Currently the Compassion SIG covers four overlapping areas - Self Compassion, General Compassion, Compassion in Close Relationships and Compassion in the Therapeutic Relationship. Here are ten recent relevant research abstracts:


(Tables are not included in this text, but full text from Sonja Lyubomirsky's website: [Available in free full text from Sonja Lyubomirsky's website](http://sonjalyubomirskys.com/papers-publications/))


which empathic concern was assessed. Factor analyses showed that, indeed, the ERQ items that assess empathic concern can be split up in two factors, that is, one reflecting sympathy and one reflecting tenderness. In addition, in line with previous studies, our research showed that, in response to a need-situation that reflects current needs, individuals scored higher on the ERQ factor reflecting sympathy than on the ERQ factor reflecting tenderness. Findings are discussed in terms of the practical and theoretical implications of distinguishing between sympathy and tenderness.


Individual differences in attachment are well established as a correlate of couple relationship satisfaction. However, less is known about the role of attachment in predicting satisfaction at specific milestone points in couple relationships. The present study explored the role of attachment in predicting relationship satisfaction during couples’ first pregnancy, and the mediating role of relationship enhancing behaviors. Male and female attachment anxiety and avoidance predicted their own low relationship satisfaction, and this was partially mediated by relationship enhancing behaviors. Male attachment anxiety and avoidance predicted low female satisfaction, and this was fully mediated by relationship enhancing behaviors. This study is the first to highlight the important role of male attachment during pregnancy, and the mediating role of relationship enhancing behaviors.


This study investigated if the social achievement goals that students endorsed at the beginning of their freshman year were associated with social behaviors and adjustment 6 months later (N = 276; 52% female). Students were recruited from a residential hall and Resident Advisors provided multi-dimensional assessments of students’ social behaviors. A social development goal (a focus on improving social skills and relationships) promoted adjustment, indicated by a positive association with overall social competence. A social demonstration-avoid goal (a focus on avoiding negative judgments) hindered adjustment, indicated by negative associations with overall social competence, popularity and prosocial behavior and positive associations with anxious and internalizing behavior. A social demonstration-approach goal (a focus on gaining positive judgments) had benefits, as shown by positive associations with overall social competence and popularity, and negative associations with anxious behavior, but also drawbacks for adjustment, as shown by a positive association with aggression.


(Free full text available) The purpose of this study was to examine the longitudinal relations between attachment state of mind in late adolescence and romantic relationships in adulthood. Participants were drawn from two independent studies that were conducted respectively in 1992 and 1996 and that involved the administration of the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) to 167 college students. They were followed-up in 2007 (N = 99) to investigate different aspects of their romantic relationships since college. Those who had shown greater preoccupation with attachment in the AAI were more likely to be single in adulthood and to report romantic relationships of shorter length. In addition, they reported lower levels of intimacy, commitment, and passion in their current or recent romantic relationships. Dismissing tendencies were associated with higher levels of perceived passion in romantic relationships. Most of these associations remained significant after controlling for intervening life events, different dimensions of individual adjustment, socio-economic status, as well as probable life events derived from the AAI.


Self-compassion refers to having an accepting and caring orientation towards oneself. Although self-compassion has been studied primarily in healthy populations, one particularly compelling clinical context in which to examine self-compassion is social anxiety disorder (SAD). SAD is characterized by high levels of negative self-criticism as well as an abiding concern about others’ evaluation of one's performance. In the present study, we tested the hypotheses that: (1) people with SAD would demonstrate less self-compassion than healthy controls (HCs), (2) self-compassion would relate to severity of social anxiety and fear of evaluation among people with SAD, and (3) age would be negatively correlated with self-compassion for people with SAD, but not for HC. As expected, people with SAD reported less self-compassion than HCs on the Self-Compassion Scale and its subscales. Within the SAD group, lesser self-compassion was not generally associated with severity of social anxiety, but it was associated with greater fear of both negative and positive evaluation. Age was negatively correlated with self-compassion for people with SAD, whereas age was positively correlated with self-compassion for HC. These findings suggest that self-compassion may be a particularly important target for assessment and treatment in persons with SAD.