

## Background

Self-compassionate individuals treat themselves with the compassion and care shown to others, namely to treat themselves with kindness, recognising their shared humanity and being mindful when considering their negative qualities.

A greater capacity for self-compassion is associated with psychological wellbeing and the intention to engage in health promoting activities but what about motives to exercise?

### Study Purpose:

Explore, the influence of self-compassion for regular exercisers on activity.

Does self-determined motivation mediate the influence of self-compassion on physical activity involvement?

**If your COMPASSION does not include YOURSELF it is incomplete.**  
 - Jack Kornfield



## Participants

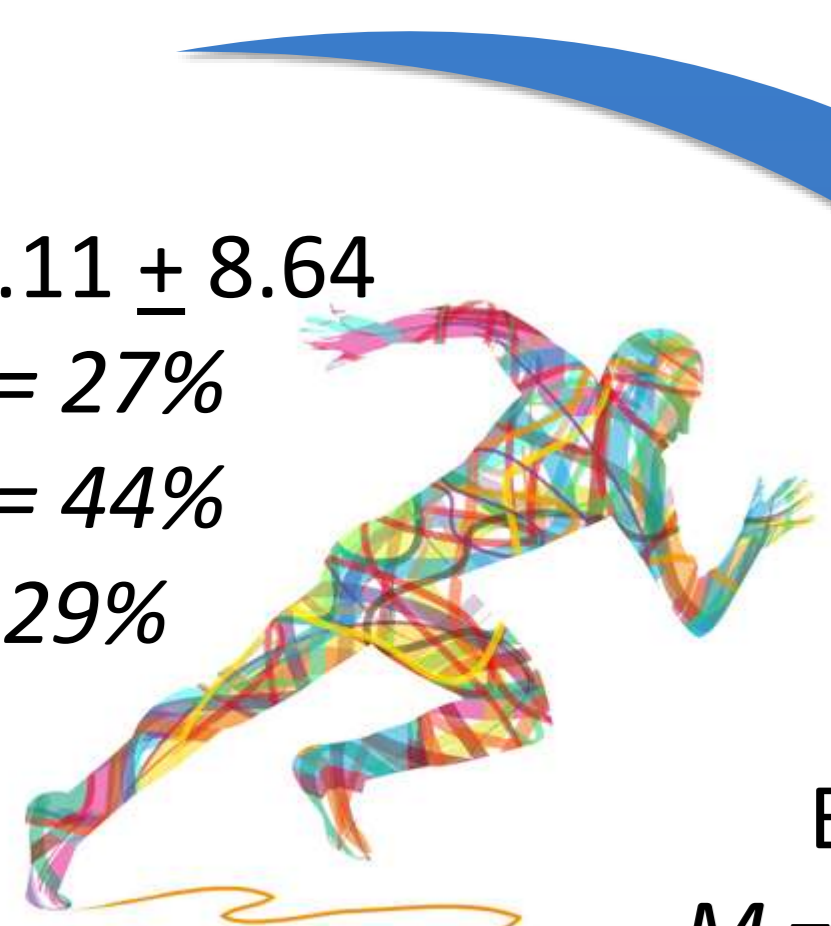
Recruited via running clubs, Parkrun and social media groups

• 351 Participants completed the online survey

### Exclusion of data

- Incomplete data - N= 79
- Over-reported Activity - N = 82
- Low Activity - N = 17)

Age  
 M= 40.11 ± 8.64  
 18-34 = 27%  
 35-44 = 44%  
 45+ = 29%



BMI  
 M = 25 ± 4

Final Sample (172)  
 • Female = 146  
 • Male = 26

## Measures & Analysis

### Self-Compassion Scale

(SCS) Neff (2003)  
 26 items  
 6 sub-scales + Total Self-Compassion

### Behavioural Regulations in Exercise Questionnaire-2

(BREQ-2) Markland & Tobin (2004)  
 19 items  
 5 sub-scales + Relative Autonomy Index

### International Physical Activity Questionnaire LF

(IPAQ-LF) Craig et al. (2003)  
 27 items  
 4 activity domains inc. Leisure

### Demographics

Age, Gender  
 Body Mass (height and Weight)  
 General health status  
 Disability

### Analysis:

- Bivariate Correlations of SCS and BREQ-2 sub-scales
- Independent t-tests of gender differences
- One-way ANOVA of age group differences
- Mediation Analyses of Total METs and Leisure METs (SPSS Process)

## Findings

Table 1: Bivariate correlations between Self-reported PA, Self-compassion, Behavioural Regulation for Exercise scales \*\*  $p < 0.01$  level (2-tailed); \*  $p < 0.05$  level (2-tailed).

Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Total METs	.52**	-0.03	-0.02	0.00	-0.06	0.13	0.02	-0.08	-0.02	.17*	0.13
2 Leisure METs		-0.03	-0.05	-0.02	-0.03	0.05	0.08	-0.07	0.05	0.20**	0.03
3 Self-Compassion			0.91**	0.92**	0.93**	0.23**	-0.08	-0.19*	-0.48**	-0.10	0.15
4 Self-Kindness vs Self-Judgement				0.76**	0.76**	0.16*	-0.03	-0.13	-0.44**	-0.13	0.10
5 Common Humanity vs Isolation					0.79**	0.23**	-0.09	-0.22**	-0.41**	-0.04	0.14
6 Mindfulness vs Over-Identification						0.23**	-0.10	-0.19*	-0.47**	-0.11	0.17*
7 Relative Autonomy							-0.67**	-0.62**	-0.27**	0.71**	0.86**
8 Amotivation								0.33**	0.02	-0.45**	-0.42**
9 External Regulation									0.23**	-0.33**	-0.32**
10 Introjected Regulation										0.23**	-0.06
11 Identified Regulation											0.62**
12 Intrinsic Motivation											



### Significant differences between male and female runners:

Mindfulness vs Over Identification forms of self-compassion ( $t_{(170)} = 2.14, p = 0.03$ )

Introjected Regulation Motivation ( $t_{(170)} = -2.58, p = 0.01$ )



### Significant differences between the three age groups:

Common Humanity vs Isolation ( $F_{(2, 169)} = 4.24, p = 0.02$ ), over 45s higher scores than 18-34yrs

Mindfulness vs Over Identification forms of self-compassion ( $F_{(2, 169)} = 4.11, p = 0.018$ ), over 45s higher scores than 18-34yrs

Total Self-compassion ( $F_{(2, 169)} = 4.40, p = 0.02$ ), over 45s higher scores than 18-34yrs

External Regulation ( $F_{(2, 169)} = 4.50, p = 0.01$ ), over 45s lower scores than 18-34yrs

Introjected Regulation ( $F_{(2, 169)} = 16.14, p < 0.001$ ), over 45s lower scores than 35-44yrs who had lower scores than 18-34yrs

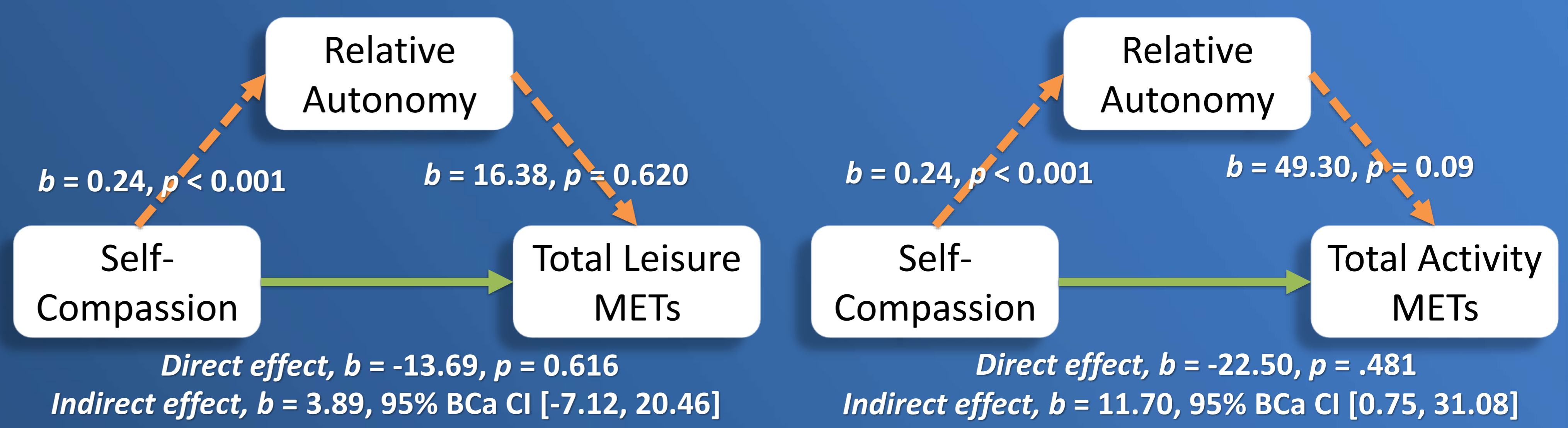


Figure 1: Mediation Analyses of the indirect effect of self-compassion on (a) Leisure activity and (b) Total Activity through Relative Autonomy - Confidence Interval for the indirect effect is a Bca bootstrapped CI based on 5000 samples

## Conclusions

- Older adults and men involved in regular exercise display greater self-compassion than women and younger exercisers. In particular taking a balanced view of negative emotions (feelings are neither suppressed nor exaggerated).
- Older adults and men are less likely to exercise to maintain self-esteem or to avoid guilt
- Older adults are also less likely to exercise to due to pressure exerted by others or external reinforcers.
- Self-determined motivation mediates the influence of self-compassion on physical activity, more so for total activity than planned leisure activity.

## References

- Craig, C. L., Marshall, A.L., Sjostrom, M. et al. (2003). International Physical Activity Questionnaire: 12-country reliability and validity. *Medicine Sciences in Sports & Exercise*, 1381-1395
- Neff, K. D. (2003). Development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2, 223-250.
- Markland, D. & Tobin, V. (2004). A modification of the Behavioral Regulation in Exercise Questionnaire to include an assessment of amotivation. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 26, 191-196