Assessment   *Construction and Factorial Validation of a Short Form of the Self-Compassion Scale*

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The objective of the present study was to construct and validate a short-form version of the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS). Two Dutch samples were used to construct and cross-validate the factorial structure of a 12-item Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form (SCS–SF). The SCS-SF was then validated in a third, English sample. The SCS–SF demonstrated adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.86 in all samples) and a near-perfect correlation with the long form SCS (*r* ≥ 0.97 all samples). Confirmatory factor analysis on the SCS–SF supported the same six-factor structure as found in the long form, as well as a single higher-order factor of self-compassion. The SCS–SF thus represents a reliable and valid alternative to the long-form SCS, especially when looking at overall self-compassion scores. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Key Practitioner Message:
- The 12-item Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form (SCS–SF) in Dutch and English offers an economical alternative to the long Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) to measure self-compassion. Although the original long form of the SCS is reduced to half, the SCS–SF is reliable and has the same factorial structure as the original scale.

Keywords: Self-Compassion, Scale Development, Short Form

Self-compassion is a relatively new concept in the fields of social, personality and clinical psychology (Gilbert, 2005; Leary, Tate, Adams, Batts Allen, & Hancock, 2007; Neff, 2008). Neff (2003a, 2003b) defines self-compassion as the ability to hold one's feelings of suffering with a sense of warmth, connection and concern. She also proposes three major components of self-compassion. The first is self-

kindness—the ability to treat oneself with care rather than harsh self-judgement. The second is common humanity—recognizing that imperfection is a shared aspect of the human experience rather than feeling isolated by one's failures. The third is mindfulness—holding one's experience in balanced perspective rather than exaggerating the dramatic storyline of suffering.

Research has shown that self-compassion is associated with psychological well-being and suggests that self-compassion might be an important protective factor, fostering emotional resilience (see Neff, 2009, for a recent review). For example, higher levels of self-compassion are typically related to

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greater psychological health as demonstrated by less depression and anxiety (e.g. Leary et al., 2007; Neff, 2003a; Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007; Raes, 2010) and greater happiness and optimism (e.g. Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007). Given the relevance of the concept of self-compassion for various fields, especially the field of clinical psychology and practice (e.g. Gilbert & Proctor, 2006; Shapiro, Astin, Bishop, & Cordova, 2005), interest in the construct has been growing rapidly.

Self-compassion is typically assessed using the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS; Neff, 2003a). The original SCS has 26 items measuring six components of self-compassion (negative aspects are reverse coded): Self-Kindness (e.g. 'When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need'), Self-Judgment (e.g. 'I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies'), Common Humanity (e.g. 'I try to see my failings as part of the human condition'), Isolation (e.g. 'When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure'), Mindfulness (e.g. 'When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance') and Over-Identification (e.g. 'When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong') (Neff, 2003a). Adequate psychometric properties are reported (Neff, 2003a). Items are rated on a five-point response scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*). A Dutch version of the scale has also been developed (Neff & Vonk, 2009). While highly similar to the original, the Dutch SCS uses a seven-point response scale and includes only 24 items.[1] Subscale scores are computed by adding item scores. A total self-compassion score is computed by reversing the negative subscale items and then adding all subscale scores.

The present study was set up to develop a shortened yet reliable and structurally equivalent version of the long SCS. Such a short version might be particularly useful in settings where time constraints make the use of the long form less feasible or advisable (e.g. time-consuming survey research, therapy process-outcome research and individual treatment monitoring in daily clinical practice). The initial version of the short form of the SCS (Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form [SCS–SF]) was constructed with a Dutch-speaking sample. A second independent Dutch-speaking sample was

used to cross-validate the (Dutch) SCS–SF scale characteristics and to test whether the SCS–SF also showed the six-factor structure previously demonstrated for the original SCS. A third sample was used to investigate whether the same version of the SCS–SF could be validated in English.

METHOD

Participants in Sample 1 consisted of 271 first-year psychology Dutch-speaking students at the University of Leuven, Belgium (214 women, 57 men). The average age was 18.14 years (Standard Deviation [SD] = 1.25; range: 18–28). All respondents participated in return for partial course credit.

Sample 2 consisted of 185 participants (131 women, 54 men), all recruited using snowball sampling via e-mail. The e-mail provided the address of a web site; when accessing the particular link, participants were first asked to provide their age and sex, after which they filled out study measures. The mean age of Sample 2 was 33.04 years (SD = 10.60; range: 18–64). All participated without financial or other compensation.

Sample 3 consisted of 415 students at the University of Texas at Austin, USA (272 women, 143 men). The average age was 20.62 years (SD = 1.74; range: 18–42), 53.5% Caucasian, 20.5% Hispanic, 7.0% African American, 7.0% Asian American, 5.3% Mixed Ethnicity, 1.7% Foreign, 0.7% American Indian and 4.3% Other. All participated in return for partial course credit.

RESULTS

Sample 1: Construction of the SCS–SF

The initial version of the SCS–SF was created using a Dutch-speaking sample. Following Stöber and Joormann's (2001) procedure for creating short forms of longer self-report measures, we first selected two items from each of the six self-compassion subscales that demonstrated (a) high correlations with the long SCS and (b) high correlations with their intended SCS subscale. As noted by Stöber and Joormann (2001) these requirements helped to ensure that the short form of the scale would evidence a high correlation with the long form of the scale and that subscale items would be representative of their intended subscale domains.

We tried to select, as much as possible, pairs of subscale items that showed high intercorrelations to maximize subscale reliability (cf. Stöber

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[1] The long Dutch SCS has two items less than the original English SCS due to translation difficulties with two items in the Dutch version (Neff & Vonk, 2009).

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Table 1. Items for the SCS–SF, including item correlations with subscale scores (both the long and short versions)

Item description*	Subscale	Total SCS	SCS–SF
1. Consumed by feelings of inadequacy	OI	0.74 (0.78)	0.87 (0.90)
2. Understanding of aspects I don't like	SK	0.73 (0.71)	0.80 (0.81)
3. Balanced view of situation	M	0.77 (0.81)	0.87 (0.87)
4. Other people happier than I am	I	0.80 (0.87)	0.90 (0.93)
5. Part of the human condition	CH	0.68 (0.76)	0.83 (0.86)
6. The caring and tenderness I need	SK	0.78 (0.76)	0.86 (0.84)
7. Keep my emotions in balance	M	0.73 (0.75)	0.85 (0.88)
8. Feel alone in my failure	I	0.75 (0.80)	0.91 (0.87)
9. Fixate on everything that's wrong	OI	0.80 (0.81)	0.87 (0.89)
10. Feelings shared by most people	CH	0.74 (0.78)	0.86 (0.85)
11. Judgemental about my own flaws	SJ	0.88 (0.78)	0.92 (0.85)
12. Impatient towards aspects I don't like	SJ	0.83 (0.75)	0.92 (0.86)

*For full item wordings, see Appendix.
SK = Self-Kindness; SJ = Self-Judgement; CH = Common Humanity; I = Isolation; M = Mindfulness; OI = Over-Identification; SCS = Self-Compassion Scale long version; SCS–SF = Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form (12 items). Values presented are for Sample 1 (Dutch). Values given in parentheses are for Sample 3 (English). All items for the SJ, I and OI subscales were reverse-coded before calculating correlations.

& Joormann, 2001). Note, however, that for some subscales we did not always automatically choose the two items with the highest intercorrelation. By simply choosing the two items with the highest intercorrelation we would run the risk of suboptimal content domain coverage (see e.g. Mackinnon et al., 1999; Thompson, 2007). Therefore, we selected items for each subscale that reflected the breadth of the original subscale content.[2]

The items that were selected to form the SCS–SF are listed in Table 1. Also included are item correlations with long SCS and SCS–SF subscale scores. See Appendix for the full wording of the items. Note that all items from the Self-Judgment, Isolation and Overidentification subscales were reverse-coded before analyses. Each individual item displayed a correlation with its respective

SCS subscale score ranging between 0.68 and 0.88 for the full SCS, and 0.80 and 0.92 for the SCS–SF.

Table 2 presents internal consistency reliabilities (using Cronbach's alpha) for the long SCS and SCS–SF, including the total score and subscale scores. Internal consistency of the SCS–SF was high for the total score but more variable for subscale scores. Means and SDs for the long and short SCS (subscales and total scores) are also reported in Table 2.

Correlations between the corresponding subscales for the long and short form were as follows: $r = 0.91$ for Self-Kindness, $r = 0.93$ for Self-Judgement, $r = 0.84$ for Common Humanity, $r = 0.86$ for Isolation, $r = 0.87$ for Mindfulness and $r = 0.88$ for Over-Identification. The correlation between the total score of the long and short form was near perfect, $r = 0.97$.

Sample 2: Replication and Factorial Validation (Dutch SCS–SF)

Because, as for the original long scale (Neff, 2003a), the SCS-SF subscales were highly intercorrelated (see Table 3), we tested model fit for a higher-order model representing a single, first-order 'general' self-compassion factor and six second-order factors (corresponding to the six subscales). The fit of this model was examined by performing confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) using the Lisrel 8.71® (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2004). Following recommendations (e.g. Flora & Curran, 2004; Maydeu-Olivares, 2001), robust Diagonally Weighted Least Squares estimation method based

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[2] The four items of the original Self-Kindness subscale are 'When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need' (SK-1), 'I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering' (SK-2), 'I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like' (SK-3) and 'I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies' (SK-4). The first two and last two items were highly intercorrelated, which makes sense given that the first two items are about treating oneself kindly and the latter two about being understanding towards one's flaws and inadequacies. If we would have picked either the first two or the latter two, this would have resulted in a higher internal consistency for the short-form Self-Kindness subscale. However, this would also have resulted in suboptimal content domain coverage. By choosing an item of each of those two clusters of items we were better able to preserve the original content of the full SCS (cf. Mackinnon et al., 1999; Thompson, 2007).

Table 2. Means, SDs and Cronbach's alphas for the long SCS (subscale scores and total scores) and the SCS–SF (subscale scores and total scores). Note that values presented are for Sample 1 (Dutch). Values given in parentheses are for Sample 3 (English)

	α	M	SD
Long SCS			
Self-Kindness	0.72 (0.78)	14.81 (15.06)	4.79 (3.29)
Self-Judgment	0.83 (0.81)	15.93 (15.46)	5.54 (3.69)
Common Humanity	0.71 (0.76)	15.67 (12.01)	4.36 (2.87)
Isolation	0.81 (0.80)	16.08 (11.93)	4.11 (3.23)
Mindfulness	0.67 (0.75)	16.23 (12.82)	3.91 (2.67)
Over-Identification	0.70 (0.80)	16.09 (12.16)	5.06 (3.26)
Total SCS score	0.90 (0.93)	94.79 (78.33)	20.07 (14.75)
Short SCS			
Self-Kindness	0.55 (0.54)	8.44 (5.86)	2.30 (1.46)
Self-Judgment	0.81 (0.63)	8.32 (5.98)	2.77 (1.71)
Common Humanity	0.60 (0.62)	8.20 (5.79)	2.36 (1.60)
Isolation	0.77 (0.68)	7.26 (6.14)	2.97 (1.83)
Mindfulness	0.64 (0.69)	8.74 (6.69)	2.43 (1.55)
Over-Identification	0.69 (0.75)	7.15 (6.39)	3.01 (1.83)
Total SCS–SF score	0.87 (0.86)	48.12 (36.00)	11.61 (7.33)

Note: The Dutch version uses a seven-point scale. The English version uses a five-point scale. Therefore, mean scores for the Dutch and English SCS–SF differ. Also, the Self-Kindness and Self-Judgment subscales of the English full SCS have five items each. The Dutch version has only four items for those subscales.
SCS = Self-Compassion Scale; SCS–SF = Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form; SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 3. Correlations between SCS-SF subscale scores. Values are for Sample 1 (Dutch). Values for Sample 3 (English) are shown in parentheses

	SK	SJ	CH	I	M
SK	—				
SJ	0.49 (0.45)	—			
CH	0.52 (0.46)	0.46 (0.27)	—		
I	0.31 (0.41)	0.55 (0.59)	0.37 (0.31)	—	
M	0.54 (0.49)	0.32 (0.28)	0.41 (0.50)	0.25 (0.40)	—
OI	0.37 (0.43)	0.59 (0.63)	0.44 (0.31)	0.66 (0.61)	0.32 (0.38)

Note: All correlations significant at $p < 0.001$.
SK = Self-Kindness; SJ = Self-Judgement; CH = Common Humanity; I = Isolation; M = Mindfulness; OI = Over-Identification.

on polychoric input matrices was used, since SCS items are rated on a Likert-type scale (ordinal data) and sample size is moderate. Model fit was assessed using the Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 statistic (SBS-χ^2), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), the comparative fit index (CFI) and the non-normed fit index (NNFI). The SBS-χ^2 was used given the ordinal character of the data (Satorra & Bentler, 2001). Following Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger and Müller (2003) a $\chi^2/$ degrees of freedom (df) ratio of 3 or less will be taken as indicative of acceptable model fit. RMSEA

and SRMR ≤ 0.08, and CFI and NNFI ≥ 0.90, will be taken as cut-offs for an acceptable fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). All fit indices indicated acceptable model fit for the hypothesized higher-order model: SBS-χ^2 = 104.99 (df = 48), RMSEA = 0.08, SRMR = 0.07, CFI = 0.97 and NNFI = 0.96.

Sample 3: Replication and Factorial Validation (English SCS–SF)

We collected a third sample in English to see if the psychometric properties found for the Dutch version

of the SCS–SF would hold for an English version of the SCS–SF. In Tables 1–3, values for the English sample are shown in parentheses. Results found for the English SCS–SF were quite similar to the Dutch SCS–SF. Note that (as shown in Table 2) the internal consistency of the English SCS–SF total score was high (alpha = 0.86). Cronbach's alphas for subscales were more variable, ranging between 0.54 and 0.75.

The English SCS–SF total score showed a near-perfect correlation of $r = 0.98$ with the long SCS total score. Correlations between the long- and short-form subscales (on corresponding dimensions) were also excellent: $r = 0.89$ for Self-Kindness, $r = 0.90$ for Self-Judgement, $r = 0.91$ for Common Humanity, $r = 0.93$ for Isolation, $r = 0.89$ for Mindfulness and $r = 0.89$ for Over-Identification.

Again, we tested model fit for the higher-order model with a single first-order self-compassion factor and six second-order factors (see Table 3 for intercorrelations between subscales for the short SCS). All fit indices indicated that model fit for the hypothesized higher-order model was acceptable for the English SCS–SF: SBS-χ^2 = 175.50 (df = 48), RMSEA = 0.080, SRMR = 0.077, CFI = 0.97 and NNFI = 0.96.

DISCUSSION

The present study was aimed at developing a short version of the SCS (Neff, 2003a; Neff & Vonk, 2009) in Dutch and English. The key findings can be summarized as follows. First, the shortened scale exhibits a near-perfect correlation with the full SCS ($r \geq 0.97$). Second, although the number of scale items was reduced by half, the shortened version yields no substantial loss in terms of internal consistency for total scores (see below for discussion of subscale reliabilities). Third, CFA demonstrated that the shortened SCS has the same higher-order factor structure as the original full scale with a 'general' higher-order self-compassion factor and six second-order factors corresponding to the six facets of self-compassion: Self-Kindness, Self-Judgment, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness and Over-Identification. Fourth, the fact that the same good psychometric properties were observed for the English SCS–SF as for the Dutch SCS–SF is reassuring as to the robustness of findings.

As a whole, the present findings indicate that the shortened, 12-item SCS can be effectively and efficiently used as an economical alternative to the full SCS. The SCS–SF may be of particular use in time- and cost-intensive survey and therapy outcome

research, often containing loaded test batteries. Also, clinical practitioners who wish to monitor treatment progress of their individual patients can use the short version to minimize time-consuming assessment.

However, we should also note that the internal consistencies for the SCS–SF subscales were relatively low (ranging between 0.55 and 0.81 for the Dutch SCS–SF, and 0.54 and 0.75 for the English SCS–SF). Although reliabilities for all but one subscale (Self-Kindness) were above 0.60, and Cronbach's alphas of 0.60 and above are generally deemed acceptable for use in groups, we would recommend using the full scale if information about subscales is crucial. For total score information, however, the SCS–SF is an economical alternative to the long form as it has the same factor structure, good internal consistency and a near-perfect correlation with the long SCS.

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APPENDIX: ITEMS OF THE SCS–SF

1. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy. [D-6; E-6; OI]
2. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like. [D-7; E-26; SK]
3. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation. [D-8; E-14; M]
4. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am. [D-9; E-13; I]
5. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition. [D-12; E-15; CH]
6. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need. [D-13; E-12; SK]
7. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance. [D-14; E-9; M]
8. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure [D-17; E-25; I]
9. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong [D-18; E-2; OI]
10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people. [D-19; E-10; CH]
11. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies. [D-21; E-1; SJ]
12. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like. [D-23; E-11; SJ]

Note. D-X = X[th] item in the Dutch full SCS; E-X = X[th] item in the English full SCS; OI = Over-Identification; SK = Self-Kindness; M = Mindfulness; I = Isolation; CH = Common Humanity; SJ = Self-Judgment.