



Self-Compassion in Children and Young People Who Receive Child Welfare Services

By Jane Gilgun, PhD, & Samantha Hirschev, MSW

What is self-compassion?

Self-compassion is positive regard for the self as worthy of respect and love during good times and times of challenge.

Why is self-compassion important?

Persons who have self-compassion accept themselves as imperfect, view their experiences as part of the human condition, and allow themselves to experience painful thoughts and feelings, knowing that emotions have a natural flow when persons allow themselves to experience them. They do not ruminate or behave destructively but engage in processes that lead to a working through of painful emotions. They hold themselves accountable for any hurt they cause and seek to repair damage to relationship with others. Self-compassion begins when young people experience compassion from others.

What is self-rejection?

- Self-rejection is composed of beliefs that the self is bad, worthless, and unlovable.
- Young people who have experienced abuse and neglect often feel worthless, unlovable, and unworthy of respect.
- These beliefs are painful.

Why is self-rejection important?

- More than three million children year in the United States are reported to authorities for abuse and neglect. These children and others whose maltreatment is unreported are at risk to develop self-rejection and then go on in their lives to hurt themselves and others.
- Children and young people who self-reject attempt to feel better. They often act out in aggressive and self-harmful ways. They have not learned from other people how to have compassion for themselves.
- Persons who self-reject may have difficulty taking responsibility for their behaviors, holding themselves accountable, apologizing, making amends, and seeking reconciliation because they cannot bear the emotional pain of believing themselves to be bad, worthless, and unlovable.

How does self-compassion develop?

- Children who have self-compassion have parents who are self-compassionate.
- Effective service providers are self-compassionate and compassionate.

REFERENCES

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For further information, email Jane Gilgun at jgilgun@umn.edu