

## Self-compassion in elderly people: Samples from studies

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Elderly people who practice self-compassion tend to experience better psychological well-being and cope more effectively with the challenges of aging, such as physical decline and emotional stress. Self-compassion in older adults involves treating oneself with kindness, recognizing the shared human experience of aging, and maintaining mindful awareness without harsh self-judgment. Research shows that higher self-compassion is linked to greater life satisfaction, less emotional distress, and a more positive attitude toward age-related changes. It also moderates the negative impact of poor physical health on subjective well-being, helping older adults maintain resilience despite health issues. Moreover, self-compassionate elderly individuals are more willing to seek and use assistance (e.g., using walkers or asking for help) without feeling bothered, which can promote better physical and cognitive functioning (Allen et al., 2012; Allen & Leary, 2014).

Practical strategies to cultivate self-compassion in seniors include:

- Self-kindness: Encouraging gentle, supportive self-talk instead of self-criticism.
- Common humanity: Understanding that aging challenges are a universal experience.
- Mindfulness: Staying present and accepting difficult emotions or situations without judgment, for example, through meditation or deep breathing exercises.

Encouraging self-compassion among older adults may thus improve their overall quality of life, mental health, and ability to adapt to aging-related difficulties.

### Samples from Studies

Authors	Title	Conclusion
<b>Perez-Blasco et al., 2016</b>	The Effects of Mindfulness and Self-Compassion on Improving the Capacity to Adapt to Stress Situations in Elderly People Living in the Community	The results demonstrated that both mindfulness and self-compassion significantly improved participants' capacity to cope with stress. Specifically, cultivating these qualities was associated with better emotional regulation, reduced stress levels, and increased psychological well-being. The study concluded that mindfulness and self-compassion practices can serve as effective interventions to help older adults manage stress and enhance their overall mental health.
<b>Kashmari et al., 2023</b>	Comparing the Effectiveness of Cognitive-behavioral Therapy Combined With Self-compassion and Cognitive Motor Activities and Cognitive Motor Intervention Alone on Forgiveness and Self-compassion in the Elderly	Both intervention methods — (1) cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) combined with self-compassion and cognitive-motor activities, and (2) cognitive-motor intervention alone — were effective in increasing levels of forgiveness and self-compassion among elderly participants. CBT combined with self-compassion and cognitive-motor activities was significantly more effective than cognitive-motor activities alone in enhancing self-compassion in the elderly.
<b>Bijaeyeh et al., 2021</b>	The Effectiveness of the Self-Compassion Training on Life Satisfaction and Resilience of the Elderly Women	The results suggest that self-compassion training is an effective therapeutic intervention to enhance psychological well-being and resilience in elderly women, and it can be effectively applied in nursing home settings
<b>Farokhzadian &amp; Mirderekvand, 2018</b>	The Effectiveness of Self-Compassion Focused Therapy on Increase of Psychological Well-Being and Reduction of Depression in the Elderly	Self-compassion-focused therapy significantly reduces cognitive vulnerability to depression and increases psychological well-being in elderly individuals. The research demonstrated statistically significant improvements in dysfunctional attitudes, self-esteem, and attribution styles related to negative events after eight sessions of therapy.
<b>Kazemi et al., 2020</b>	The effectiveness of self-compassion treatment on loneliness and life expectancy in elderly women	Self-compassion-focused therapy significantly reduces loneliness and increases life expectancy among senior women. This indicates that the intervention not only helps elderly women feel less isolated but also has a positive impact on their overall longevity
<b>Mohamed Abd-Elsalam Elhgry et al., 2020</b>	Effect of self-compassion based intervention on self-compassion, life satisfaction and psychological well-being among older adults	A highly statistically significant increase in life satisfaction scores post-intervention. Elderly participants with chronic health problems showed notably higher self-compassion after the intervention, suggesting better acceptance and kind responses to their health difficulties. Positive increases were seen in psychological well-being subscales such as acceptance, autonomy, environment mastery, personal growth, positive relations, and purpose in life.

## Conclusion

Recent research consistently highlights the positive impact of self-compassion and mindfulness-based interventions on the psychological well-being of elderly individuals. Studies have demonstrated that practices fostering mindfulness and self-compassion significantly improve older adults' abilities to manage stress, regulate emotions, and reduce depressive symptoms. For example, Perez-Blasco et al. (2016) found enhanced stress adaptation through mindfulness and self-compassion, while Farokhzadian and Mirderekvand (2018) observed reduced depression and increased psychological well-being after focused self-compassion therapy.

Additionally, combining cognitive-behavioral therapy with self-compassion and cognitive-motor activities yields greater improvements in forgiveness and self-compassion compared to cognitive-motor activities alone (Kashmari et al., 2023). Self-compassion training also bolsters life satisfaction, resilience, and reduces loneliness, which are critical factors for elderly women's mental health (Bijaeyeh et al., 2021; Kazemi et al., 2020). Interventions notably enhance various aspects of psychological well-being such as acceptance, personal growth, and positive relationships, even among those suffering chronic health conditions (Mohamed Abd-Elsalam Elhgry et al., 2020).

## Recommendations

Given these findings, integrating self-compassion and mindfulness-based approaches into mental health programs for the elderly can offer valuable benefits. Tailoring interventions to include both psychological therapy and physical or cognitive activities may maximize outcomes. Nursing homes and community centers should consider structured self-compassion training to improve resilience and reduce loneliness. Moreover, healthcare providers working with chronically ill older adults should incorporate these practices to foster better acceptance and psychological adjustment, ultimately enhancing quality of life and possibly longevity.

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