

## The Self-Compassion Scale

### Compassion

Assessment

8-10 min.

Client

Yes

*Self-compassion is defined 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 own experience is part of the common human experience” (Neff, 2003, p. 224). The Self-Compassion Scale (SCS; Neff, 2011) is an assessment tool designed to measure three core components of self-compassion.*

### Goal

The purpose of the SCS is to measure three interrelated components of self-compassion:

Self-kindness	“... that we be gentle and understanding with ourselves rather than harshly critical and judgmental.”
Common Humanity	“... feeling connected with others in the experience of life rather than feeling isolated and alienated by our suffering.”
Mindfulness	“... that we hold our experience in balanced awareness, rather than ignoring our pain or exaggerating it.”

*Source: Neff (2011, p. 44).*

### Advice

The SCS can be useful for different purposes. First, the scale can be used to make self-critical clients aware that they may need to develop more self-compassion. Second, the scale can be used as a tool to assess progress in terms of self-compassion. For example, especially when clients try to change behavioural patterns, failure is very common. It is important for clients in these circumstances to be compassionate towards themselves in order to facilitate the ongoing process of change.

Translations of the scale into Dutch, German, and Turkish are available from the instrument author. See for more information: <http://self-compassion.org/>.



## Scoring

To compute the score, use the scoring table as provided in this assessment. First, a mean score of all subscales must be calculated: see the scoring table below the questionnaire to see which items should be added up to form one subscale. Second, the total self-compassion score is calculated by reversing and adding the negative subscale items (self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification) to the remaining subscales (self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness). Reversing a score is done by exchanging the original value of an item by its opposite value: a score of 1 turns into a score of 5, a score of 2 turns into a 4, etc. Concluding, a high total SCS-score indicates a high level of self-compassion. The practitioner can choose to work with the total self-compassion score, or with the individual subscale scores.



## Suggested Readings

Neff, K. D. (2003). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity, 2*, 223–250.

Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-compassion: Stop beating yourself up and leave insecurity behind*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

## Tool Description

**Instructions:** This questionnaire is about how you act toward yourself in difficult times. Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
almost never				almost always

no.	rating	statement
1		I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.
2		When I'm feeling down, I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.
3		When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.
4		When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.
5		I try to be loving toward myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.
6		When I fail at something important to me, I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.
7		When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.
8		When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.
9		When something upsets me, I try to keep my emotions in balance.
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 intolerant and impatient toward those aspects of my personality I don't like.
12		When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.
13		When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.
14		When something painful happens, I try to take a balanced view of the situation.
15		I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.
16		When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.
17		When I fail at something important to me, I try to keep things in perspective.
18		When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.
19		I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
20		When something upsets me, I get carried away with my feelings.
21		I can be a bit cold-hearted toward myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
22		When I'm feeling down, I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.

no.	rating	statement
23		I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.
24		When something painful happens, I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.
25		When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.
26		I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Copyright © 2011 by Kristin D. Neff. Reprinted with permission of the copyright holder, Kristin D. Neff.

### Scoring

Self-kindness		Self-judgment		Common Humanity		Isolation		Mindfulness		Over-Identification	
item	score	item	score	item	score	item	score	item	score	item	score
5		1		3		4		9		2	
12		8		7		13		14		6	
19		11		10		18		17		20	
23		16		15		25		22		24	
26		21									
Total:		Total:		Total:		Total:		Total:		Total:	
Divided by 5:		Divided by 5:		Divided by 4:		Divided by 4:		Divided by 4:		Divided by 4:	

### Total Self-compassion Score:

Self-kindness + Self-judgment (reversed) + Common Humanity + Isolation (reversed) + Mindfulness + Over-identification (reversed) =

.....