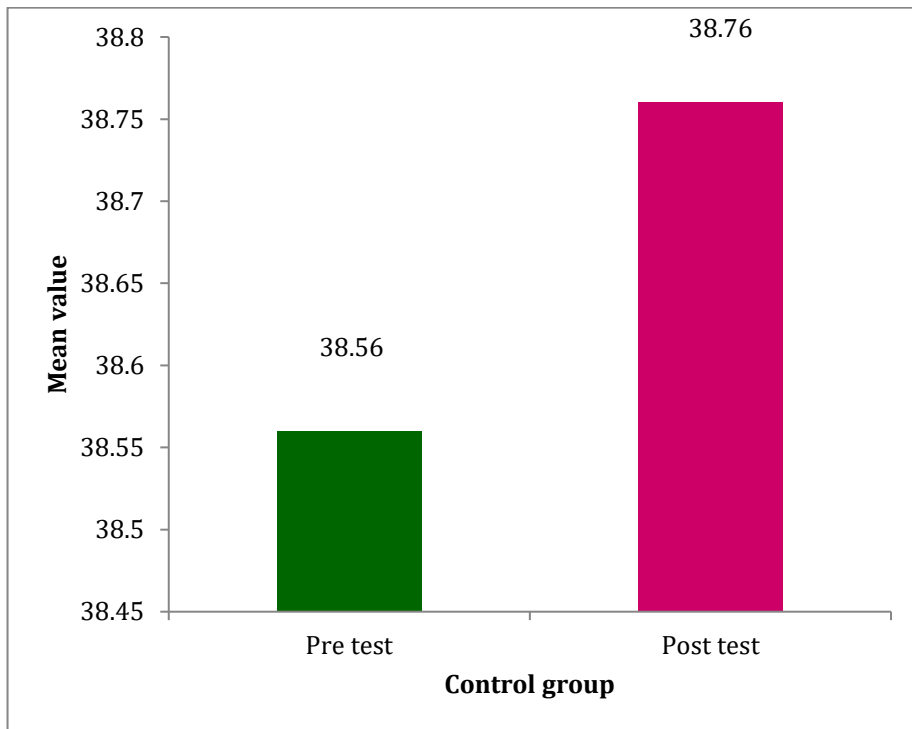


Table 2 Comparison of pre test and post test scores of college students on self compassion

Control Group	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Pre test	38.56	8.61	0.091	0.92 NS
Post test	38.76	8.47		

The details presented in table 2 indicate that in the control group the pre test and post test mean scores on self compassion were 38.56 and 38.76 respectively. The corresponding standard deviations are 8.61 for pretest and 8.47 for post test. The calculated t value is 0.091 which is non significant. This suggests that there is no significant difference between pre test and post

test scores in the control group in terms of self compassion. Thus the result indicates that the level of self compassion among the students of the control group remains the same.



Findings

- Result shows that there is a significant difference between pre test and post test scores in the experimental group in terms of self compassion. The result implies that in the post test the students' scores were higher on self compassion.
- Analysis proved that there is no significant difference between pre test and post test scores in the control group in terms of self compassion. Thus the result indicates that the level of self compassion among the students of the control group remains the same.

Conclusion

CFT has been found to be effective in improving self compassion. More randomized control trials comparing CFT with other therapies are needed to determine the effect of this intervention on self compassion with more scientific evidence. Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) offers significant potential as a therapeutic approach to enhance self-compassion among college students. This study highlights how CFT, through techniques like mindfulness, compassionate imagery, and self-soothing practices, empowers students to develop a more nurturing and empathetic inner voice. Findings suggest that CFT not only lowers self-critical tendencies but also boosts resilience, fosters a healthier body image, and improves students' overall mental well-being.

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