

ABSTRACT

Compassion is positively related to mental well-being. The present study used writing exercises to cultivate university students' self-compassion and other-compassion, and to improve their mental well-being. A possible mechanism to improve compassion was to reduce fears of compassion. Effects were measured at post-intervention, one-month follow-up, and three-month follow-up. A hundred and thirty-six university students participated in the study. They were randomly assigned to self-compassionate writing, other-compassion writing, or control writing condition. It was found that the writing interventions had positive yet statistically non-significant effects on psychological and emotional well-being. Participants in all conditions improved on social well-being. Self-compassionate writing intervention was found to be successful in reducing fear of self-compassion and enhancing self-compassion. The effect sizes were large. The change in fear of compassion uniquely predicted the change in self-compassion. Meanwhile, although other-compassionate writing significantly reduced the fear of other-compassion, the effect was small and was not maintained at follow-up intervals. The change of fear had no unique relationship with the change in other-compassion.