



To Whom It May Concern:

Dr. Kristin Neff grants permission to use the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003) for any purpose whatsoever, including research, clinical work, teaching, etc. Please cite:

Neff, K. D. (2003). Development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2, 223-250.

Permission is also given to translate the Self-Compassion Scale using the analytic approach to validate the factor structure that was established in:

Neff, K. D., Tóth-Király, I., Yarnell, L., Arimitsu, K., Castilho, P., Ghorbani, N.,... Mantios, M. (2019). Examining the Factor Structure of the Self-Compassion Scale using exploratory SEM bifactor analysis in 20 diverse samples: Support for use of a total score and six subscale scores. *Psychological Assessment*, 31 (1), 27-45.

Best wishes,

Kristin Neff, PhD

Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)

HOW I TYPICALLY ACT TOWARDS MYSELF IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Please read each statement carefully before answering. For each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following 1-5 scale. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.

**Almost
never**

1

2

3

4

**Almost
always**

5

1. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.
2. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.
3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.
4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.
5. I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.
6. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.
7. When I'm down, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.
8. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.
9. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.
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 intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.
12. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.
13. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.
14. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.
15. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition
16. When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.
17. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.
18. When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.
19. I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
20. When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.
21. I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
22. When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.
23. I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.
24. When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.
25. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.
26. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Reference

[Neff, K. D. \(2003\). Development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2, 223-250.](#)

SCORING KEY

Self-Kindness Items: 5, 12, 19, 23, 26

Self-Judgment Items (reverse scored): 1, 8, 11, 16, 21

Common Humanity Items: 3, 7, 10, 15

Isolation Items (reverse scored): 4, 13, 18, 25

Mindfulness Items: 9, 14, 17, 22

Over-identification Items (reverse scored): 2, 6, 20, 24

To reverse score items (1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1).

To compute a total self-compassion score, first reverse score the negative subscale items - self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification. Then take the mean of each subscale, and compute a total mean (the average of the six subscale means).

When examining subscale scores, higher scores on the self-judgment, isolation and over-identification scale indicate *less* self-compassion before reverse-coding, and *more* self-compassion after reverse coding. You can choose to report subscale scores with or without reverse-coding, but these three negative subscales must be reverse coded before calculating a total self-compassion score.

Note that the scoring procedures are slightly different than that used in the original scale article (Neff, 2003), in which items were totaled rather than averaged. However, it is easier to interpret the scores of the total mean is used and most researchers currently report total SCS scores on a five-point scale.

NORMS AND SCORE SIGNIFICANCE

There are no clinical norms or scores which indicate that an individual is high or low in self-compassion. Rather, SCS scores are mainly used in a comparative manner to examine outcomes for people scoring higher or lower in self-compassion.

As an ad hoc rubric, however, you can consider scores 1.0-2.49 to be low, between 2.5-3.5 to be moderate, and 3.51-5.0 to be high. When trying to determine whether self-compassion levels are high or low relevant to a particular sample, some researchers use a median split.

SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDITY

The SCS was developed in a sample of college undergraduates (Neff, 2003a). After identifying 71 items that were easily understood by students using a small pilot sample ($n=68$), exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were used with a larger sample ($n=391$) to identify 26 items that loaded best on separate subscales representing the six components of self-compassion. Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were used to provide support that scale items fit as intended with the proposed a priori theoretical model. An initial CFA found a marginal fit to a higher-order model representing a global factor of self-compassion and six subscale factors. Cross validation using CFA in a second sample ($N=232$) found adequate fit for a higher-order model. Total SCS scores evidenced good internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$), as did the six subscales (Cronbach's α ranging from .75 to .81). Test-retest reliability over a three-week interval was also good for the total score (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$) and six subscale scores (with Cronbach's α ranging from .80 to .88).

More recently, bifactor Exploratory Structural Equation Modeling (ESEM) has been used to verify the factor structure of the SCS rather than a higher order model, as it is more theoretically appropriate. [Neff et al. \(2019\)](#) used bifactor ESEM to examine the factor structure of the SCS in 20 diverse samples ($N = 11,685$), and excellent fit was found for a model of one general factor of self-compassion and six specific subscale factors. Moreover, 95% of the reliable variance could be attributed to a general factor. Although there has been debate over whether or not the SCS should be used as a total score or as separate positive and negative scores, empirical evidence tends to support the use of a total score rather than two separate scores ([Neff, 2018](#); [Neff, 2020](#)). The factor structure of the SCS has also been found to be culturally invariant across 18 international samples ([Tóth-Király & Neff, 2020](#)).

For an in-depth discussion of the psychometric properties of the SCS, see [Neff and Tóth-Király \(in press\)](#).

ANALYTIC APPROACH FOR VALIDATION AND TRANSLATION

In order to validate the factor structure of the scale (including for translations) we strongly recommend the use of bifactor ESEM, as this is the most appropriate method to assess the operation of self-compassion components as a system. Information on this analytic method can be found in ([Neff et al., 2019](#)). Moreover, appropriate syntax for how to conduct these analyses for the SCS using Mplus can be found in the online supplement to that article and also [here](#).

Many translations of the SCS already exist can be found [here](#). You are free to create a new translation of the SCS, but we ask that you use bifactor ESEM to validate the scale structure since it is most appropriate.