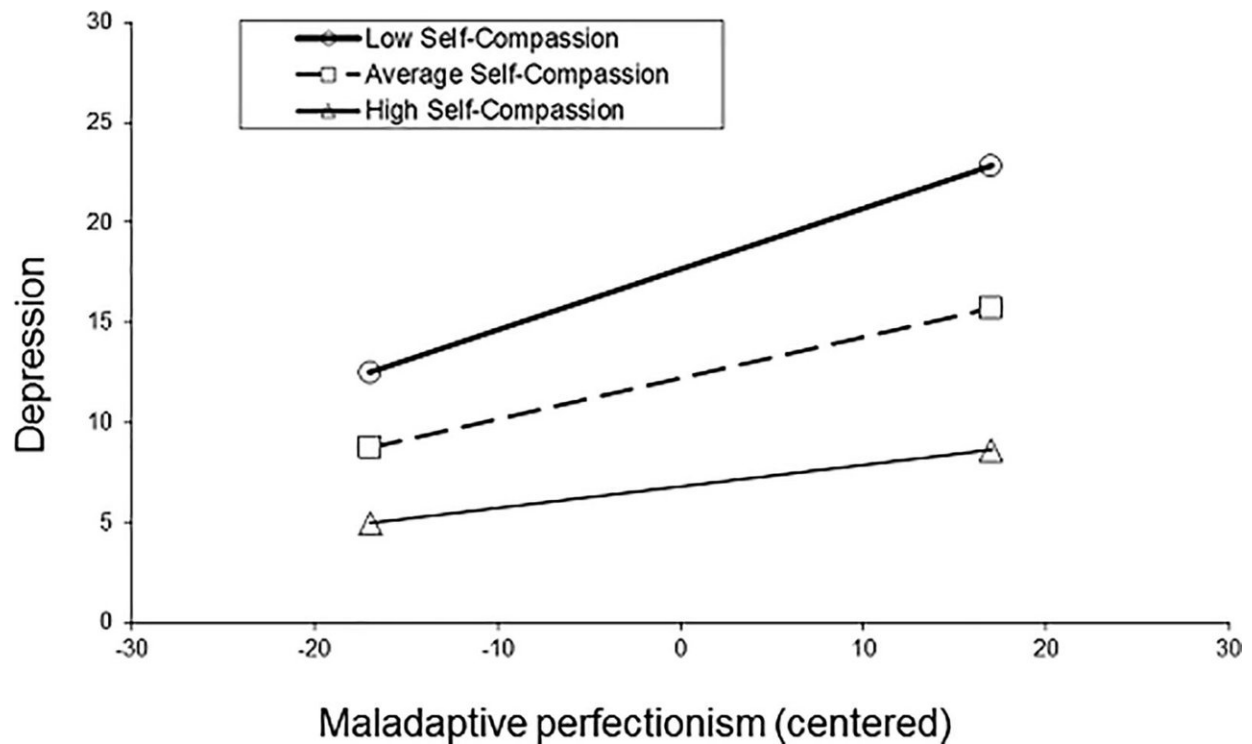


Self-compassion may protect people from the harmful effects of perfectionism

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The moderating effect of self-compassion on perfectionism and depression, in an adult sample. Credit: Ferrari et al (2018)

Relating to oneself in a healthy way can help weaken the association between perfectionism and depression, according to a study published February 21, 2018 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Madeleine Ferrari from Australian Catholic University, and colleagues.

Perfectionistic people often push themselves harder than others to succeed, but can also fall into the trap of being self-critical and overly concerned about making mistakes. When the perfectionist fails, they often experience depression and burnout. In this study, Ferrari and colleagues considered whether [self-compassion](#), a kind way of relating to oneself, might help temper the link between perfectionist tendencies and depression.

The researchers administered anonymous questionnaires to assess [perfectionism](#), depression, and self-compassion across 541 adolescents and 515 adults. Their analyses of these self-assessments revealed that self-compassion may help uncouple perfectionism and depression.

The replication of this finding in two groups of differently-aged people suggests that self-compassion may help moderate the link between perfectionism and depression across the lifespan. The authors suggest that self-compassion interventions could be a useful way to undermine the effects of perfectionism, but future experimental or intervention research is needed to fully assess this possibility.

"Self-compassion, the practice of self-kindness, consistently reduces the strength of the relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and [depression](#) for both adolescents and adults," says lead author Madeleine Ferrari.

More information: Ferrari M, Yap K, Scott N, Einstein DA, Ciarrochi J (2018) Self-compassion moderates the perfectionism and depression link in both adolescence and adulthood. *PLoS ONE* 13(2): e0192022. doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0192022

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