Self-compassion amongst clients with problematic alcohol use:
Can mindfulness treatment moderate treatment response?

Presented by

Michelle Brooks
B Psych (Hons)

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I. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a university degree or other similar qualification to any other University or Institution.

Signed: ..........................  Date: ..........................
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Abstract

There have been numerous previous studies examining the relationship between depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem and alcohol use but the results have been inconsistent and often contradictory. Additionally, other research has found self-esteem difficult to define, measure and improve. Recent research has focused on self-compassion which is comprised of six facets including Self-Kindness, Self-Judgement, Mindfulness, Over-identification, Common Humanity and Isolation. The aim of the present study was to examine the relationship between self-compassion, depression, anxiety and stress among individuals who are alcohol dependent as there had not been any published research examining this to date. Seventy Seven participants from the Central Coast Drug and Alcohol Service were recruited for the present study. A number of questionnaires were used including the DASS, the Self-Compassion Scale and the Opiate Treatment Index. The baseline results from this study found that participants were significantly higher in depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol use and lower in self-compassion than the general population. The 15 week follow-up data indicated that mindfulness based treatment is an efficacious intervention for reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress and improving self-compassion particularly for people with alcohol dependence problems. Additionally, the self-judgement component of self-compassion appears to show the most gain through the intervention that was employed in this study. Taken together, these results suggest a mindfulness intervention may be a useful tool in the treatment of alcohol use disorders and improving self-compassion, depression, anxiety and stress. Future studies should focus on the effectiveness of a structured mindfulness intervention in increasing self-compassion in both a clinical population and a non-clinical population and on examining the antecedent of the
relationship between self-compassion and depression, anxiety, stress and alcohol consumption.