



Implementing a Self-Compassion Seminar within the Teen Court System

Senior Project

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
The Esther G. Maynor Honors College
University of North Carolina at Pembroke

By

Jazmine Borden
Psychology
May 6, 2022

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jazmine Borden".

Jazmine Borden
Honors College Scholar

5-6-22

Date

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ashley Batts Allen".

Ashley Batts Allen, Ph.D.
Faculty Mentor

5-6-22

Date

Joshua Kalin Busman, Ph.D.
Senior Project Coordinator

Date

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Acknowledgements

Being a part of the Esther G. Maynor Honors College during my undergraduate education has been a great honor for me. I am very appreciative of the support and experiences it has given me. I would like to thank Dr. Ashley Allen for being my senior project advisor and helping me create this project. I would also like to thank PURC and Dr. Charles Humphry for supporting me in my undergraduate research. I want to thank Dr. Richard Gay for supporting me with my research with Dr. Ashley Allen and in my next educational steps. Finally I would like to thank my friends, family, and especially my mom for always being there and supporting me to graduation!

Robeson County Teen Court Facility: Self-Compassion Seminar (Instructor Edition)

Dr. Ashley Batts Allen (Mentor)
Jazmine Borden
The University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Self-Compassion Seminar Outline

This program is designed to run for approximately 1.5-2 hours.

- A. Introductions
 - Ex. What is your name? How old are you? What is one thing you like to do for fun?
- B. What is self-compassion and why is it important/ beneficial?
 - a. Give examples
- C. What is self-criticism and how is it the opposite of self-compassion?
 - a. Give examples
- D. Self-compassion exercise worksheets
 - a. I am Awesome worksheet (E1)
 - b. Self-compassion for others exercise (E2)
 - c. Self-compassion and school life (E3)
 - d. Self-compassion Letter (E4)
 - e. 5 positive things about yourself - 5 positive things about someone else in the room (E5)
- E. Take home self-compassion bookmark and exercises
 - a. Self-compassion bookmarks for guardians
 - b. Sticky note self-compassion daily exercise
 - c. Self-compassion music exercise

Self-compassion seminar supply List

1. Paper
2. Pencils
3. Colorful pens
4. Sticky Note packs (35)
5. Flip chart/poster board
6. Sharpie permanent markers

Introductions

Hello, my name is ____ and I am very excited to be with you all today! I hope you will learn something new this evening and have a good time as well. Let's go around the room and introduce ourselves.

Question Ideas:

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What grade are you in?
4. What is your favorite tv show?
5. What is one thing you like to do for fun?

What is Self-Compassion?

- Self-compassion is the practice of showing compassion to ourselves. Self-compassion is made of three main components: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness (Neff, 2003).
- What do you think self-kindness is?* Self-kindness is just as the word implies—being kind or nice to ourselves, especially in times when we are struggling.
- What do you think common humanity is?* Common humanity means that we understand that we are not alone in our struggles or the hard situations we go through.
- What do you think mindfulness is?* Mindfulness involves being intentional and present about our thoughts and feelings and understanding and accepting our emotions in certain situations.
 - *An example of self-compassion for ourselves would be: It's okay that I feel overwhelmed right now, lots of other students feel overwhelmed at the end of the semester, and I am capable of getting everything done.*
 - *Would anyone like to try to give an example of self-compassion or any of the three components?*

What is Self-Criticism and how is it the opposite of Self-Compassion?

- Now that we have background knowledge on self-compassion, we can understand what the opposite of self-compassionate behaviors would be. Self-Criticism would be the opposite of self-compassion. I do not know if any of you have heard the phrase “we can be our own worst critics” but that is very true. The three components of self-criticism are 1. Self-judgment 2. Isolation and 3. Overidentification (Neff, 2003).
- What do you think self-judgment is?* Self-judgment is the opposite of self-kindness, so this implies being unkind to yourself, putting yourself down, or believing negative things about yourself.
- What do you think isolation is?* Isolation is the opposite of common humanity and this means you believe you are alone in your struggles, only you go through hard times and no one else can understand.
- What do you think overidentification is?* Overidentification is the opposite of mindfulness, meaning that you get carried away with your emotions.
 - An example of self-criticism would be: I am a failure, I am all alone, and I will just wallow in my feelings.
 - *Would anyone like to try to give an example of self-criticism or any of the three components?*

Why is Self-Compassion important/ beneficial?

Now that we understand what self-compassion and self-criticism are, it is important to address why we all should strive to be more self-compassionate.

1. People high in self-compassion have more positive relationships (Neff & Beretvas, 2011; Yarnell & Neff, 2013).
2. People high in self-compassion have lower rates of depression, anxiety procrastination, and perfectionism (Klingle & Vliet, 2019).
3. People high in self-compassion accept responsibility for their actions at times better than people low in self-compassion (Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis & Schumann, 2018). *[I know you all have been learning about taking responsibility here at Teen Court]*
4. Most importantly, people high in self-compassion tend to be happier, more optimistic, more satisfied with their life, have better-coping skills, and be more intrinsically motivated (Neff & Beretvas, 2013).

Discuss these benefits within 2-3 person groups

Okay, so now we are all going to complete some activities, some individually and some as a group, to practice self-compassion.

I AM AWESOME (E1- individual activity)

Name someone that you look up to in your life:

Dr. Allen

Why do you admire this person?

I admire Dr. Allen because she is a person I want to grow up and be more like. She is very kind, patient, and successful. She is one of the nicest instructors I have ever had and I truly believe she cares about every one of her students. She has also worked hard to get to the positions she is in and I want to be able to have that same work ethic so that I can be successful in my career just as she is.

Now write 3 things that make you proud to be who you are:

- 1. I am about to graduate from college*
- 2. I am self-less*
- 3. I am a really good friend*

Do you share any characteristics with the person that you look up to? If so, list them below:

Selflessness, good friend, & work ethic.

If not, list some ways you could gain these characteristics:

I need to practice being more kind and understanding. Also, I need to be more self-disciplined.

Whenever you are feeling down, look at this list or create a new list of everything that makes you awesome! Though you might not always feel like it, you ARE awesome and deserve to remind yourself of just how awesome you are

Self-Compassion for Others Exercise (E2- individual activity)

Think about someone in your life who you felt compassion or empathy for...

Person A

Why did you feel compassion or empathy for that person?

They were going through a hard time and placed a lot of pressure on themselves.

Did you express your compassion or empathy to them? If so, how did they react?

Yes, they were thankful and happy to have someone supportive.

If the same situation happened to you, would you have felt compassion for yourself? Why or why not?

I would have felt self-compassion but not as much.

Self-Compassion and School Life (E3- group activity)

All of you here are students and I understand that school life in and outside the classroom can be difficult.

What is your hardest or least favorite subject?

English, specifically spelling

How does that class/ subject make you feel?

It used to make me feel frustrated and like other kids were so much smarter than me.

Has anyone ever teased you about your difficulty in that subject?

Yes

If so, write 3 things that cancel out the negative things they said?

It's okay to not make an A on every test, I am about to graduate from college, and the grade in that class did not hinder me from getting into college

Create a plan to be more self-compassionate to yourself with that subject...

Anytime I am feeling frustrated by this subject I will think of other people who may struggle with it as well and remember all the other subjects that I am better at.

Self-Compassion Letter (E4- individual activity)

Think about something within yourself that makes you feel inadequate or embarrassed. Now think about how an unconditionally loving and kind friend would perceive that same thing within you. Now, write a letter to yourself from the perspective of the kind, loving friend and how they would speak to you regarding the thing you are embarrassed about. Include things about your personal emotions and how your friend would write about those feelings.

When you are going through a hard time you can re-read this letter to yourself as a reminder of how to be more self-compassionate to yourself.

5 positive things about yourself - 5 positive things about someone else in the room (E5- group activity)

List 5 self-compassionate positive things about yourself

Examples:

- 1. As Hannah Montanna once said- Nobody is perfect and nobody expects me to be perfect.*
- 2. My grade in biopsychology may not be an A but I am working as hard as I can to bring it up and I am smart and capable of completing all my assignments.*
- 3. I feel unmotivated to do my homework right now, but that does not make me lazy. I will slowly complete each assignment one at a time and celebrate getting each individual assignment completed.*

List 5 self-compassionate positive things about someone in this room

Use real examples about 5 different people in the room

Take home Self-Compassion exercises

1. Sticky Note Exercise

Every day write one self-compassionate thing about yourself or someone close to you and reflect on why that is a good thing. Keep the sticky notes that you write every day and whenever you're having a bad day, you are thinking self-critical thoughts, or someone says something critical to you, read the sticky notes you have written about yourself.

2. Self-Compassion Music Exercise

Listen to songs that encourage you to think positively about yourself (make sure you have guardian permission). The point of listening to these songs is to understand the encouragement in some of the lyrics and to encourage yourself to think further encouraging and kind things about yourself. For example in the song "Rain on Me" the lyrics go "I would rather be dry but at least I'm alive" it makes me think how things may be hard right now (A class or situation) and I would rather not be dealing with that situation but at least I have good friends to study with when I feel unmotivated.

Song Examples

- Brown Skin Girl (Beyonce)
- Firework (Katy Perry)
- Try (Pink)
- Perfect (Pink)
- Numb Little Bug (Em Beihold)
- Don't you worry bout a thang (Tori Kelly)
- Shake it off (Taylor Swift)
- Don't Stop Believing (Journey)
- Fight Song (Rachel Platten)
- Stronger (Kelly Clarkson)
- Unstoppable (Sia)
- Love Myself (Hailiee Steinfeld)
- Rain on Me (Ariana Grande & Lady GaGa)
- The Climb (Miley Cyrus)
- Glorious (Macklemore & Skylar Grey)
- Surface Pressure (Encanto- Jessica Darrow)

Self-Compassion bookmarks for guardians

Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion is one's ability to keep emotions in balance (mindfulness), show kindness towards oneself (self-kindness), and recognize that one is not alone in their struggles (common humanity) (Neff, 2003).



Today we talked about self-compassion and how it is beneficial in everyone's life.

Some benefits of self-compassion are:

1. More positive relationships (Neff & Beretvas, 2011; Yarnell & Neff, 2013).
2. Lower reported rates of depression and anxiety (Klinge & Vliet, 2019).
3. Easier to accept accountability for your actions (Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis & Schumann, 2018).
4. Reportings of happier, more optimistic, and satisfaction with life (Neff & Beretvas, 2013).

Students received some take-home self-compassion activities so that they can be practiced further.

The goal of this seminar is to help the participants understand that they can take accountability for their actions while still being kind to themselves.

Self-Compassion

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Self-compassion is the practice of showing compassion to ourselves. Self-compassion is made of three main components: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness.

Self-Criticism is the opposite of self-compassion. The three components of self-criticism are self-judgment, isolation, and overidentification.

Self-Compassion Benefits:

1. People high in self-compassion have more positive relationships (Neff & Beretvas, 2011; Yarnell & Neff, 2013).
2. People high in self-compassion have lower rates of depression, anxiety, procrastination, and perfectionism (Klinge & Vliet, 2019).
3. People high in self-compassion accept responsibility for their actions at times better than people low in self-compassion (Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis & Schumann, 2018).
4. And, most importantly, people high in self-compassion tend to be happier, more optimistic, more satisfied with their lives, have better coping skills, and be more intrinsically motivated (Neff & Beretvas, 2013).

I AM AWESOME

Name someone that you look up to in your life:

Why do you admire this person?

Now write 3 things that make you proud to be who you are:

1.

2.

3.

Do you share any characteristics with the person that you look up to? If so, list them below:

If not, list some ways you could gain these characteristics:

Whenever you are feeling down, look at this list or create a new list of everything that makes you awesome! Though you might not always feel like it, you ARE awesome and deserve to remind yourself of just how awesome you are

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Why did you feel compassion or empathy for that person?

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If the same situation happened to you, would you have felt compassion for yourself? Why or why not?

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What is your hardest or least favorite subject?

How does that class/ subject make you feel?

Has anyone ever teased you about your difficulty in that subject?

If so, write 3 things that cancel out the negative things they said?

Create a plan to be more self-compassionate to yourself with that subject...

5 positive things about yourself - 5 positive things about someone else in the room

List 5 self-compassionate positive things about yourself

List 5 compassionate positive things about someone in this room

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- Glorious (Macklemore & Skylar Grey)
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