



THE COMPASSIONATE ENGAGEMENT AND ACTION SCALES

Self-compassion

When things go wrong for us and we become distressed by setbacks, failures, disappointments or losses, we may cope with these in different ways. We are interested in the degree to which people can **be compassionate with themselves**. We define compassion as “a sensitivity to suffering in self and others with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it.” This means there are two aspects to compassion. The *first* is the ability to be motivated to engage with things/feelings that are difficult as opposed to trying to avoid or suppress them. The *second* aspect of compassion is the ability to focus on what is helpful to us. Just like a doctor with his/her patient. The first is to be motivated and able to pay attention to the pain and (learn how to) make sense of it. The second is to be able to take the action that will be helpful. Below is a series of questions that ask you about these two aspects of compassion. Therefore read each statement carefully and think about how it applies to you if you become distressed. Please rate the items using the following rating scale:

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

Section 1 – These are questions that ask you about how motivated you are, and able to engage with distress when you experience it. So:

When I’m distressed or upset by things...

1. I am *motivated* to engage and work with my distress when it arises.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

2. I *notice*, and am *sensitive* to my distressed feelings when they arise in me.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

(r)3. I avoid thinking about my distress and try to distract myself and put it out of my mind.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

4. I am *emotionally moved* by my distressed feelings or situations.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

5. I *tolerate* the various feelings that are part of my distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**



6. I *reflect on* and *make sense* of my feelings of distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

(r)7 I do not tolerate being distressed.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

8. I am *accepting, non-critical and non-judgemental* of my feelings of distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

Section 2 – These questions relate to how you actively cope in compassionate ways with emotions, thoughts and situations that distress you. So:

When I'm distressed or upset by things...

1. I direct my *attention* to what is likely to be helpful to me.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

2. I *think* about and come up with helpful ways to cope with my distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

(r)3. I don't know how to help myself.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

4. I take the *actions* and do the things that will be helpful to me.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

5. I create inner feelings of *support, helpfulness and encouragement*.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

NOTE FOR USERS: REVERSE ITEMS (r) ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE SCORING

Compassion to others

When things go wrong for other people and they become distressed by setbacks, failures, disappointments or losses, we may cope with their distress in different ways. We are interested in the degree to which people can be **compassionate to others**. We define compassion as “a sensitivity to suffering in self and others with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it.” This means there are two aspects to compassion. The *first* is the ability to be motivated to engage with things/feelings that are difficult as opposed to trying to avoid or suppress them. The *second* aspect of compassion is the ability to focus on what is helpful. Just like a doctor with his/her patient. The first is to be motivated and able to pay attention to the pain and (learn how to) make sense of it. The second is to be able to take the action that will be helpful. Below is a series of questions that ask you about these two aspects of compassion. Therefore read each statement carefully and think about how it applies to you when **people in your life** become distressed. Please rate the items using the following rating scale:

Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

Section 1 – These are questions that ask you about how motivated you are, and able to engage with other people’s distress when they are experiencing it. So:

When others are distressed or upset by things...

1. I am *motivated* to engage and work with other peoples’ distress when it arises.

Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

2. I *notice* and *am sensitive* to distress in others when it arises.

Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

(r)3. I avoid thinking about other peoples’ distress, try to distract myself and put it out of my mind.

Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

4. I am *emotionally moved* by expressions of distress in others.

Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

5. I *tolerate* the various feelings that are part of other people’s distress.

Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**



6. I *reflect on* and *make sense of* other people's distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

(r)7 I do not tolerate other peoples' distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

8. I am *accepting, non-critical and non-judgemental* of others people's distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

Section 2 – These questions relate to how you actively respond in compassionate ways when other people are distressed. So:

When others are distressed or upset by things...

1. I direct *attention* to what is likely to be helpful to others.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

2. I *think about and come up* with helpful ways for them to cope with their distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

(r)3. I don't know how to help other people when they are distressed.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

4. I take the *actions* and *do the things* that will be helpful to others.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

5. I express feelings of *support, helpfulness and encouragement* to others.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

NOTE FOR USERS: REVERSE ITEMS (r) ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE SCORING

Compassion from others

When things go wrong for us and we become distressed by setbacks, failures, disappointments or losses, others may cope with our distress in different ways. We are interested in the degree to which you feel that **important people in your life can be compassionate to your distress**. We define compassion as “a sensitivity to suffering in self and others with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it.” This means there are two aspects to compassion. The *first* is the ability to be motivated to engage with things/feelings that are difficult as opposed to trying to avoid or suppress them. The *second* aspect of compassion is the ability to focus on what is helpful to us or others. Just like a doctor with his/her patient. The first is to be motivated and able to pay attention to the pain and (learn how to) make sense of it. The second is to be able to take the action that will be helpful. Below is a series of questions that ask you about these two aspects of compassion. Therefore read each statement carefully and think about how it applies to the **important people in your life** when you become distressed. Please rate the items using the following rating scale:

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

Section 1 – These are questions that ask you about how motivated you think others are, and how much they engage with your distress when you experience it. So:

When I’m distressed or upset by things...

1. Other people are actively *motivated* to engage and work with my distress when it arises.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

2. Others *notice* and *are sensitive* to my distressed feelings when they arise in me.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

(r)3 Others *avoid* thinking about my distress, try to distract themselves and put it out of their mind.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

4. Others are *emotionally moved* by my distressed feelings.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

5. Others *tolerate* my various feelings that are part of my distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**



6. Others *reflect on* and *make sense* of my feelings of distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

(r)7. Others do not tolerate my distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

8. Others are *accepting, non-critical and non-judgemental* of my feelings of distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

Section 2 – These questions relate to how others actively cope in compassionate ways with emotions and situations that distress you. So:

When I'm distressed or upset by things...

1. Others direct their *attention* to what is likely to be helpful to me.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

2. Others *think about* and come up with helpful ways for me to cope with my distress.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

(r)3. Others don't know how to help me when I am distressed

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

4. Others take the *actions* and do the things that will be helpful to me.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

5. Others treat me with feelings of *support, helpfulness and encouragement*.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Always**

NOTE FOR USERS: REVERSE ITEMS (r) ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE SCORING

SCORING

The three scales – *Compassion for others*, *compassion from others*, *compassion for self* are scored separately.

For each scale two subscales can be calculated: Engagement (items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8) and Actions (1, 2, 4, 5).

For the *Compassion for self* scale, two dimensions may be analysed in the Engagement subscale (sum of items 2 and 4, and sum of items 1, 5, 6, and 8).

A total score can be calculated (sum of items of the Engagement and Actions subscales) for each scale – *Compassion for others*, *compassion from others*, *compassion for self*.

Please note that reverse items (r) are not included in the scoring.

DESCRIPTION

The Compassionate Engagement and Action Scales

The Compassionate Engagement and Action Scales are three scales which measure self-compassion (“I am motivated to engage and work with my distress when it arises”), the ability to be compassionate to distressed others (“I am motivated to engage and work with other peoples’ distress when it arises”) and the ability to receive compassion from key persons in the respondent’s life (“Other people are actively motivated to engage and work with my distress when it arises”). In the first section of each scale, six items are formulated to reflect the six compassion attributes in the CFT model: sensitivity to suffering, sympathy, non-judgemental, empathy, distress tolerance and care for wellbeing. These sections also include two reversed filler items. The second section of the scale has four more items which reflect specific compassionate actions to deal with distress and an extra reversed filler item. Participants are asked to rate each statement according to how frequently it occurs on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = Never; 10= Always).

REFERENCE

Gilbert, P., Catarino, F., Duarte, C., Matos, M., Kolts, R., Stubbs, J., ... & Basran, J. (2017). The development of compassionate engagement and action scales for self and others. *Journal of Compassionate Health Care*, 4(1), 4.