

The Dreaded 'C' Word in Eating Disorder Treatment: Compassion

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Agenda

- Different Types of Negative Self-Talk
- Why We Use Negative Self-Talk
- What is Self-Compassion
- How to Be Self-Compassionate

What We Say To Ourselves

- *I should have....*
- *I'm so stupid*
- *This is all my fault*
- *I knew better than that*
- *I can't do this*
- *I'm never going to...*
- *I can't believe I did that*





Cognitive distortions

- Cognitive distortions are:
 - Tendencies or patterns of thinking or believing;
 - That are false or inaccurate;
 - And have the potential to cause psychological damage.

Some Common examples:

1. All-or-Nothing Thinking / Polarized Thinking
2. Overgeneralization
3. Disqualifying the Positive- You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities don't count.
4. Jumping to Conclusions – Fortune Telling
5. Catastrophizing) or Minimization
6. Mental Filtering: You dwell on the negatives.



Cognitive distortions

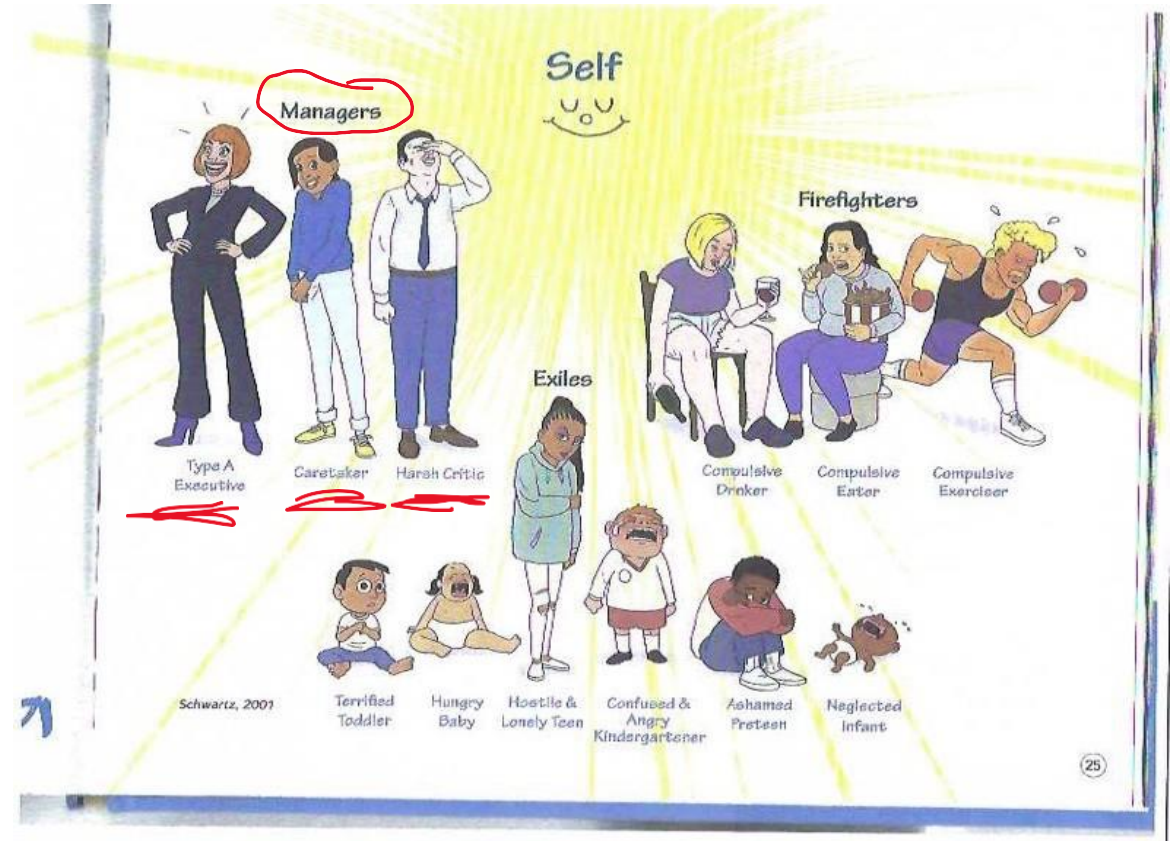
Cognitive distortions are biased perspectives we take on ourselves and the world around us. They are irrational thoughts and beliefs that we unknowingly reinforce over time ([Positive psychology.com](https://www.positivepsychology.com))

These distortions in our thinking are often subtle, and it is challenging to recognize them when they are a regular feature of our day-to-day thoughts.

These distortions have been shown to relate positively to symptoms of depression, meaning that where cognitive distortions abound, symptoms of depression are likely to occur (Burns et al., 1987).

What We Say To Ourselves - Why?

- Evolutionary
- Adaptive Response/ Protective Part
- Generational Influence



Does Negative Self Talk Improve Motivation?

- Many believe negative self talk is motivating
 - The fear: “If I don’t criticize myself, I won’t be motivated to change”
 - Fact: Self criticism leads to a negative view of one’s own potential
 - Less likely to recover from a setback
 - Those who engage in self compassion tend to believe they have greater potential to grow, which leads to greater self improvement

Characteristics of Someone with an ED



PERFECTIONISM IS THE DESIRE TO BE OR APPEAR OR BE PERFECT. PATIENTS WITH EATING DISORDERS MAY HOLD THEMSELVES TO A HIGH STANDARD IN REGARDS CONTROL THEIR DIET, SHAPE AND WEIGHT AND MAY HAVE A DRIVE TO ACHIEVE PERFECTION IN THESE AREAS, MAINTAINING THEIR EATING DISORDER (ACUTE.ORG)



HARM AVOIDANCE IS A PERSONALITY TRAIT CHARACTERIZED BY EXCESSIVE WORRYING, PESSIMISM, SHYNESS, AND BEING FEARFUL, DOUBTFUL, AND EASILY FATIGUED. HARM AVOIDANCE IS ELEVATED IN INDIVIDUALS WITH ANOREXIA NERVOSA, BULIMIA NERVOSA, BED AND EDNOS.



AVOIDANCE MOTIVATION IS A TENDENCY TO AVOID DISTRESSING PROBLEMS AND UNDESIRABLE OUTCOMES. AVOIDANCE MOTIVATION HAS BEEN POSITIVELY ASSOCIATED WITH BINGEING, PURGING AND RESTRICTION BEHAVIORS LIKE BINGE EPISODES, LAXATIVE ABUSE, DIET PILL USE, DIETARY RESTRICTION, AND EMOTIONAL EATING.



HISTORY OF TRAUMA



COGNITIVE RIGIDITY: INDIVIDUALS WITH HEIGHTENED COGNITIVE RIGIDITY MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY CHANGING FAMILIAR, MALADAPTIVE EATING ROUTINES IN FAVOR OF RECOVERY.

How the Eating Disorder Impacts an Individual - Physical

Restricting:

- **Metabolism** slows down
 - Impaired **cardiac** function
- **Low bone density** and **amenorrhea** impacted by hormonal changes
- **Muscle Breakdown**
- **GI** complications

Purging:

- Dehydration
- Electrolyte balance
 - Low **potassium** (can be fatal) → can lead to heart failure
 - Blood **pH imbalance** (can be fatal)
- GI complications

How the Eating Disorder Impacts an Individual - Mental

Restricting

Preoccupation with food

Memory loss

Irritability, anxiety, isolation, self-centeredness

Minnesota Starvation

Experiment

Binging and/or Purging

Significant distress

Shame

Feelings of low self-worth

Weight Stigma

Weight Stigma: discrimination toward an individual because of their weight or size

- Less likely to seek medical care in the future, and more likely to engage in eating disorder behaviors
- Like negative self-talk, weight stigma is also not an effective motivator for change
- Can negatively impact patient care
- Contributes to a greater risk of developing heart disease and diabetes

Why Not Just Stay This Way?

“Even if we do manage to get our act together, the goalposts for what counts as ‘good enough’ seem always to remain frustratingly out of reach...And, no Matter how well we do, someone else always seems to be doing it better. The result of this line of thinking is sobering: millions of people need to take pharmaceuticals every day just to cope with daily life. Insecurity, anxiety, and depression are incredibly common in our society, and much of this is due to self-judgement, to beating ourselves up when we feel we aren’t winning the game of life.”

– Kristen Neff

What is Self-Compassion?

- Compassion = To suffer with/ to suffer together
- Recognize our own suffering
- Wanting health and wellbeing for ourself
- Understanding that our own problems are just as important and worthy
- Giving self kindness and understanding



What is Self-Compassion?

Self-Compassion Scale Short Form (SCS-SF)

HOW I TYPICALLY ACT TOWARDS MYSELF IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Please read each statement carefully before answering. Indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following scale:

Almost never

Almost always

1 2 3 4 5

1. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.
2. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.
3. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.
4. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.
5. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.
6. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.
7. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.
8. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure
9. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.
10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.
11. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.
12. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.



How To Be Self-Compassionate

Three Doorways In:

1. Give yourself kindness and care (instead of self-judgement)
2. Remind yourself that encountering pain is part of the shared human experience (instead of isolation)
3. Hold your thoughts and emotions in mindful awareness (instead of over-identification)

Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself by Kristin Neff, PH.D.



Teaching Clients to Give Themselves Compassion

Challenging
cognitive
distortions

Focusing on
8CS of self

Self care

Challenging out cognitive distortions

Journal When you notice a change in mood, journal about what you're thinking and feeling.

Complete a thought record A thought record is a tool in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) you use in a difficult situation to help you notice your unhelpful ways of thinking and change your perspective to something more realistic. (adapted from Dr. Madeline Polina)

Practice mindfulness which is the ability to focus on the present moment. Practice noticing the thoughts and letting them go. Learn to recognize that you are not your thoughts.



8Cs of self

According to IFS- (Internal family systems) the 8cs help us better get in tune with our Self.

Compassion

Creativity

Curiosity

Confidence

Courage

Calm

Connectedness

Clarity



Self care

Self-care is the practice of doing things to take care of your mind, body, and soul by engaging in activities that promote well-being and reduce stress. It reminds yourself and others that your needs are priority.

Here are some self care activities you might want to try:

- Meditating
- Listening to your favorite music
- Going for a walk in nature
- Reading
- Cuddling with a fur baby
- Trying a creative project
- Attending a creative performance
- Spending time with others that fill your cup

Giving Our Clients Compassionate Care

Number 1 principle in healthcare: ***Do no harm***

- Being compassionate is an important part of this principle

Individuals express that compassion is very important to them when seeking medical treatment

- Will be more likely to seek additional medical care

Healthcare providers modeling compassion toward our clients can help clients learn to be compassionate toward themselves

Giving Ourselves, As Providers, Self- Compassion

- Awareness
- Validation your concerns, hard times, struggles, etc.
- Remind ourselves that we are also human – we mess up, don't always know the answer, don't always say the right thing
- Remove any amplified and/or harsh language about yourself
- Ask yourself what you need
- Eventually repair w/ client, professional, and/or guardian

- Fill up our Cup:
 - Self-care
 - Boundaries
 - Supervision/Consultation
 - Therapy
 - Glimmers

Thank you!

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Resources