The Role of Self-compassion and Self-criticism on Eating Symptomatology
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Introduction

• There is now growing literature addressing eating psychopathology and its risk and protective factors.
• Self-compassion is treating oneself with kindness and care when confronted with personal inadequacies and failures. 1
• Self-criticism is associated with negative evaluation oneself extremely focuses on achievement. 2

Methods

• Sample: A community sample of 195 adults.
• Measures: Eating disorder symptoms, self-compassion, self-criticism, and well-being.
• Design: Cross-sectional data analysed by SPSS.

Results

• Eating symptoms and self-criticism have a unique relationship, after controlling for self-compassion

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Eating Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>SE²</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-compassion</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>-4.61*</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-criticism</td>
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<td>4.62*</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 195; *p < .001

• Eating symptoms had the main effect F(1, 190) = 6.17, p < .05, ηp² = .03, as those who had clinical eating symptoms (M = 1.8, SD = 0.6) showed poorer well-being than those who did not (M = 1.5, SD = 0.6).

The analysis did not reveal a main effect of gender.

• There was also no significant interaction between eating symptoms and gender F(1, 190) = .11, p = .74, ηp² = .00.

Discussion

• Self-criticism strongly and independently predicts eating pathology.
• Therapists should take the well-being of individuals suffering from eating pathology into consideration during the treatment process.
• Preliminary evidence on the importance of self-criticism and self-compassion on the well-being of the general population.

Limitations

• Cross-sectional research design.
• Most of the participants had a higher level of education.
• The questionnaire did not distinguish between categories of eating disorders.

Implications

• Importance of assessing self-criticism in addition to the usual treatment processes for eating disorders.
• Enhancing individuals’ self-compassion and target self-criticism, in addition to reduction of eating pathology to promote well-being in the treatment process.

References


Figure 1. Shows mean of well-being scores based on gender and eating symptoms