THE EFFECTS OF SELF-COMPASSION ON BODY IMAGE IN
PAGEANT CONTESTANTS

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education School of Behavioral Sciences
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ABSTRACT

Self-compassion has been found to provide individuals with important tools for facing personal adversity and struggles. These strengths are increasingly beneficial to individuals faced with both internal and external criticism. Studies exploring these benefits for those in highly public and critiqued fields are limited. Pageantry has the ability to amplify such criticism, but research for the population is limited. A group of twenty female previous and current pageant contestants were recruited to explore the effects of self-compassion. This study will explore, in detail, the effects of self-compassion on personality and body image in this population. This study will utilize creative therapeutic interventions, proven to increase self-compassion, to determine if an increase provides improvement in those areas. Further research may explore how this information can generalized to those in other highly critiqued, public fields such as politics, entertainment, and athletics.

Keywords: self-compassion, pageantry, therapeutic writing, body-image, journaling
Dedication

To my mother, who wanted nothing more than to see me succeed in this endeavor. She was the one that pushed me to give my best, encouraged me when I fell, and supported me until her very last breath.

To my father, who has chosen to be my dad. He has supported every dream and has lovingly moved mountains so I could succeed. I would not be who I am today without his love, support, and strength.
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List of Abbreviations

AN: anorexia nervosa
BN: bulimia nervosa
BED: binge-eating disorder
SCS-SF: Self-Compassion Scale
BPSS-R: Revised Body Part Satisfaction Scale
RQ: Research Question
H: Hypothesis
Ha: Alternative Hypothesis
Pre_SCS: Results of Self-Compassion Scale prior to intervention
Post_SCS: Results of Self-Compassion Scale after intervention
Post_BPSS_overall: Results of Revised Body Part Satisfaction Scale (Overall satisfaction question) prior to intervention
Pre_BPSS_overall: Results of Revised Body Part Satisfaction Scale (Overall satisfaction question) after intervention
Self-Compassion and Pageantry

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Self-compassion is considered to be foundational to empathy and compassion for others (Beck & Verticchio, 2018). It may also provide individuals with important tools for facing personal adversity and struggles. Additionally, it may also be beneficial in dealing with external expectations as well. This may be especially true for women. Self-compassion has already been explored and found to have a positive relationship to body image (Wasylkiw, MacKinnon & MacLellan, 2012). It has also been explored as part of the available resources for female athletes in dealing with personal fears of failure and the negative evaluation of others (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011).

Interestingly, women are faced with both, internal and external evaluation of their own body image in the world of pageantry. Women can enter this community at a very young age and continue to compete through adulthood. Leaving them consistently faced with similar struggles to that of female athletes (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011). However, it is difficult to locate research on self-compassion within the pageant community. In fact, extraordinarily little research appears to be done on this population at all. Most research available is in relationship to mental health with a focus on its effects on eating disorders (Wonderlich, Ackard & Henderson, 2005). This leaves so much unanswered about this population of women that can be addressed through research. This suggested study would begin to address the gap in literature available in the field of psychology for this population. This study will do so by exploring self-compassion in this population. As journaling is already used to
increase self-compassion, this study will utilize simple journaling exercises to increase this important resource (Beck & Verticchio, 2018).

This section includes the background of self-compassion and an explanation of how it can be beneficial for an individual. A basic understanding of the background and expectations of pageantry will be examined. It will be continued with a discussion on how the two relate to one another and how individuals in pageantry may benefit from an increased level of self-compassion. The problem and purpose of the study will also be discussed as based on the background information. Finally, there will be a discussion on the significance for the study and a conclusion with the four main research questions for the current study. A selection of key terms will also be defined for the reader to allow for better understanding of the information provided in the study.

**Background**

**Self-Compassion**

Self-compassion is considered to be foundational to an individual’s ability to hold empathy and compassion for others (Beck & Verticchio, 2018). Although difficult to completely define, empathy is usually expressed as a way of understanding the thinking and feelings others (Calloway-Thomas, 2018; Hall & Schwartz, 2019). Most research suggests that it is considered critical in the social interactions an individual has with others because it relates to feelings and emotions (Calloway-Thomas, 2018; Hall & Schwartz, 2019). Compassion is closely related to empathy and is also considered an important aspect of social interactions. It relates to one’s ability to understand the suffering of other individuals (Kurth, 2019). Compassion typically
pushes an individual to improve the suffering they recognize in others, and it is often considered
the emotional response to empathy (Kurth, 2019).

Self-compassion may also provide individuals with some important tools for facing
personal adversity and struggles. Previous studies suggest that self-compassion allows an
individual to see failure as a learning opportunity, rather than something negative (Miyagawa,
Niiya & Taniguchi, 2019). It has also been found to reduce negative reactions to daily adversity
as well (Muris, et. al., 2019). Additionally, it may be beneficial in dealing with external
expectations a person may face throughout life, especially in relationship to rejection and body-
image (Beekman, Stock & Howe, 2017). This important aspect is especially true for women,
because they are at the highest risk of being affected by negative body evaluations (Schmidt,
Raque-Bogdan & Hollern, 2019)

As noted above, self-compassion has been explored in its relationship to body image
(Wasylkiw, MacKinnon & MacLellan, 2012). It has also been explored as possible resources for
female athletes in dealing with the fears of failure and negative evaluation of others (Mosewich,
Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011). This suggests that information can be
generalized across a larger population of women, such as those in pageantry, entertainment and
public relations such as politics.

Pageantry
Interestingly, women are faced with both internal and external evaluation, especially in the area of body image in the world of pageantry. As noted previously, women can enter pageantry at any age and continue to compete through adulthood. This extended exposure has the ability to leave them facing similar struggles of lifelong female athletes (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011). Unfortunately, it is difficult to locate any research on self-compassion within the pageant community. In fact, very little research appears to be done on this population at all. The effects of eating disorders on mental health are the most commonly found studies that use women in pageantry as the focus for the study (Wonderlich, Ackard & Henderson, 2005). This lack of information suggests a great need for research to answer the questions left about this population of women.

Since research on self-compassion is so limited in relationship to those in the competitive, public eye, the first topic of exploration for this study will be how self-compassion benefits those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry. This will be focused on the areas of body image, personality, and personal achievement. To do this, the researchers will first have to review the level of self-compassion currently held by the pageant contestants prior to implanting any methods to increase it. For this study, therapeutic writing activities will be used to increase the level of self-compassion held by the participants. This will allow the researchers to determine if such methods are useful for increasing self-compassion with this population, and if successful, it will allow the exploration of the benefits of
increased self-compassion in the pageant population. Research exploring the effects of journaling as a therapeutic method have been previously addressed as successful; however, studies covering varied different groups of women, such as pageant contestants continue to be found lacking in the literature (Dwyer, Piquette, Buckle & McCaslin, 2013). This gap in information on the populations in the competitive, public eye provide a strong need for further research on the topic.

**Problem Statement**

Although numerous studies have considered the effects of self-compassion on women, only a minority consider individuals in highly critiqued, competitive, or scrutinized fields (Killham, et. al., 2018; Mosewich, et. al., 2011; Tarasoff, Ferguson & Kowalski, 2017). Out of these studies, nearly all explore self-compassion on individuals in some form of athletics. Current research does not consider the experience of a larger portion of women in other scrutinized and competitive fields. Individuals in pageantry, politics, and entertainment are not yet currently explored in the research on the topic of self-compassion, despite the fact self-compassion has been recognized as beneficial in dealing with internal and external judgement (Breines & Chen, 2012; Desmond, 2018). Studies considering this gap about the mental health of this population can be critically important to assist them in dealing with the stresses of their field. Studies exploring self-compassion in further populations, as they have with athletes, may also provide important results for assisting larger communities of women in the public eye. The problem is found in the generalization of current research, with most studies not yet considering the benefits and effects of self-compassion on a wider population of women.

Because women are typically the most highly affected by body-image, research on self-compassion is also heavy in this area. Research suggests that self-compassion can truly benefit
women in dealing with body-image and reduce the possible negative mental health results (Barnett & Sharp, 2016; Duba, Kindsvatter & Priddy, 2010; Slater, Varsani & Diedrichs, 2017). However, studies of other areas of internal and external judgement are nearly absent from most current research. Although women in the public eye, pageantry, and other competitive fields are clearly at risk for body related criticism, they also face judgement in many other areas. Critique of personality and personal achievement are often key elements in pageantry and politics (Landsbaum, 2017; Miss America 2.0., 2019). Athletes are also faced with judgement in the area of personal achievement as well (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011). Another problem with current research is the limited consideration of areas frequently critiqued in women, especially for those in the public eye or competition. It also fails to explore how the population could benefit from increased self-compassion in those areas, like it has been proven to assist with body image.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study will be to address the gaps of current research in the benefits of self-compassion for women in competitive, public domains. The study will utilize female pageant contestants, who frequently face similar levels of internal and external judgement as other competitive fields, such athletics and politics (Miss America 2.0., 2019). It will increase the information base for similar populations and will begin the process of generalization of self-compassion studies for these populations. This study will also address the population generalization of previous studies using creative therapeutic methods for increasing self-compassion through creative writing. Using creative writing, this study will determine if an increase of self-compassion assists pageant contestants to better cope with internal and external judgement, especially in the area of body-image.
Significance of Study

Pageantry has the ability to amplify the internal and external judgements of an individual by placing certain aspects of their life in purposeful judgement of others to be displayed to their community (Miss America 2.0., 2019; Shindle, 2014). Pageantry takes issues such as body image, personality, and personal achievement that women frequently struggle with and places them at the forefront (Banet-Weiser, 2006; Kelly & Garmon, 2016; Thompson & Hammond, 2003; Miss America 2.0., 2019). Women willingly choose and prepare to face these additional critiques with the promise of financial rewards, self-improvement, and a social platform for global improvement that is given to successful candidates (Cohen 2016; Williams, 2019).

Competition & External Evaluation

Self-compassion has already been shown to improve an individual’s ability to cope with both normal internal and external judgement, as well as maladaptive forms of perfectionism (Barnett & Sharp, 2016). This suggests that pageant contestants would find self-compassion a critical resource in dealing with the additional chosen levels of criticism. Increasing self-compassion for this population may help to reduce the possible negative effects of such increased levels of internal and external judgement (Neff, 2009). This is especially true in the area of body-image, which has been one of the recurring study themes for this population (Barnett & Sharp, 2016; Duba, Kindsvatter & Priddy, 2010; Slater, Varsani & Diedrichs, 2017).

Population generalization. For this reason, the current study will be important in bridging the gap between the need for self-compassion for women and its increased importance for those in public view and competitive fields. It will begin the foundational work of exploring the effects of self-compassion for highly critiqued individuals who face more sources of
judgement than their peers. Information collected by this study may also be generalized not only to pageant contestants, but those with similar levels of judgement such as athletes, politicians, and performers.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for the current study are as follows:

**RQ1:** Does self-compassion benefit those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry in the area of body image?

**RQ2:** Does therapeutic writing activities increase the level of self-compassion held by pageantry participants?

**Definition of Terms**

These terms are especially pertinent to the context of this study:

1. Self-Compassion
2. Pageantry
3. External Criticism

**Self-compassion**

According to Dr. Kristin Neff, a leading researcher in the area, self-compassion is defined as a skill set that allows an individual to relate to themselves kindly and with less damaging self-judgement; especially in difficult situations (Bluth & Neff, 2018). It is a form of coping mechanism that is used alongside emotional regulation and resilience (Desmond, 2017).

**Pageantry**
Pageantry is a worldwide concept, but for the purpose of this study, the American ideal of a beauty pageant as presented by organizations such as Miss America, Mrs. America, Miss USA, Miss World and Miss Universe will be utilized. Pageantry systems such as these allow eligible contestants to compete for advertised prizes, prestige, platform advancement or money (Cohen 2016; Williams, 2019). Contestants compete in many areas, usually including some form of physical and verbal presentation of themselves (Miss America 2.0., 2019).

**External Criticism**

For the purpose of this study, external criticism will be defined as the judgement and opinions of other individuals about the pageant contestant. This criticism includes the judgement of individuals around the contestant that address aspects of their presentation in pageantry. This includes, but is not limited to, their family, pageant coaches, and the judges in the pageant system of competition. External criticism may also come from other previous or current contestants and audience members of the pageant and other related events.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The scholarly literature available in relationship to individuals in competitive pageantry and self-compassion are non-existent. However, numerous studies have found that individuals with high levels of self-compassion are more successful at coping with many aspects of daily life (Neff, 2009). In order to understand the importance of this skill for pageant contestants, one must first gain sufficient understanding of the research in the area. It is also beneficial to explore the struggles faced by those in competitive careers and hobbies such as pageantry. Research in these topics provide sufficient evidence to the importance of self-compassion for such individuals.

Once the need for self-compassion in pageant competitors has been confirmed, a review of studies used to increase self-compassion can begin. The literature review below also explores how different therapeutic interventions such as group, mindfulness training, and creative interventions have been successfully used with numerous populations. The current study will use the provided information to determine if the level of self-compassion in pageant contestants can be increased using similar methodology and interventions.

Conceptual Framework

Pageants, in general, are especially susceptible to the encouragement of the idealization and objectification of the female body. In fact, many well-known pageants in the United States continue to perpetuate a specific definition of the feminine ideal (Banet-Weiser, 2006). Pageantry includes numerous areas of competition, where individuals are judged by their external presentation, both physically and verbally. One of the most recognizable pageants in the
United States, the Miss America organization, critiques contestants on five different aspects of their presentation, including their verbal abilities, poise, physical presentation, and personal talent (Miss America 2.0., 2019). Women in pageantry can spend weeks, months, and even years in preparation for a single competitive event. This includes restrictive eating habits, excessive exercise routines, hours of practice for talent competition, and personalized coaching for everything else (Shindle, 2014). The limited research available about the pageant population shows high levels of eating related disorders, and the damages as a result of unreasonable expectations for child competitors (Kelly & Garmon, 2016; Thompson & Hammond, 2003). Competitors in the pageant realm are typically highly driven individuals with clearly defined self-expectations (Shindle, 2014).

The characteristics and expectations held by pageant contestants are not drastically different from many other women in competitive careers and hobbies. Women in other competitive fields, such as athletics, present similar levels of preparation, determination, and training in preparation for important competitions (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011). They also cope with fear of failure and the possible negative evaluation of others, especially those in their field of competition (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011). Additionally, pageant contestants are also publicly judged by their communities, both locally and globally (Thomas, 2018).

Pageantry is similar to other competitive fields, allowing eligible contestants to compete for advertised prizes, prestige, platform advancement or money, that all increase based on competition level and pageant system recognition (Cohen 2016; Williams, 2019). The winners from each level of a pageantry system, usually done locally, state-wide, nationally, and
sometimes, internationally, then compete with other advancing contestants to be recognized with the final winner title (Miss America 2.0., 2019).

In each level of competition, the contestants compete in many areas. As noted previously, this usually includes some form of physical and verbal presentation of themselves, often including a show of talent and interview with judges (Miss America 2.0., 2019). Much like other forms of competition, the contestants must outdo their competitors with higher scores in the judged areas in order to obtain the final title as winner (Miss America 2.0., 2019; Mosewich, et. al., 2011). This can be a stressful experience for competitors, requiring many days, months, and years of preparation (Mosewich, et. al., 2011; Shindle, 2014).

The research available in competitive populations has found increased levels of self-compassion in female athletic competitors allowed them to more easily cope with the difficulties of competition and regular public exposure (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011). This information may be beneficial for pageant contestants as well. Both athletic and pageant competitors share similar struggles in competition. This suggests that similar methods of facing and coping with the challenges and external judgement may be useful for both. Previous research suggests that dealing with both internal and external judgement of others may be addressed through increased self-compassion (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011).

Studies have also found that self-compassion may be beneficial in assisting individuals with issues regarding personal body image as well (Wasylkiw, MacKinnon & MacLellan, 2012). As body image is a key area of competition for many pageant contestants, this provides a starting point for the further exploration on self-compassion in pageant contestants (Miss America 2.0.,
The benefits of self-compassion for similar populations and with similar issues held by contestants may encourage the generalization of such studies for pageant contestants.

**Theoretical Foundations**

The external and internal judgments of an individual within the world of pageantry as relevant foundations from multiple theories of human development and living. This relevance can be seen especially in theories that focus on individual experience as a woman such as Feminist theory. Additionally, relevance can also be found in theories that consider basic human needs for optimal mental and physical health, such as Maslow’s theory of Hierarchy of Needs. Both theoretical models on the woman as an individual with both an independent set of roles and basic needs.

**Feminist Theory**

The ideas of mindfulness and self-compassion share several elements with Feminist theory, especially when it comes to the formation and nature of self (Crowder, 2016). According to Corey (2017), a core tenet of Feminist theory is the significant influence that gender roles found in a society can have on the development of a person’s identity (p. 367). Additionally, Murdock (2017) also reflects on the rigid expectations that society can be place on individuals; these are often manifested especially toward women. These ideas are amplified in pageantry, as these elements are purposefully judged by others. While Feminist theory is commonly used as a framework of psychotherapy, it offers relevance to the focus of this study. In fact, researchers argue that the therapeutic measures used to increased self-compassion can effectively be used within the context of Feminist theory (Crowder, 2016).

Another central construct to Feminist theory is that “The Person is Political” (Corey, 2017 p. 369, Murdock, 2017, p. 386). This construct is relevant to the influence of external
judgment of a person’s environment onto the internal judgment made by the individual. This suggests that a person’s life, body, and action can be affected by the views of others and opinions of others. Both Corey and Murdock note that the experiences of women are connected to factors external to themselves and can be especially influential in their internal expectations. For the purpose of this study, pageantry is one of the primary platforms of external judgement the participants face.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Schulte (2018) describes the focus of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs as a progressing level of needs present in human development, with the basic foundation being that of physiological needs needed for survival support, such as need for air to breath, nourishment from food, or body renewal from sleep. As a person meets these needs, more developed needs are able to manifest, such as needs for safety, love and belonging, and finally, self-fulfillment needs such as esteem and self-actualization. This theory suggests that the motivation of one’s actions, choices, and goals are based on the individual’s place within the hierarchy (Maslow, 1943).
**Figure 1**

*Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs*

```
Self-
-Transendence

Self- Actualization

Esteem Needs

Belonging and Love Needs

Safety Needs

Physiological Needs
```

*Notes.* Representation of the amended version of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (based on Maslow 1943, 1954, including updates from further work published in 1969). This theory suggests that basic and psychological needs must be satisfied before the achievement of self-fulfillment needs (Maslow, 1943).

Pageantry, as a whole, looks at a contestant’s life through based on their level of achievement, especially in the area of self-actualization through their ability to positively affect the world around them using their internal potential (Miss America 2.0., 201; Danyliuk, Burkalo& Taras, 2020). This is considered the highest level of accomplishment and motivation according the Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, with the exception of the element of spirituality found through self-transcendence (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). This suggests that contestants must first be able to effectively satisfy the lower levels of motivation that affect their body-image, social interactions, and basic needs in order to be successful. Self-compassion has been found to assist individuals in working toward the fulfillment of these psychological and self-fulfillment needs (Neff, 2009; Desmond, 2016).
Related Literature

Although there is very little research available for individuals in pageantry, there is some related literature that explores several aspects that may affect the population. First, the effects and benefits of self-compassion have been studied thoroughly in other populations (Desmond, 2017; Germer, 2009; Krieger, Hermann, Zimmermann & Grosse Holtfort, 2015; Liss & Erchull, 2015; Neff, 2009; Neff, 2007, Neff, 2011). This information and the results of these studies will be provided for consideration. This review will also discuss the interventions used to increase self-compassion, including the use of mindfulness training, creative interventions, and group interventions. This discussion will address the success of the interventions with other populations, such as women and athletes. Additionally, an overview of the evidence of the need for self-compassion and how it can benefit pageant contestants will be explored across several domains of the population. The literature review will also touch on how self-compassion may be beneficial for other individuals in competitive public fields such as athletes, entertainers, and politicians. Finally, a discussion on how body-image, a major concern of many publicly critiqued populations including pageant contestants, can be addressed through self-compassion. The overall information included will provide a strong basis for the current study by exposing major gaps in the published literature and revealing the need for additional studies in self-compassion within public, competitive populations including pageant contestants.

Self-Compassion

Self-Compassion allows individuals to build their internal resources for coping with difficult situations through increased resilience and emotional regulation (Desmond, 2017). Self-compassion has been shown to increase life-satisfaction and positive moods, while decreasing the negative effects of external criticism (Neff, 2009). These aspects of self-compassion are
especially important for pageant contestants and other individuals in the public eye. As noted above, these individuals are not new to the importance of self-motivation and the need for dealing with external criticism. In essence, self-compassion is about being kind to one’s self, even when others are not providing positive feedback (Germer, 2009). This skill is critical for individuals in pageantry that have very busy lives that include preparing and training for competition where they are consistently critiqued by others (Shindle, 2014).

Self-compassion is considered a skill that can be learned by an individual through practice (Desmond, 2017). Research has shown that therapeutic writing is one method that can be used to increase self-compassion skills. These studies have also shown that creative therapeutic methods such as journaling can decrease negative symptoms of depression and anxiety, while still having the ability to increase self-compassion skills (Gortner, Rude & Pennebaker, 2006). Benefits of therapeutic writing can be seen with as little as ten minutes of writing a day, which is encouraging for pageant contestants, considering their limited access to free time during preparation periods (Blake, 2017).

The importance of self-compassion has been the topic of numerous recent studies and books (Desmond, 2017; Germer, 2009; Krieger, Hermann, Zimmermann & Grosse Holtfort, 2015; Liss & Erchull, 2015; Neff, 2009; Neff, 2007, Neff, 2011). Self-compassion is a critical skill for the ability to assist individuals in coping with criticism both internally and externally. Dr. Kristin Neff, a modern expert and professor who focuses her research in this area, suggests that self-compassion allows an individual to provide themselves with kindness rather than judgement, and an alternative to using social comparison which may avoid feelings of isolation, and increase mindfulness (Neff, 2009).
Self-compassion is also linked to an individual’s mood as well. Individuals with increased self-compassion have decreased levels of low mood, less fear of failure, and reduced occurrences of other mental health disorders (Neff, 2009). Rather than a focus on one’s inadequacies, self-compassion allows an individual to strive for increased over-all well-being (Neff, 2009). Studies have shown that women struggle more than men with the skills of self-compassion (De Souza & Hutz, 2016). This is especially true for the younger population, as self-compassion seems to improve naturally for individuals over the age of thirty across both genders (De Souza & Hutz, 2016). Self-compassion is also closely linked to the idea of mindfulness, which is based on the ability to be aware of aspects of one’s self, without allowing the negative aspects to become overwhelming (Neff, 2009). In fact, high levels of mindfulness are also found to be linked to higher levels of overall life satisfaction (Chen, Wu, & Chang, 2017).

Many people may believe that self-compassion and self-esteem are similar ideas. However, recent research suggests that this is not an accurate assumption (Stephenson, Watson, Chen & Morris, 2017). Self-esteem is based on one’s view of self-value in comparison to others, while self-compassion is kindness in spite of social comparison (Desmond, 2016). Unlike self-esteem which is a Western notion, self-compassion is practiced worldwide (Neff, 2009). Since all individuals have faults, self-compassion allows for a sense of commonality within humanity (Neff, 2009). Self-compassion can also be a stable trait, unlike self-esteem which changes based on external sources. According to Dr. Neff, self-compassion comes with all the benefits of high self-esteem, without the negative results, feelings, and symptoms associated with it (Neff, 2011).

**Studies of Self-Compassion.** The study of self-compassion is frequently done using an assessment scale formulated by Dr. Kristin Neff, the researcher mentioned above. This assessment scale has two versions, the original, containing twenty-six questions, and the short
version, with only twelve questions. Her research team has determined that both the long and short version of the Self-Compassion Scale are valid assessments for determining levels of self-compassion (Neff, Raes, Pommier & Van Gucht, 2011). The short version of the scale is especially beneficial in situations where a lengthy assessment may be difficult or less cost effective (Neff, Raes, Pommier & Van Gucht, 2011). This assessment is recognized as an appropriate method for studying an individual’s level of self-compassion and therefore will be utilized for the current study as well.

As researchers study self-compassion, they also find more information on the important role it plays. Self-compassion may allow individuals to avoid unhealthy levels of self-criticism that may decrease the desire for the needed pursuit of personal growth and improvement (Breines & Chen, 2012). Even small amounts of time spent focusing, with effort, on encouraging self-compassion can be beneficial to an individual. Research suggests that spending approximately thirty minutes a day for two weeks on self-compassion training can provide significant increases of self-compassion in one’s thinking and behavior (Desmond, 2018). However, any practice of self-compassion may provide at least some benefits when things are difficult. The skill of self-compassion allows an individual to feel accepted and lovable when things appear less than ideal (Desmond, 2018). The need for self-compassion is especially important for the publicly criticized, as they face both internal and external judgement on a regular basis.

*Positive psychology and creativity.* Self-compassion studies have a strong connection with the realm of positive psychology. Positive psychology is the research and findings in the mental health field that focus on an individual’s positive traits and abilities in order to increase their progress toward goals and self-development (Csillik, 2014). For over twenty years, positive psychology has grown rapidly, with studies even being generalized outside the western world.
Counseling methods used by clinicians with a focus on positive psychology build on an individual’s strengths and naturally encourage self-compassion.

Some positive psychologists and practicing clinicians use creative therapies to assist their clients. The practice of creativity has the ability to inadvertently provide opportunities to improve an individual’s mental health (Gladding & Wallace, 2012). It does so by allowing individuals more independence to be innovative and pursue personal growth (Gladding & Wallace, 2012). Creativity also allows individuals to focus on their own strengths, which is key in positive psychology (Csillik, 2014). Creativity is also the basis to numerous psychological interventions including therapeutic writing and art therapy (Puig, Lee, Goodwin & Sherrard, 2006). Even individuals outside of psychology, like those in entertainment careers and hobbies have used these methods to assist others in the pursuit of positive mental health through theater, music, and art (Gladding & Wallace, 2012).

**Interventions for Increasing Self-Compassion**

Numerous interventions have been utilized to increase self-compassion, including mindfulness training and group interventions, as well as creative interventions such as therapeutic writing, and arts and movement interventions. Despite the intervention type or length, all were found to provide increased levels of self-compassion, which is linked to higher levels of life-satisfaction and happiness, and lower levels of depression, stress and anxiety (Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017; Campos, Cebolla, Quero, Bretón-López, Botella, Soler & Baños, 2016). Many elements found within the different intervention types overlap, and can be utilized in different ways to fit the needs of a client or study population.
Mindfulness Training. Mindfulness and self-compassion are often associated in research literature. Their joint increase has been found to improve mental health, with self-compassion being linked to lower levels of depression and mindfulness being linked to lower levels of anxiety (Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017). Mindful self-compassion meditation has also been proven to increase physical well-being through lowering the effects of stress on studied individuals (Arch, Landy & Brown, 2016). These results suggest that increasing self-compassion through mindfulness provides benefits in both mental and physical well-being. Mindfulness interventions are used in the treatment of many psychological conditions through increasing self-compassion, which is considered a significant factor in the well-being and happiness of an individual (Campos, Cebolla, Quero, Bretón-López, Botella, Soler & Baños, 2016).

Mindfulness interventions vary in length, from daily meditation to short term treatments plans (Campos, et. al., 2016). One study found that both shorter and longer-term, non-permanent, mindfulness interventions provided improvement in self-compassion levels held by participants (Sakai, Terao, Kawano, Akase, Hatano, Shirahama & Ishii, 2019). Such trainings and interventions provide positive results, while being utilized in numerous different ways to fit the needs of therapy, including group based, virtual, personal, and in person interactions (Campo, Bluth, Santacroce, Knapik, Tan, Gold, & Asher, 2017). Mindfulness interventions have also been combined with other health benefiting activities, such as yoga, to increase the positive mental and physical benefits that it has already been proven to provide (Danucalov, Kozasa, Afonso, Galduroz & Leite, 2017).

Creative Interventions. Creative interventions of therapy range drastically across the field of psychology, ranging from a therapeutic writing to the creative and expressive arts, such as music, drawing, painting and dance or movement. These therapies are usually semi-structured,
providing important information and skills, while allowing individuals to express themselves through their words, creation or movement during the intervention period (Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017; Deaver & McAuliffe, 2009; Harris, 2005; Puig, Lee, Goodwin & Sherrard, 2006;)

**Arts, Music, and Movement Interventions.** Studies utilizing creative interventions to increase self-compassion, especially those of arts, music, and movement, are still limited, but increasing. Studies of arts, music and movement therapies suggest that creative interventions also lead to an increase self-compassion levels in participants (Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017). Studies exploring these interventions with populations outside of pageantry have proven that they are beneficial in enhancing participant mental health through decreases in anxiety and depression, while providing increases in optimism and happiness levels (Puig, Lee, Goodwin & Sherrard, 2006). In fact, some study participants expressed that the improvements made through the therapeutic arts were a surprising benefit to them during the progress (Puig, Lee, Goodwin & Sherrard, 2006). Another study found that increasing self-compassion through arts, movement, and music interventions also helped to reduce stress levels for participants, while building up other positive traits such as curiosity and gratitude (Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017).

Creative interventions using the incorporation of music have also been explored with numerous populations. One study, exploring the use of music, both independently and in combination with other evidence-based interventions noted that both methods were correlated with significant increases in mindfulness and self-compassion after the intervention period was over (Sorensen, Steindl, Dingle & Garcia, 2019). This suggests that creative interventions, such as music can easily adapted to further self-compassion studies. Research continues to suggest that creative interventions such as art, movement and music are most beneficial when integrated
with other proven therapeutic techniques, as it allows participants a method of expression for the therapeutic experiences (Whitten & Burt, 2015).

**Therapeutic Writing.** As noted, research about the use of creative therapies for increasing self-compassion is still limited. However, the available studies on the topic, utilizing therapeutic writing such as journaling to increase mindfulness, have been promising, showing it able to provide an increase in self-compassion levels for participants (Beck & Verticchio, 2018). Numerous other studies have shown that therapeutic writing and journaling can provide a plethora of qualitative data about an individual during the research process (Hayman, Wilkes & Jackson, 2012). Daily mindfulness practices such as journaling have also been shown to improve general wellbeing and resilience and allow for increased personal growth for those who engage in such practices (Beck & Verticchio, 2018).

Participants in journaling studies found the experience of using creative therapeutic methods useful as a way to change their perspectives (Deaver & McAuliffe, 2009). A study using expressive writing to explore the area of body image found that focusing on the increase of self-compassion, worked better, than journaling alone as a method of improving participant body-image (Dennis, Angelo Emil, 2016). This provides a starting point and evidence that creative writing may be used to increase self-compassion and show a decrease in the negative effects of external and self-judgement in the area of body image through future studies such as this one.

As discussed above, the creative therapeutic method that is most used to increase self-compassion is writing because most individuals typically feel comfortable with this creative process (Chan & Horneffer, 2006). Some studies have also shown that writing activities can be more beneficial than other forms of creative expressions used for therapeutic purposes (Chan &
Horneffer, 2006). Because there is no wrong or right way to use therapeutic writing, the purpose and process of just doing it may be beneficial to some participants (Charles, 2010). According to one study, they found that journaling may allow study participants to be more honest with themselves and their counselor than with other therapeutic methods used to increase self-compassion (Dwyer, Piquette, Buckle & McCaslin, 2013).

Creative writing can also be used successfully within individual counseling and therapeutic groups. In fact, having a group of similar participants who can relate to the experiences and struggles explored within the journaling activities may be beneficial in achieving their treatment goals (Dwyer, Piquette, Buckle & McCaslin, 2013). Journaling may also be a freeing experience for the participants, in group and single formats, as it allows them an external output to get their thoughts, feelings and emotions on a topic out, rather than internalizing them (Dwyer, Piquette, Buckle & McCaslin, 2013). Individuals often found journaling activities to be both beneficial and enjoyable during studies that used this creative intervention (Harris, 2005). Creative therapeutic methods such as journaling can also be a beneficial learning tool that can be utilized by mental health practitioners to increase important skills and knowledge, such as those connected with self-compassion (Harris, 2005).

Currently, studies have found that frequent writing activities can be linked to an increase in mood positivity and decreased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress in participating individuals (Baikie, Geerligs & Wilhelm, 2012). Out of the three writing prompts explored in a study on mood disorders, all forms of structured writing activities studied were proven beneficial in some way for the participants (Baikie, Geerligs & Wilhelm, 2012) Therapeutic and creative writing has also been proven to assist depression vulnerable individuals in decreasing negative symptoms (Gortner, Rude & Pennebaker, 2006). Therapeutic writing is considered a safe method
for patients to work through difficult psychological issues as well (Blake, 2017). Additionally, using writing as a therapeutic method does not need to be a difficult or time-consuming task for participants. Research suggests that writing activities lasting between ten minutes to an hour a day provide adequate time to address and achieve goals (Blake, 2017).

Not only are writing interventions a comfortable, quick method of addressing self-compassion, they can easily be adapted to internet-based studies and treatment plans. The results of research using similar interventions has proven successful in improving the mental health of participants (Baikie, Geerligs & Wilhelm, 2012; Allen, Wetherell & Smith, 2020). Previous studies on self-compassion utilizing therapeutic writing online found that they were able show an increase in self-compassion for participants, especially when the writing focused on certain components such as mindfulness (Dreisoerner, Junker & van Dick, 2020). This makes therapeutic writing interventions very accessible for participants, regardless of location or comfort level with traditional therapeutic interventions.

**Group Interventions.** Group interventions often utilize some of the elements within other interventions such mindfulness training and creative interventions. Group interventions utilize the interpersonal interactions and discussions to facilitate the information provided and strengthen the self-compassion skills being addressed (Neff & Germer, 2013). Research with collage aged women found that short, group-based, self-compassion interventions consisting of informational exercises and the sharing of experiences provided encouraging results (Smeets, Neff, Alberts & Peters, 2014).

Group intervention studies also suggest that, although these interventions last only a few weeks, they are able to show an increase in the levels of self-compassion held by participants (Smeets, et. al., 2014). Group formats have also been utilized online, showing similar results to
face-to face group interventions, when the same information and similar activities are utilized (Krieger, Martig, Van Den Brink & Berger, 2016). However, for some group studies the researchers were unable to determine if this increase continued to lead to positive changes in the women’s lives, although the women showed an increase in self-compassion scores at the end of the intervention (Smeets, et al., 2014). This may be a key reason group intervention studies incorporate elements of the other intervention types such as the inclusion of mindful or creative “homework” activities for group participants that can be utilized long-term after the study period (Neff & Germer, 2013).

As noted above, many interventions including group therapy, especially those with a focus on the narrative approach, may be beneficial in assisting women who struggle with these issues (Duba, Kindsvatter & Priddy, 2010). However, it is important to stress that the research within this population is still limited. Emerging research has numerous possibilities to explore within this and similar populations. Future studies may benefit from exploring the use of additional creative therapeutic methods to increase self-compassion. Additionally, more future studies may explore the effects of certain aspects of public life on self-esteem in comparison to self-compassion. One clear gap can be addressed during the current study, by using proven creative methods, such as therapeutic writing to address the self-compassion of women in one subset of the public eye, pageant contestants.

**Pageantry and Self-Compassion**

The need to fit a specified look, shape, and ideal has gained tremendous popularity in the United States. Since their origins in the United States, pageants have been especially susceptible to the idealization and objectification of the female body (Banet-Weiser, 2006). Previous Miss America contestants such as Kate Shindle, Miss America 1998, shared about how a participant’s
world was controlled by their appearance and outsiders’ perspectives during their reigns (Shindle, 2014). This same notion is also visible in global pageantry, with systems around the world encouraging contestants to fit a set of criteria consisting of expectations for their body image, lifestyle, and habits (Srivastava, 2020). Such sexually objectifying environments can lead to numerous negative issues for the individuals involved, both mental and physical (Moffitt & Szymanski, 2011).

Thankfully, in recent history many pageants have made an effort to separate themselves from this fascination with beauty idealization and the pursuit of perfection, as a way to increase public popularity as global advocacy for self-acceptance and self-compassion continues to grow (Banet-Weiser, 2006). Despite their efforts, most large, well-known pageants across the world continue to perpetuate a certain feminine ideal (Banet-Weiser, 2006). Current contestants continue to be scrutinized based on all aspects of themselves, from physical presentation to the details of their everyday life. This can lead to unhealthy levels of perfectionism and other negative outcomes related to body-image. Self-criticism is common across many populations, but may potentially be increased in pageant contestants based on the high level of external expectations placed on them (Desmond, 2016). Current studies and research available about pageant contestants do not consider their levels of self-compassion, rather, most focus on the negative relationship pageantry has with eating disorders and childhood experiences (Kelly & Garmon, 2016; Thompson & Hammond, 2003; Wonderlich, Ackard & Henderson, 2005). Up to date, studies exploring self-esteem, perfectionism, and self-compassion have yet to be addressed with this population of individuals which spans across ages, genders, religions, sexual orientations, and nationality.
Expectations and Exploitations. Not only are women in pageantry subject to their own self-criticism, they are especially affected by public opinion and external criticism. This implies the need and importance for a certain level of self-compassion to avoid maladaptive perfectionism. These individuals are not new to the importance of self-motivation; as pageantry requires regular training both psychically and mentally (Shindle, 2014). Researchers of self-compassion are aware that not every person is capable of living up to a pageant-like ideal (Desmond, 2016).

The American pageantry industry has struggled with beauty idealization since its early years, even facing several protests for these unrealistic expectations for the average women (Vandenberg, 2018). In fact, in 1968 a protest was held against the Miss America pageant for perpetuating sexism, racism, and for supporting the objectification of women, rather than uplifting their natural femininity (Vanderberg, 2018). The expectations of pageant contestants can range from body size and shape, color, clothing styles, and even how their ethnic traits are displayed. Social media branding, fitness and strict personal awareness in this area become second nature for successful pageant contestants (Brajdic, 2017).

Research as shown that the average measurements the Miss America winners remain significantly smaller than the national average over the years (Spitzer, Henderson & Zivian, 1999). As you can see in Table 1, the body measurements of women in pageantry are far smaller than that of the average American woman. However, beauty idealization and objectification of women is not limited to American pageantry systems; it is also seen globally. In South America, The Miss Peru pageant contestants are typically expected to present their full body measurements on stage for both the audience and judges (Pérez-Rosario, 2018). Across the globe in Nigeria, researchers have debated how the expectation for female pageant contestants to wear
bikinis may be used as a method of boosting the nation’s global relevance by pushing the women to reach or surpass global beauty standards (Balogun, 2019). Some pageants have even pushed contestants to downplay their ethnic background in order to better suit the current beauty ideal (Balogun, 2019).

Table 1

Expectations and Actual American Female Body Measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Measurement in inches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runway Model(a)</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pageant Winner(b)</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average American Woman(c)</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Average woman and runway model information were adapted from statistics and information collected by the US government and model hiring agencies with reference to a typical American clothing chart (Christel & Dunn, 2017; FastStats - Body Measurements, 2017; Women's Size Chart & Fit Guide, 2020; Helmer, 2019). Pageant winner measurements were based on a recent pageant contestant information estimated by a celebrity biographer (Enright, 2020).

\(a\)Minimum Height, Biggest measurements- 2017 \(b\)Camille Schrier, Miss America- 2020 \(c\)Size 18-2017

Although the world of pageantry continues to evolve, the level of criticism faced by contestants often breeds exploitation and objectification of the women’s bodies. By definition, pageantry seeks to select the ideal woman from a group of contestants through a set of judging criteria covering the woman’s body image, lifestyle, and habits (Srivastava, 2020). Some countries even use pageantry to emphasis these elements to the greater population in order to increase revenue through commercial exploitation and increased tourist appeal for their area (Akena, 2020; Srivastava, 2020). Individuals in pageantry often find that success in the field is closely linked with their ability to handle this constant external and internal criticism without maladaptive responses.
Maladaptive perfectionism has been found to adversely affect an individual’s body image through a decrease in self-compassion (Barnett & Sharp, 2016). However, those with higher levels of self-compassion were found to have reduced levels of self-judgement (Barnett & Sharp, 2016). Women, especially those in middle-age, are surrounded by the expectation to fit an unrealistic ideal (Duba, Kindsvatter & Priddy, 2010). Television, fashion, and pageantry continue to display and encourage women to achieve physical looks outside the national norm. These influences can have an impact on a woman’s body image and self-esteem (Duba, Kindsvatter & Priddy, 2010). Individuals are often more critical of themselves than outside sources (Desmond, 2016).

**Pageantry and Eating Disorders.** The ability of pageantry to affect a woman’s body-image has already been shown through the research above, however, for some it can lead to maladaptive adaptions to the criticism. Much of the available research with pageant contestants explores the result of these adaptions and the possibility of an increase in eating disorders within this population. Research suggests that individuals with experiences in pageantry throughout their lifetime are more prone to lower levels of body satisfaction (Wonderlich, Ackard, Henderson, 2007). Low levels of body-satisfaction and high levels of self-criticism are major predictors of eating disorders in women (Culbert, Racine & Klump, 2015; Fennig, Hadas, Itzhaky, Roe, Apter & Shahar, 2008; Lofrano-Prado, Prado, Barros, Mauro Virgilio Gomes de, Tenório, Thiago Ricardo dos Santos, & Souza, 2015).

Although these experiences in pageantry were not directly linked to certain eating disorders, lower levels of body-satisfaction and thin idealization based on external expectations may increase the risk (Culbert, Racine & Klump, 2015; Hellmich, 2010). Experts believe that the external expectations to fit an unrealistic ideal have led to increases in eating disorders for even
the youngest girls (Hellmich, 2010). The ideal of “thinness” as a sign of beauty is especially prevalent in the western culture, which is the basis for most pageant system expectations (Warren, Gleaves & Rakhkovskaya, 2013). Pageantry has the ability to amplify these expectations further by placing the women in direct criticism of their ability to fit that ideal. However, research suggests that higher levels of self-compassion may allow these women to face this criticism in a healthier manner and present their authentic selves despite the possibility of negative feedback (Zhang, Chen & Tomova Shakur, 2020).

**Pageantry, Community and Politics.** Pageantry also has the ability to be used for the benefit of contestants as well. Many competitors use pageantry as a means to serve their communities or create political change. Some women use pageantry as a means to further their academic and experiential knowledge, as they encourage poise and communication, while providing opportunities for academic and career advancement (Smith, 2018). Other contestants take the criticism and objectification of their bodies during the pageant experience as an opportunity to advocate for social change (David & Pruz, 2018; Thomas, 2018; Pérez-Rosario, 2018). However, with political and social involvement comes another set of external criticisms for contestants. The external responses to these actions may be amplified by the pageant title, placing the contestant in the front view of their community, country, and occasionally the world, sometimes lasting for many years after their time in pageantry (Thomas, 2018; Unpacking the Bachelor’s Pageant Feud, 2019). However, many women in pageantry find the ability to affect their communities as a key reason for allowing these additional pressures through actively competing (Smith, 2018; Thomas, 2018).

**Lifetime Experiences in Pageantry.** Women can enter pageantry with their parents’ assistance as young as infancy. Some girls are placed in pageantry early, as a part of a grooming
process that some families believe will give their daughters the ability to elevate their social and economic status in the future (Abbott, 2018). This is especially true for girls with lower socio-economic backgrounds, that may be seeking validation of personal value through process of being judged as “beautiful” during the pageant experience (Abbot, 2018). This may have negative effects on the women as they grow into adulthood, with research showing that childhood contestants scored significantly lower in body-satisfaction (Wonderlich, Ackard, Henderson, 2007). These women also had slightly higher levels of depression than women outside of pageantry (Wonderlich, Ackard, Henderson, 2007).

Much like those with lifetime experiences in athletics, women faced with constant internal and external critique through pageantry are pressured to fit certain ideals and expectations that may lead to adverse side effects in adolescence through adulthood (Carvalho & Serpa, 2014; Barnard, Athey, Killgore, Alfonso-Miller & Grandner, 2018). In pageantry, young contestants are often encouraged to look and behave more like adults as part of their “beatification” process for competition (Carvalho & Serpa, 2014). This is expressed vividly by childhood pageant contestants wearing make-up, dental partials, and hair extensions as part of their preparation to go on stage (Heltsley & Calhoun, 2003). Some mothers’ have taken the results of these expectation further by allowing their daughters to have semi-permeant body modifications done, such as hair lightening (Heltsley & Calhoun, 2003).

However, many young women and their families find that pageantry is also a positive experience (Kelly & Garmon, 2016; Williams, 2019). Lifetime experiences in pageantry may help women gain leadership and communication skills that can promote positive changes in their community (Williams, 2019; Gilbert, 2015). Some adolescents and young adults find that pageantry opens doors for networking and future career advancement (Brajdic, 2017).
Additionally, pageantry may allow young women to break through socio-economic and gender boundaries that they would not otherwise have been able to overcome (Abbot, 2018; Gilbert, 2015). Many lifetime pageant contestants also find a sisterhood and friendships in the pageant community as well, since they all face similar internal and external critique (Sang, 2015). Previous Miss Universe contestant, Alana Brajdic, stressed that personal growth, learning the art of conversation and diplomacy, and friendships were all important things she gained through pageantry (Brajdic, 2017). Pageant support and friendship communities are found across social media, allowing contestants to encourage these friendships long after a single pageant competition.

**Self-Compassion in Athletics**

Research exploring the benefits of self-compassion for female athletes have already shown encouraging results for highly critiqued and publicly visible populations (Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabistion, Sedgwick & Tracy, 2011; Reis, Kowalski, Ferguson, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Crocker, 2015). Although research in the area of self-compassion within athletics is also slowly emerging, some research suggests that the mental environment that is created by higher levels of self-compassion is what makes it so valuable for individuals in competitive populations (Fontana, Fry & Cramer, 2017). Like those in pageantry, athletes, especially dancers, are also faced with high levels of judgement in the area of body-image (Tarasoff, Ferguson & Kowalski, 2017). Researchers have even compared the beatification of athletes to the expectations of pageant contestants during one study with Brazilian soccer players (Snyder, 2018). Additionally, female athletes are especially hard on themselves when it comes to failure, self-criticism and negative feedback from others (Killham, et. al., 2018).
Research with female athletes found that self-compassion may provide a resource for coping with negative emotions such as shame and reduce the possibility of harsh internal critique (Mosewich, et. al., 2011). Studies with lifetime athletes beginning in childhood have found that the lifestyle may lead to the need for trauma-informed mental health care as a part of their training (Thomson & Jaque, 2019). However, research with athletic dancers found that, although the population has an atmosphere of constant internal and external critique, individuals with higher levels of self-compassion had lower levels of negative self-perceptions (Tarasoff, Ferguson & Kowalski, 2017). Although studies aren’t conclusive whether self-compassion actually improves the participants’ athletic performance, they have found that it benefits the individual by allowing them to have a more balanced view of themselves, both inside and outside of competition (Killham, et. al., 2018).

The available research in this area does show that self-compassion is positively correlated with an athlete’s ability to create a healthy mindset, especially in emotionally difficult situations (Sabiston, et. al., 2015). Researchers continue to stress the need for further study in the area of self-compassion with this population, based on the unique mental effects the realm of sports can have on an individual as a public and competitive activity (Fontana, Fry & Cramer, 2017). Unfortunately, outside of athletes, additional research about the importance of self-compassion for those in the competitive, public eye is still virtually non-existent.

**Self-Compassion in Entertainers and Politicians**

As noted previously, research in the area of self-compassion within other individuals in public and competitive fields such as entertainers and politicians have yet to be explored. However, research on self-compassion suggests that self-compassionate individuals may be able promote that trait in others (Miller & Kelly, 2020). This means that individuals in entertainment
and politics may have the ability to better the mental health of others through their work with the public. Self-compassionate individuals are also better able to accept the flaws and failures of others, because of their ability to treat themselves kindly when faced with internal and external criticism (Zhang, Chen & Tomova Shakur, 2020). This suggests that self-compassion would be beneficial skill for entertainers and politicians who must communicate and work closely with others in a very public setting.

It is also important to note that entertainers and politicians purposefully create a public face, based on the external critique of the public (Luckhurst & Mayer, 2019). This persona usually consists of only the elements of themselves that they believe the public desires to see (Luckhurst & Mayer, 2019). For entertainers, this can be done both during paid performance and during personal exposure, as they build an image for themselves (Luckhurst & Mayer, 2009). A quick look at entertainment magazine will show that entertainers are frequently judged by their appearance, lifestyle, relationships, and personality. Politicians face similar external judgement as well, that is often amplified by constant negative presentations of their characteristics by those with political views (Ordway & Wihbey, 2016). There are times that these presentations are unfair, cruel, or incorrect (Landsbaum, 2017). Just as with athletes and pageant contestants, this can lead to additional internal criticism as well. However, self-compassion may allow this population to be more authentic by reducing the fear that they may be judged harshly by external sources (Zhang, Chen & Tomova Shakur, 2020). This possibility provides an opportunity for exploration through similar means as this study to be a replicated with this population in the future for generalization purposes.

**Body Image**
Body image is often one of the primary concerns of women of all age groups, especially those being judged specifically on their body through pageantry (Duba, Kindsvatter & Priddy, 2010; Liss & Erchull, 2015; Samuels, Maine & Tantillo, 2019). Body image distortion and low body satisfaction can lead to numerous issues, including eating disorders, maladaptive perfectionism, and depression (Barnett & Sharp, 2016; Elif Ergüney Okumuş, Özlem Sertel Berk & Yücel, 2019). Research suggests that increasing self-compassion is one way to counteract negative results of body image struggles (Bergunde & Dritschel, 2020).

One study comparing women after viewing fitness and body improvement images to those who viewed self-compassion quotes found that those who focused on self-compassion had higher levels of body satisfaction (Slater Varsani & Diedrichs, 2017). These participants were also found to have more body appreciation and less negative mood than the participants assigned to fitness and body improvement images (Slater Varsani & Diedrichs, 2017). This study suggests that both the information and pictures related to body image can have an effect on the satisfaction and mental wellness of an individual. Another study with adolescents found that those with higher levels of self-compassion were less likely to suffer from eating pathology and other maladaptive body-related coping mechanisms (Pullmer, Coelho & Zaitsoff, 2019).

**Eating Disorders.** As noted above, an unhealthy view of one’s body-image may increase the risk of being diagnosed with an eating disorder such as anorexia nervosa (AN), bulimia nervosa (BN), and binge-eating disorder (BED). A study using data collected from the United States government estimated that these eating disorders are spread across age groups and racial backgrounds and can lead significant psychosocial impairment (Udo & Grilo, 2018). Additionally, studies suggest that individuals with eating disorders are more likely to be diagnosed with other mental health conditions, especially anxiety disorders such as social
phobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder (Swinbourne, Hunt, Abbott, Russell, St Clare & Touyz, 2012).

Outside of mental health, eating disorders may also lead to numerous physical issues as well (Pawlaczyk-Kamieńska, Osińska & Śniatała, 2016; Sowińska-Przepiera, Patalong-Wójcik, Andrysiak-Mamos, Starzyński, Przestalski & Syrenicz, 2019). The treatment of eating disorders often requires a multidisciplinary team to address the physical, psychological, and social concerns they create (Sowińska-Przepiera, et. al., 2019). Fortunately, self-compassion has been proven able to both help prevent and help treat eating disorders in studied individuals (Kelly, Carter & Borairi, 2014; Bergunde & Dritschel, 2020). In fact, one study of women with AN found that participants presented less eating pathology on days where they were more self-compassionate during time of personal difficulty (Kelly, Waring, & Dupasquier, 2020).

Self-compassion may also allow individuals to avoid unhealthy perfectionism toward their body, allowing them to accept themselves with less internal criticism (Bergunde & Dritschel, 2020). Further studies suggest that focusing on self-compassion not only reduces negative body behaviors, it can also increase healthy self-motivated improvement (Moffitt, Neumann & Williamson, 2018). When body related self-criticism does occur, self-compassion may also mediate some of the negative effects it can cause by lowering the possibility of depressive symptoms attached to the criticism (Wasylkiw, MacKinnon & MacLellan, 2012). Research suggests that self-compassion is a much healthier way to address one’s view of themselves than a focusing merely on self-esteem (Neff, 2011).

**Self-Esteem.** Self-esteem has been strongly linked to psychology for many years, with assumption that it held the ability to improve mental health (Neff, 2011). Additionally, self-compassion and self-esteem have also been found to have a strong positive correlation with one
another (Moffitt, Neumann & Williamson, 2018). However, research completed as early as 2011 found that the trend of focusing on just self-esteem may actually be more damaging, than beneficial, leading to an increase in discouragement and narcissism in the general population (Neff, 2011). In fact, evolving research suggests that, independently, increased self-esteem levels may be linked to narcissistic tendencies in some individuals (Cichocka, Cislak, Stronge, Osborne & Sibley, 2019). While self-compassion was linked to positive mood and improved mental health when studied independently (Neff, 2009).

Even when addressed in the same way or at the same time, focus on self-compassion and self-esteem do not always provide similar results. In fact, a study published in 2017 found that writing interventions focusing on self-compassion showed significantly more improvement in body satisfaction than similar activities focusing on self-esteem (Seekis, Bradley & Duffy, 2017). This was once again confirmed in 2018 when another study explored using writing interventions to improve self-compassion and self-esteem with similar results (Moffitt, Neumann & Williamson, 2018). One study found that even when self-esteem was correlated with improved body-image, it fell below the significance level when compared to self-compassion’s effect on body-image (Beekman, Stock & Howe, 2017). Generally, studies agree that self-compassion has a stronger connection with one’s ability to have a healthy relation to self than self-esteem.

Women outside media body expectations, such as those with disabilities and other medical conditions may find self-compassion especially beneficial for their mental health in the area of coping with body-image concerns. One study concluded that positive coping mechanisms for body-image concerns have the ability to improve psychological health for that population (Xu & Liu, 2020). Additional studies focusing on individuals with medical conditions that affect the skin and body also found that self-compassion had the ability to decrease the negative and
damaging effects that the medical conditions may have on an individual’s body image (Sherman, Roper, Kilby, 2019; Todorov, Sherman, Kilby & Breast Cancer Network Australia, 2019). Overall, self-compassion was found as beneficial in addressing body image concerns across affected populations.

Summary

The currently published literature reveals many ways that self-compassion has been found beneficial to women, even those in similarly competitive populations as pageantry. However, the number of studies with the competitive populations is limited, and focuses primarily on athletic competitors. Although the available research gap suggests a need for further research on the topic, it is encouraging for those in pageantry. The available literature has also found that many interventions have been proven to show increases in self-compassion, with both creative and mindfulness-based interventions providing some of the most noticeable increases in self-compassion levels in the studied populations (Beck & Verticchio, 2018). Out of the creative interventions, therapeutic writing, with a heavy focus on mindfulness, appears to be the most accessible and adaptable approach (Allen, Wetherell & Smith, 2020; Baikie, Geerligs & Wilhelm, 2012; Dreisoerner, Junker & van Dick, 2020). Using this information, the current study will be able to explore how these dynamics can be addressed within the pageant population, and begin the process of filling the current research gap. It may also become a starting point for further research in the area with other individuals in public, competitive sectors that are also faced with high levels of internal and external criticism.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This section will cover the method used to collect the needed data for the presented research questions. First it will discuss the design of the current study, current research questions, and participant information. It will also review the data collection aspects of the study, such as data collection procedures and the two measures used to explore self-compassion and body image. It will be completed with a look at procedures for data analysis that will be used for the information collected.

Method Design

Since the women for this study will be recruited online and be spread across a wide geographical area, it is difficult to complete the study in person. Therefore, the study will be done using digital communication such as email for all aspects requiring personal interactions with the participants. Participants will be sent detailed information and a typed list of journaling activities to be completed during the study period. Weekly communication to check in with participants will also utilized in order to insure the completion of the study.

The instrumentation used for this study will include two different measures. These measures include the short form Self-Compassion Scale (SCS-SF) and the revised Body Part Satisfaction Scale (BPSS-R). These two measures will examine whether a rise in self-compassion has an effect on body image satisfaction in pageant contestants.

A group of twenty participants will be invited through an online pageantry community group that contains over two-thousand pageant contestants worldwide to join a voluntary journaling study on self-compassion. Interested individuals will be emailed the scale to be completed within seventy-two hours (3 days). The first twenty women to respond and complete
the pre-intervention measures will be used for the study. Upon completion and return of the pre-intervention results, participants will be emailed a list of journaling activities to be done at least 2 times per week for 4 weeks, as well short weekly explanations of the journaling activities. To facilitate debriefing at the end of the study, the conductor will provide an optional video conference to debrief and answer any questions participants have about the study. This will also allow the researcher to get the participants’ thoughts and feelings about the study. No formal controls will be available to prevent participant discussion of journaling activities in the online communities, with the exception of the researcher’s request to save thoughts to the end of the study.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for the study are as follows:

**RQ1:** Does self-compassion benefit those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry in the area of body image?

**RQ2:** Does therapeutic writing activities increase the level of self-compassion held by pageantry participants?

For this study, the researcher will focus on the individual’s perceptions of personal and external expectations in the areas of body image as positive or negative. In order to do this, the researcher will first have to review the level of self-compassion held by the pageant contestants prior to the study using the short self-compassion scale created by Kristen Neff. The researcher will also need understand the expectations and beliefs held by the participants in the area of body image through the completion of the additional measure noted above. Secondly, the study will be looking at the level of success that therapeutic journaling methods have in increasing the
contestants’ scores on the SCS-SF, compared to the information collected from the beginning of the study.

This qualifies the study as a single group pretest/posttest design because it will compare the individuals with themselves before and after the study intervention has been completed (Warner, 2013). In order to increase the level of self-compassion with these individuals the researcher will utilize the creative method of therapeutic writing. This method is very personal and cannot be fully controlled by the researcher; participants will control several aspects of the process, including the length of journal entry, time entry is made, and location of completion. However, the topic of journaling will come from research-based suggestions from researchers such as Dr. Kristin Neff, Tim Desmond, and Dr. Christopher Germer. This study will continue to add to the current research on the subject, suggesting that such methods are useful for increasing self-compassion. This study will benefit the field by adding the experience of the unique population of pageant contestants. By exploring the effects of journaling as a therapeutic method in pageant women, the study will work to fill an area lacking in the current literature (Dwyer, Piquette, Buckle & McCaslin, 2013). Additionally, further research in this area may be beneficial to other women in publicly critiqued fields such as politics, athletics, and entertainment.

**Hypotheses**

**H1:** Self-compassion does benefit those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry in the area of body image.

**Ha1:** Self-compassion does not benefit those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry in the area of body image.

**H2:** Therapeutic writing activities increase the level of self-compassion held by pageantry participants.
Ha2: Therapeutic writing does not increase the level of self-compassion help my pageantry participants.

**Procedures & Measures**

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the value of self-compassion for women in pageantry, especially in the areas of body-image and personality. The current research project will study the effect of using therapeutic writing methods to increase self-compassion in adult, female, pageant contestants. Upon selection into the study, participants will take premeasures to create a baseline for the study. After selection and baseline collection, each participant will be given several short journaling activities that focus on increasing self-compassion over the course of four weeks. The activities will be selected from exercises created and proven by other researchers and experts on self-compassion including Dr. Kristin Neff, Tim Desmond, and Dr. Christopher Germer (Desmond, 2017; Germer, 2009; Neff & Germer, 2018; Neff, 2011). After the intervention period is complete, the participants will be given post-measures to determine if there were improvements to the levels of self-compassion and if this increase showed improvement in the participants’ body-images or personality. The participants will also have access to a debriefing session at the end of the study period.

**Participants and Setting**

Participants of this study will all be adult women ages eighteen and above. In order to participate, they must have previously or currently competing in a local, state or nationwide pageant. In order to collect adequate information, a convenience sample of around twenty women will be recruited using an internet-based, social media pageant community for global competitors called the Society of Pageant Women LLC. This public community of nearly three
thousand previous and current competitors is accessed online on Facebook or through their website at www.societyopw.com. A group of twenty women will be invited through this community to join this voluntary journaling study on self-compassion. The first twenty to accept the invitation and complete the pre-intervention measures will be selected to continue with the rest of the study.

Recruited individuals will be emailed the pre-intervention packet to be completed within seventy-two hours (three days). Upon completion and return of the packet, participants will be emailed on weekly intervals with a selection of journaling activities to be done two times per week for four weeks. The participants will be informed at the start of the study that each activity does not be time consuming. However, they must make a point to focus at least fifteen minutes per journaling activity, totaling thirty minutes a week. The length of time spent in journaling may be considered at the end of the study for possible future studies. To facilitate debriefing, at the end of the study, the conductor will have an open video conference focus group to answer any questions and get the participants thoughts and feelings about the study. No formal controls will be available to prevent participant discussion of journaling activities. However, during the initial consent to participate, each participant must agree to keep answers on provided instruments and their journaling content confidential. While this does not guarantee non-disclosure needed for formal control, it does provide some strength to the study. Since the ladies for this study will be spread across a wide area, it is difficult to complete interviews or measures in person. Therefore, this study will be done by email. Participants will also be sent a typed list of journaling activities to be completed in order during the study period.

Instrumentation
The pre-intervention packet measures will include three different items, a demographic questionnaire, the Self-Compassion Scale Short Version (SCS-SF), and Body Part Satisfaction Scale- Revised (BPSS-R). The demographic questionnaire was created by the researcher and will collect information about the women’s age, years in pageantry and marital status.

The post-intervention packet will include similar items including the SCS-SF and BPSS-R. This will allow the researcher to examine any changes that occurred through the intervention period in the areas of self-compassion and body-image. The post-intervention packet will also include another short questionnaire exploring topics such as the participants’ length of time spent on journaling activities during the study for future use.

**Self-Compassion Scale (SCS-SF)**

The SCS-SF is a twelve-item scale exploring self-compassion that has shown be equally effective in providing the needed information as its longer counterpart (SCS) (Neff, Raes, Pommier & Van Gucht, 2011). The SCS-SF consists of questions with a response 5-point response scale ranging from the number one being “almost never” to the number five being “almost always” (Raes, Pommier, Neff & Van Gucht, 2011). This scale includes questions such as how tolerate they are toward their flaws, and their level of self-kindness while suffering (Neff, 2018). Topics covered in the SCS-SF include six subscales, with negative aspects being reverse coded during analysis (Raes, Pommier, Neff & Van Gucht, 2011). The subscales of the Self-Compassion Scale Short form are the same as it’s longer counterpart and include Self-Kindness, Self-Judgment, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness, and Over-Identification (Raes, Pommier, Neff & Van Gucht, 2011). It will explore the participant’s ability to treat themselves kindly and recognize that others are no better than themselves.
Body Part Satisfaction Scale (BPSS-R)

The BPSS-R is a simple fifteen question measure of body satisfaction covering numerous body parts and the general satisfaction of the participants’ bodies. It is based on the original twenty-four question measure, created in 1973, that focuses on numerous female body parts that could be associated with dissatisfaction (Petrie, Tripp & Harvey, 2002). This revised edition selected questions to fit body parts most critiqued in pageantry. This also includes the addition to an overall body satisfaction question. The Body Part Satisfaction Scale uses a Likert scale consisting of six points. The scale begins at one, meaning “highly dissatisfied” heading to six, meaning “extremely satisfied.”

Data Collection Procedures

Table 2

Data Collection Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-intervention</th>
<th>Recruitment: Reaching out to online pageant community members through Facebook post.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-intervention</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-intervention</td>
<td>Participant selection: Once participants are selected via email interest; they will be sent the pre-intervention measures and information. Participants will</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
have 72 hours (three days) to complete the three measures and return the results via email.

Participant Confirmation: Upon return of the pre-intervention measures, participants will be thanked and informed of their continuation in the study by email within 48 hours (two days)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Week One</th>
<th>Monday: Instructions and weekly journaling activities will be sent to participants via email.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friday: A reminder to complete the two journaling activities will be sent to participants via email.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Week Two</th>
<th>Monday: Instructions and weekly journaling activities will be sent to participants via email.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friday: A reminder to complete the two journaling activities will be sent to participants via email.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Week Three</th>
<th>Monday: Instructions and weekly journaling activities will be sent to participants via email.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friday: A reminder to complete the two journaling activities will be sent to participants via email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Monday: Instructions and weekly journaling activities will be sent to participants via email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Four</td>
<td>Friday: A reminder to complete the two journaling activities will be sent to participants via email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study Debriefing: Wrap up email and thanks to participants for their assistance and completion of the study intervention. Post intervention measures will be sent at this time. Participants will be given 72 hours (three days) to complete and return the measures to the researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-intervention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*An optional video conference for participants will be completed to answer any questions and to assist in the debriefing process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-intervention</td>
<td>Data Collection: Data will be organized and input into researcher’s database.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-intervention</td>
<td>Data analysis and study results completion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Since this study is a quasi-experimental design, comparing the same group before and after an intervention program, all variables of the experiment cannot be completely
controlled. For this study, the researcher is assuming normal distribution, allowing for the Likert based data collected to be analyzed using a parametric test. All measures will be set up for participant response in Qualtrics to facilitate data analysis of. The researcher will then use the program compare each measure’s results to one another. After the completion of the intervention, the participants will once again complete the measures through Qualtrics to then compare the results from the information provided by participants' pre-intervention results.

Quasi-experimental designs usually result in weaker internal validity but stronger external validity due to its “real-world” study setting (Warner, 2013). In this case, the results of the SCS-SF will be used as the independent variable when comparing to the dependent variables, the results of the other measure: BPSS-R. If the independent variable shows an increase after intervention, the researcher can then consider the possible correlation between self-compassion to body-image and personality (Hayes, 2013). This will address the research questions noted below.

RQ1: Does self-compassion benefit those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry in the area of body image?

RQ2: Does therapeutic writing activities increase the level of self-compassion held by pageantry participants?

Research question one will be explored by comparing the results collected into Qualtrics of SCS-SF to the results of BPSS-R. Research question two will be explored by comparing the results of SCS-SF pre-interventions to the results post-intervention. The comparison of the SCS-SF to the results of BPSS-R will be done both pre and post intervention to examine difference of results and to show correlation of those results with self-compassion increases. However, the
current study will not be able to show causality based on this study’s research design (Hayes. 2013). Future studies may consider exploring each variable independently to further explore causality in more detail.

**Conclusion**

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the effects of journaling on self-compassion in the lives of pageant contestants. Using a group of twenty women, recruited from an online support community, the study will also focus on how an increase in self-compassion affects participants in the areas of body-image and personality. The study will utilize the SCS-SF to collect information about participant self-compassion and the BPSS-R to determine the effects on body-image. This quasi-experimental, same group comparison design will begin to fill gaps in the information available about self-compassion for those in highly critiqued, public fields such as pageantry, entertainment and competitive sports.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Out of the twenty eligible pageant contestants recruited, only eleven of the participants completed the entirety of the four-week study using self-compassion focused journaling. All of the participants were asked to complete pre- and post- intervention measures to examine the effects of the journaling activities on increasing self-compassion and how self-compassion affects areas of personality and body image. They were also asked several demographic questions for clarification purposes, for use in determining the need for further research in subsections of the population. Participants included in this chapter’s results were those who did at least part of both the pre- and post- sets of measurements. Data analysis was conducted using Qualtrics and IntellectusStatistics software.

Research Questions

The research questions for the study are as follows:

RQ1: Does self-compassion benefit those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry in the area of body image?

RQ2: Does therapeutic writing activities increase the level of self-compassion held by pageantry participants?

Hypotheses

H1: Self-compassion does benefit those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry in the area of body image.
**Ha1:** Self-compassion does not benefit those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry in the area of body image.

**H2:** Therapeutic writing activities increase the level of self-compassion held by pageantry participants.

**Ha2:** Therapeutic writing does not increase the level of self-compassion help my pageantry participants.

**Descriptive Statistics**

All participants were between the ages of eighteen and forty-nine years old, with the greatest number of participants being in the twenty-six to thirty-three age range. Additionally, 63.64 percent of participants reported being single while 27.27 percent reported being married. As shown in Table 4, all participants competed in pageantry at least one year with the majority competing between one and nine years; however, approximately 18% of participants competed for over twenty years. None of the participants recorded regularly partaking in journaling activities prior the study, with over half noting they journaled only occasionally.

**Table 3**

*Participant Age Ranges*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18-25 years</td>
<td>27.27% 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26-33 years</td>
<td>36.36% 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>34-41 years</td>
<td>9.09% 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>42-49 years</td>
<td>27.27% 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Over 50 Years</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Years in Pageantry Competition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: 1-3 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: 4-9 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: 10-15 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: 15-20 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: 20 or more years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

*Journaling Frequency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Everyday</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Frequently (3-5 days a week)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Occasionally (at least once a week)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Rarely (less than once a week)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Never</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

*Marital Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>63.64%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary Statistics

Summary statistics were calculated for the results of Self-Compassion Scale prior to intervention (Pre_SCS), results of Self-Compassion Scale after intervention (Post_SCS), results of Revised Body Part Satisfaction Scale (Overall satisfaction question) prior to intervention (Post_BPSS_overall), and the results of Revised Body Part Satisfaction Scale (Overall satisfaction question) after intervention (Pre_BPSS_overall).

The observations for Pre_SCS had an average of 2.98 (SD = 0.62, SEM = 0.19, Min = 2.27, Max = 4.00, Skewness = 0.62, Kurtosis = -1.15). The observations for Post_BPSS_overall had an average of 3.56 (SD = 1.01, SEM = 0.34, Min = 3.00, Max = 6.00, Skewness = 1.75, Kurtosis = 1.84). The observations for Pre_BPSS_overall had an average of 3.55 (SD = 1.57, SEM = 0.47, Min = 1.00, Max = 6.00, Skewness = -0.01, Kurtosis = -1.14). The observations for Post_SCS had an average of 3.24 (SD = 0.67, SEM = 0.20, Min = 2.17, Max = 4.08, Skewness = -0.42, Kurtosis = -1.09). When the skewness is greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable is considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. When the kurtosis is greater than or equal to 3, then the variable's distribution is markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics can be found in Table 7.
Table 7

Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>SEM</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre_SCS</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post_BPSS_overall</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre_BPSS_overall</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post_SCS</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>-1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. '-' indicates the statistic is undefined due to constant data or an insufficient sample size.

Additional Statistical Analyses

Three additional statistical analyses were conducted on study results. A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted among Pre_SCS, Post_BPSS_overall, Pre_BPSS_overall, and Post_SCS. Cohen’s standard was used to evaluate the strength of the relationships, where coefficients between .10 and .29 represent a small effect size, coefficients between .30 and .49 represent a moderate effect size, and coefficients above .50 indicate a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). A two-tailed paired samples t-test was conducted to examine whether the mean difference of Post_SCS and Post_BPSS_overall was significantly different from zero. Finally, A linear regression analysis was conducted to assess whether Post_SCS significantly predicted Post_BPSS_overall.

Pearson Correlation Analysis
**Introduction.** A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted among Pre_SCS, Post_BPSS_overall, Pre_BPSS_overall, and Post_SCS. Cohen's standard was used to evaluate the strength of the relationships, where coefficients between .10 and .29 represent a small effect size, coefficients between .30 and .49 represent a moderate effect size, and coefficients above .50 indicate a large effect size (Cohen, 1988).

**Assumptions.**

**Linearity.** A Pearson correlation requires that the relationship between each pair of variables is linear (Conover & Iman, 1981). This assumption is violated if there is curvature among the points on the scatterplot between any pair of variables. Figure 2-Figure 3 presents the scatterplots of the correlations. A regression line has been added to assist the interpretation.

**Figure 2**

*Scatterplots between each variable with the regression line added*
Figure 3

*Scatterplots between each variable with the regression line added*

Results. The result of the correlations was examined using Holm corrections to adjust for multiple comparisons based on an alpha value of 0.05. A significant positive correlation was observed between Pre_SCS and Post_BPSS_overall ($r_p = 0.80, p = .010, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.29, 0.96]$). The correlation coefficient between Pre_SCS and Post_BPSS_overall was 0.80, indicating a large effect size. This correlation indicates that as Pre_SCS increases, Post_BPSS_overall tends to increase. A significant positive correlation was observed between Pre_SCS and Pre_BPSS_overall ($r_p = 0.93, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.71, 0.99]$). The correlation coefficient between Pre_SCS and Pre_BPSS_overall was 0.93, indicating a large effect size. This correlation indicates that as Pre_SCS increases, Pre_BPSS_overall tends to increase. A significant positive correlation was observed between Pre_SCS and Post_SCS ($r_p = 0.87, p = .002, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.49, 0.97]$). The correlation coefficient between Pre_SCS and Post_SCS was 0.87, indicating a large effect size. This correlation indicates that as Pre_SCS increases, Post_SCS tends to increase. A significant positive correlation was observed between Post_BPSS_overall and Pre_BPSS_overall ($r_p = 0.73, p = .027, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.12, 0.94]$). The correlation coefficient between Post_BPSS_overall and Pre_BPSS_overall was 0.73, indicating a large effect size. This
correlation indicates that as Post_BPSS_overall increases, Pre_BPSS_overall tends to increase. A significant positive correlation was observed between Pre_BPSS_overall and Post_SCS \( (r_p = 0.93, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.68, 0.98]) \). The correlation coefficient between Pre_BPSS_overall and Post_SCS was 0.93, indicating a large effect size. This correlation indicates that as Pre_BPSS_overall increases, Post_SCS tends to increase. No other significant correlations were found. Table 8 presents the results of the correlations.

### Table 8

*Pearson Correlation Results Among Pre_SCS, Post_BPSS_overall, Pre_BPSS_overall, and Post_SCS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination</th>
<th>( r_p )</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre_SCS-Post_BPSS_overall</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>[0.29, 0.96]</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre_SCS-Pre_BPSS_overall</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>[0.71, 0.99]</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre_SCS-Post_SCS</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>[0.49, 0.97]</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post_BPSS_overall-Pre_BPSS_overall</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>[0.12, 0.94]</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post_BPSS_overall-Post_SCS</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>[-0.06, 0.91]</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre_BPSS_overall-Post_SCS</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>[0.68, 0.98]</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = 9. Holm corrections used to adjust p-values.*

**Two-Tailed Paired Samples t-Test**

**Introduction.** A two-tailed paired samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether the mean difference of Post_SCS and Post_BPSS_overall was significantly different from zero.
Assumptions.

Normality. A Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to determine whether the differences in Post_SCS and Post_BPSS_overall could have been produced by a normal distribution (Razali & Wah, 2011). The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test were not significant based on an alpha value of 0.05, $W = 0.89$, $p = .210$. This result suggests the possibility that the differences in Post_SCS and Post_BPSS_overall were produced by a normal distribution cannot be ruled out, indicating the normality assumption is met.

Homogeneity of Variance. Levene's test was conducted to assess whether the variances of Post_SCS and Post_BPSS_overall were significantly different. The result of Levene's test was not significant based on an alpha value of 0.05, $F(1, 16) = 0.05$, $p = .826$. This result suggests it is possible that Post_SCS and Post_BPSS_overall were produced by distributions with equal variances, indicating the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.

Results. The result of the two-tailed paired samples $t$-test was not significant based on an alpha value of 0.05, $t(8) = -0.85$, $p = .421$, indicating the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. This finding suggests the difference in the mean of Post_SCS and the mean of Post_BPSS_overall was not significantly different from zero. The results are presented in Table 9.
Table 9

Two-Tailed Paired Samples t-Test for the Difference Between Post_SCS and Post_BPSS_overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post_SCS</th>
<th>Post_BPSS_overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Linear Regression Analysis

Introduction. A linear regression analysis was conducted to assess whether Post_SCS significantly predicted Post_BPSS_overall.

Assumptions.

Normality. The assumption of normality was assessed by plotting the quantiles of the model residuals against the quantiles of a Chi-square distribution, also called a Q-Q scatterplot (DeCarlo, 1997). For the assumption of normality to be met, the quantiles of the residuals must not strongly deviate from the theoretical quantiles. Strong deviations could indicate that the parameter estimates are unreliable. Figure 4 presents a Q-Q scatterplot of the model residuals.
Figure 4

Q-Q scatterplot for normality of the residuals for the regression model.

Homoscedasticity. Homoscedasticity was evaluated by plotting the residuals against the predicted values (Bates et al., 2014; Field, 2017; Osborne & Walters, 2002). The assumption of homoscedasticity is met if the points appear randomly distributed with a mean of zero and no apparent curvature. Figure 5 presents a scatterplot of predicted values and model residuals.
**Multicollinearity.** Since there was only one predictor variable, multicollinearity does not apply, and Variance Inflation Factors were not calculated.

**Outliers.** To identify influential points, Studentized residuals were calculated, and the absolute values were plotted against the observation numbers (Field, 2017; Pituch & Stevens, 2015). Studentized residuals are calculated by dividing the model residuals by the estimated residual standard deviation. An observation with a Studentized residual greater than 4.50 in absolute value, the 0.999 quantile of a $t$ distribution with 8 degrees of freedom, was considered to have significant influence on the results of the model. Figure 6 presents the Studentized residuals plot.
of the observations. Observation numbers are specified next to each point with a Studentized residual greater than 4.50.

**Figure 6**

*Studentized residuals plot for outlier detection*

![Studentized residuals plot](image)

**Results.** The results of the linear regression model were not significant, $F(1,7) = 4.64, p = .068, R^2 = 0.40$, indicating Post_SCS did not explain a significant proportion of variation in Post_BPSS_overall. Since the overall model was not significant, the individual predictors were not examined further. Table 10 summarizes the results of the regression model.
Table 10

Results for Linear Regression with Post_SCS predicting Post_BPSS_overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>[-3.56, 3.94]</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>.906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post_SCS</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>[-0.10, 2.12]</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Results: $F(1, 7) = 4.64, p = .068, R^2 = 0.40$

Unstandardized Regression Equation: $Post_{BPSS\_overall} = 0.19 + 1.01 \times Post_{SCS}$

Hypotheses

**H1: Self-compassion does benefit those in pageantry in dealing with personal and external expectations of pageantry in the area of body image.** According to the Pearson correlation analysis conducted on the data results for the SCS-SF and BPSS measures, a significant positive correlation was observed between with both the pre- and post- intervention sets of results. This would suggest that the hypothesis that self-compassion may be beneficial in assisting pageant contestants in the area of body image may be correct. When participants held higher levels of self-compassion according the SCS-SF, their overall body satisfaction score according to BPSS was also higher. However, the result of the two-tailed paired samples t-test was not significant, indicating the null hypothesis cannot be fully rejected either. Since the overall results were not conclusive, the researcher can neither fully confirm H1 or reject Ha1.
H2: Therapeutic writing activities increase the level of self-compassion held by pageantry participants. The Pearson correlation analysis found the correlation coefficient between the pre-interventions SCS-SF results and BPSS overall satisfaction question was 0.80, while the post-intervention data had a correlation coefficient of .93. This increase suggests that the second hypothesis may be accurate. However, with the increase of the post-intervention measures being insignificant according to the two-tailed paired samples t-test, the null hypothesis (Ha2) is not rejected. As with H1, the overall results were not conclusive, and the researcher can neither fully confirm H2 or reject Ha2.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to address the gaps within current research, related to the benefits of self-compassion for women in competitive, public domains such as pageantry. Based on a quantitative analysis of self-compassion and body-image measures before and after a month-long journaling intervention, focusing on increasing self-compassion.

Discussion

Comparing mean scores on the SCS-SF during the pre-intervention and post-intervention period suggests that pageant contestants showed an increase in self-compassion in at least part of all areas examined: self-kindness, self judgement, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness and over identification. The post-intervention results did show a decrease in self-compassion in two of the areas: self-kindness and over-identification. However, when each of the six areas are looked at as whole, an increase was shown in each. The table below shows the mean scores, after appropriate scoring for each area of self-compassion examined. The mean SCS-SF score pre-intervention for the entire participant body was 2.98, while the mean post-intervention was 3.24.
Table 11

*SCS-SF Means*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-intervention Mean</th>
<th>Post-intervention Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Kindness Items, 2 &amp; 6</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Judgment Items, 11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Humanity Items, 5 &amp; 10</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation Items, 4 &amp; 8</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness Items, 3 &amp; 7</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-identified Items, 1 &amp; 9</td>
<td>2.68*</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Overall Mean</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *One participant didn’t provide an answer*

Although all participants completed the SCS-SF during both the pre- and post-intervention data collection, only nine of the eleven participants completed the BPSS measure during both sets of data collection. All participants completed the BPSS during the pre-intervention process, but not the post-intervention data collection. However, based on available data, within the fifteen areas covered in the measure, there was improvement of body satisfaction in five areas: stomach, buttocks, calves, general muscle tone and overall satisfaction with size and shape of their body. Body satisfaction on participants’ stomach had the largest increase, with a 1.49 difference. All other areas actually showed some form of decrease during the post-intervention results. Body satisfaction on participants’ arm had the largest decrease, with a 1.44 difference. It is uncertain whether having all eleven participant responses during the post-intervention process would have had significant effect on the data results.
Table 12

*BPSS Means*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-intervention Mean</th>
<th>Post-intervention Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>height</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weight</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hair</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complexion</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overall face</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shoulders</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arms</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stomach</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>breasts</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>back</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buttocks</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legs</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calves</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general muscle tone</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overall satisfaction of body size &amp; shape</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Only 9 of 11 participants completed the post-intervention BPSS measure during post-intervention data collection. Highlighted areas show an increase in satisfaction.

**Implications**

Results of the study were limited due to number of participants, but the mean results suggest that such activities were slightly beneficial in increasing self-compassion in the studied population. Additionally, only nine participants completed the second measure during the post-intervention data collection. Based on those results, it suggests that self-compassion increases may not have a positive effect on all areas of body satisfaction. However, the final results did
show that when participants were asked to rate their satisfaction on their overall body shape and size, there was also an unsubstantial increase.

Although the data wasn’t conclusive, the implications for pageantry are still viable. Contestants may find that the journaling process will benefit them in the area of body image, as well as provide a source of comfort and stress relief, as it has already been proven to increase self-compassion (Beck & Verticchio, 2018). Although the study was not qualitative in nature, the length and depth of the journaling activity may have also had an effect on the post-intervention results. If pageant contestants were to put in as much intention in the process of increasing self-compassion as in other pageantry preparation activities, perhaps the results would be more conclusive on its benefits toward body image for this population.

**Limitations**

There are few limitations to the current study that should be considered when confirming the accuracy and generalization of current data results. The reliability of this data is impacted by several factors including the self-reporting of data, sample population size, and cultural framework considerations.

**Self-Reporting Data**

It is important to note that participant responses on measures were self-reported. This means that individual perceptions may have been under- or over-inflated as compared to other study participants or other pageantry participants. This has some effect on both the generalization and accuracy of the results.

**Small Sample Population**

There was a small number of participants \(N = 11\) for this study, which also limited the generalizability of the findings. Although the researcher did attempt to increase the number of
participants through multiple recruitment periods, only a small number of participant responses were collected. Additionally, two participants did not complete the BPSS post-intervention.

**Cultural Framework**

For this study, cultural background of participants was not an item of query. It is important to note that pageantry does include participation by many cultures. The study also focused on American pageantry systems and the results of the study are not generalizable to all pageantry venues internationally.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The initially stated goal of this study was to determine the benefits of self-compassion for adult, female, pageant contestants. Since both of the null-hypothesis were unable to be rejected based on the current data, several suggestions for further research can be made based on the limitations of the current study. The most notable are based on population sample size and makeup.

Further studies may consider increasing the sample, in order to get more data and allow for a more complete analysis. The lack of results for the current study was one of the most significant limitation of the current study. A larger sample size would have a reduced the effect of the partial fulfillment of a few participants during the post-intervention data collection.

Further research may also be beneficial across different population samples. Some populations to consider might include single and married contestants or different age groups, such as the inclusion of teenage contestants. Researchers may also look outside the cultural framework of the current study by collecting samples from outside of the American pageantry systems or across pageant competing minority groups in the United States.
Researchers may also consider the style of study and intervention. Additional research may consider the use of mixed method study, by collecting and analyzing the journal entries of participants. Additionally, it may also be beneficial to explore how other self-compassion increasing interventions affect this population.

These suggestions for further research will continue to add to the growing body of literature on self-compassion and increase the limited research on this understudied population. Additionally, further research in the area may allow for more conclusive results on both hypotheses stated for the current study. The results of the current study may not have been irrefutable, but provided a strong starting point for further research with this population.
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doi:10.1016/j.biopsych.2018.03.014

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xid=38a5ef1


Appendices

A. Intervention Emails

| Pre-Intervention Recruiting Response | Thank you for being willing to participate in a study on self-compassion in the lives of pageant contestants. This information will be used in the researcher’s dissertation and may be published.

   In order to participate, you will need to click the link below and take the measures included. There are 3 different questionnaires within the link. They do not all need to be completed at one time. They may take up to a total of an hour to complete.

   Please complete them within 72 hours. Within 48 hours of completion, you will receive an informational email about the study.

   This study consists of four weeks of journaling activities that must be completed twice a week for at least 15 minutes. If you are unable to commit to this time constraint, please ignore this email.

   By completing the measures below, you agree to keep your answers and journaling activities confidential during the duration of the study. Please do not share this information with others, especially other participants. You also agree for the information collected to be used by the researcher for dissertation purposes and all resulting publications.

   Please read the attached document for further consent information prior to completing the questionnaires linked below.

   [Link to measures]

   Thank you for your assistance! |

| Pre-Intervention Acceptance | Thank you for choosing to participate in this study on Self-Compassion and taking the time to complete the study measures. |
For the next four weeks you will be sent two emails a week with journaling activities that encourage self-compassion. You will receive your first email on Monday the [DATE], followed by a second email on Friday the [DATE]. These activities are based on the books, research and studies of leaders in the field of self-compassion, such as Dr. Kristin Neff and Dr. Christopher Germer. I will always note which researcher so you can look into their work further if you are interested.

I hope you enjoy this process and thank you, once again, for helping to furthering the research of self-compassion.

| Week One | In her book, *The Proven Power of being Kind to Yourself*, Dr. Kristin Neff says, “self-compassion is like magic, because it has the power to transform suffering into joy” (Neff, 2011, p.13). For the first journaling activity, take a few moments to create your own “Self-compassion Mantra,” that you can repeat to yourself when you are feeling down (Neff, 2011, p. 121). This can be as long or as short as you like, but spend several minutes contemplating what would benefit you to hear during those difficult times. Rewrite your mantra as many times as it takes to perfect it for YOU. At some point this week, take a few minutes to explore your negative emotions from the day. In one of her books, Dr. Neff suggests that you write about the things you feel bad about, difficult experiences, and things that caused emotional pain from that week (Neff, 2011, p. 103). Note how the event made you feel. Consider how you reacted to it. Then, she suggests that you take a moment to view that situation in the light of “common humanity,” meaning we all share aspects of the human experience (Neff, 2011, p. 61; p. 103). Write through this exploration. |

| Weeks Two | Using their research, Dr. Neff and Dr. Germer created a workbook for improving self-compassion. One of the first activities they suggest that you imagine a close friend that has just made a major |
mistake at work, was let go of from a job, fell into a misfortune, etc. (Neff & Desmond, 2018, p. 12). Then they ask you to consider what you would say and do toward them (Neff & Desmond, 2018, p. 12. They ask you to consider your tone, posture, and nonverbal gestures toward that friend (Neff & Desmond, 2018, p. 12). This week’s journaling activity asks you to do the same. Provide as much detail as you’d like. Use real life examples if you have them.

Every human has some point where they were faced with a painful emotional experience. Your second journal entry this week will explore this further. Pick one moment in your life when a negative emotion arose out of self-judgement and write about it (Neff, 2011, p. 103). Dr. Neff suggests that as you write, to accept the feelings in a nonjudgmental way, without “belittling it [or] making it over dramatic” (Neff, 2011, p. 103-104). If you have time, you can explore more than one situation in this way.

Week Three

According to Dr. Germer, we all have certain negative “schemas” that contain emotions, sensations, and behaviors that begin early in our lives (Germer, 2009, p.93-94). We usually consider these to be our “vulnerabilities,” and they can affect how we deal with ourselves and others (Germer, 2009, p. 93-94). Consider your own vulnerabilities and select one for this activity. Dr. Germer walks through the steps (Germer, 2009, p. 95-96):

Write about the emotions.

Write about the feelings and sensations that occur in your body.

Then consider how you typically act when addressed with this vulnerability.

Being able to recognize your vulnerabilities allows you to become self-aware and more able to show self-compassion (Germer, 2009, p.96).

We discussed vulnerabilities earlier this week. Now, we will work toward learning to be more loving and
compassionate toward ourselves. Dr. Neff gives a great little idea that we will utilize for this journaling activity. She suggests that, for a moment, you create an imaginary friend; one that is “loving, accepting, kind and compassionate” (Neff, 2011, p. 16). Imagine how that friend might feel for you. For a moment, pretend you are that imaginary friend and write a letter to yourself about the vulnerability you explored earlier this week. Dr. Neff reminds her readers to “infuse” the imaginary friend’s traits into the letter to yourself (Neff, 2011, p. 17). Once you have written it, put it away and safe it for a moment that you are struggling with your vulnerability.

This week we will focus on self-compassion in the area of the physical body. Dr. Neff reminds others that it is important accept yourself and remember, “beauty comes in all different shapes and sizes” (Neff, 2011, p. 179). For this journaling activity you will make a purposeful and kind assessment of your body. It is important that you be honest in this process and cover both the things you like and dislike (Neff, 2011, p. 179). You may also want to consider things that are normally overlooked when you consider your body (strong bones, good digestion, etc.), this will allow you to fully appreciate your body (Neff, 2011, p. 179). It is also important to explore the aspects of yourself that you may dislike; blemishes and extra pounds may be noted in this exploration (Neff, 2011, p. 179). Dr. Neff reminds us that we should try to minimize our flaws, but look at them realistically (Neff, 2011, p. 179).

Over the past few weeks, we have explored many different topics in the context of self-compassion. The final journaling activity for this study asks you to consider everything else covered and create a list of four “loving-kindness phrases” that are comprised of what you, personally, need to hear (Germer, 2009, p. 137). According to Dr. Germer, your goal in this journaling activity is to create phrases that cover a
| Post-Intervention | Thank you for completing the last four weeks of journaling activities. I sincerely hope you enjoyed this process.

In order to assist me in the completion of this study, I request that you click the link below and take the measures included. There are 2 different questionnaires within the link. They are some of the same ones you completed at the beginning of the study. They do not all need to be completed at one time. They may take up to a total of an hour to complete.

There will be an optional video conference through Webex on [date] as a follow up to the study. During this time, you will be welcome to ask any additional questions you may have and you may speak to other participants at this point.

Once again, thank you for assisting me in this research! | wide range of experiences and elicit good feelings within you (Germer, 2009, p. 137). |
B. Self-Compassion Scale- Short Version (SCS-SF)

**HOW I TYPICALLY ACT TOWARDS MYSELF 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:

Almost Never 1 2 3 4 5  
Almost Always

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.
C. Body Part Satisfaction Scale- Revised (BPSS-R)

**DIRECTIONS:** Below is a list of body parts. Please rate how satisfied you are, at the moment, with each body part according to the following scale. Remember, it is very important that you respond to all the items and that you answer them honestly as they apply to you. This information will be kept confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Height</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Weight</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Hair</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Complexion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Overall Face</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Shoulders</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Arms</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Stomach</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Breasts</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Back</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Buttocks</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Legs</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Calves</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. General Muscle tone</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Overall satisfaction with size and shape of your body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. To Whom it May Concern:

Please feel free to use the Self-Compassion Scale – Short Form in your research (12 items instead of 26 items). The short scale has a near perfect correlation with the long scale when examining total scores. We do not recommend using the short form if you are interested in subscale scores, since they’re less reliable with the short form. You can e-mail me with any questions you may have. The appropriate reference is listed below.

Best wishes,

Kristin Neff, Ph. D.

e-mail: kristin.neff@mail.utexas.edu

Reference:


Coding Key:

- Self-Kindness Items: 2, 6
- Self-Judgment Items: 11, 12
- Common Humanity Items: 5, 10
- Isolation Items: 4, 8
- Mindfulness Items: 3, 7
- Over-identified Items: 1, 9

Subscale scores are computed by calculating the mean of subscale item responses. To compute a total self-compassion score, reverse score the negative subscale items - self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification (i.e., 1 = 5, 2 = 4, 3 = 3, 4 = 2, 5 = 1) - then compute a total mean.
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