

Fears of Compassion Scales (FCS; Gilbert, McEwan, Matos & Ravis, 2011)

Reference: Gilbert, P., McEwan, K., Matos, M., & Ravis, A. (2011). Fear of compassion: Development of three self-report measures. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 84, 239-255.

Description: The FCS is comprised of 38 items and assesses three orientations of compassion: fear of compassion for others—compassion felt for others, fear of compassion from others—being the recipient of compassion, and fear of compassion for self—being compassionate towards oneself.

Fear of compassion for

others is comprised of 10 items (e.g., “People will take advantage of me if they see me as too compassionate”), fear of compassion from others is comprised of 13 items (e.g., “I often wonder whether displays of warmth and kindness from others are genuine”), and fear of compassion for self is comprised of 15 items (e.g., “I feel that I don’t deserve to be kind and forgiving to myself”). Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (0 = Don’t agree at all, 4 = Completely agree) and each scale is individually summed. For all three subscales, lower scores indicate greater compassion (i.e., decreased fear of compassion).

Instructions: Different people have different views of compassion and kindness. While some people believe that it is important to show compassion and kindness in all situations and contexts, others believe we should be more cautious and can worry about showing it too much to ourselves and to others. We are interested in your thoughts and beliefs in regard to kindness and compassion. Please use the scale below to rate the extent that you agree with each statement.

Don’t agree 0 1 2 3 4 Completely agree

Scale 1: Expressing compassion for others (FCO)

1. Being too compassionate makes people soft and easy to take advantage of.
2. People will take advantage of you if you are too forgiving and compassionate.
3. I fear that being too compassionate makes people an easy target.
4. I fear that if I am compassionate, some people will become too dependent upon me.
5. People will take advantage of me if they see me as too compassionate.
6. I worry that if I am compassionate, vulnerable people can be drawn to me and drain my emotional resources.
7. Being compassionate towards people who have done bad things is letting them off the hook.
8. There are some people in life who don’t deserve compassion.
9. For some people, I think discipline and proper punishments are more helpful than being compassionate to them.
10. People need to help themselves rather than waiting for others to help them.

Scale 2: Responding to the expression of compassion from others (FCF)

1. I try to keep my distance from others even if I know they are kind.
2. Feelings of kindness from others are somehow frightening.
3. If I think someone is being kind and caring towards me, I “put up a barrier.”
4. When people are kind and compassionate towards me I feel anxious or embarrassed.
5. If people are friendly and kind I worry they will find out something bad about me that will change their mind.

6. I worry that people are only kind and compassionate if they want something from me.
7. I often wonder whether displays of warmth and kindness from others are genuine.
8. Even though other people are kind to me, I have rarely felt warmth from my relationships with others.
9. If people are kind I feel they are getting too close.
10. I'm fearful of becoming dependent on the care from others because they might not always be available or willing to give it.
11. When people are kind and compassionate towards me I feel empty and sad.
12. I fear that when I need people to be kind and understanding they won't be.
13. Wanting others to be kind to oneself is a weakness.

Scale 3: Expressing kindness and compassion towards yourself (FSC)

1. I worry that if I start to develop compassion for myself I will become dependent on it.
2. I fear that if I become too compassionate to myself I will lose my self-criticism and my flaws will show.
3. I fear that if I develop compassion for myself, I will become someone I do not want to be.
4. I fear that if I am more self-compassionate I will become a weak person.
5. I fear that if I am too compassionate towards myself, bad things will happen.
6. I fear that if I become kinder and less self-critical to myself then my standards will drop.
7. I fear that if I become too compassionate to myself others will reject me.
8. I would rather not know what being 'kind and compassionate to myself' feels like.
9. I fear that if I start to feel compassion and warmth for myself, I will feel overcome with a sense of loss/grief.
10. When I try and feel kind and warm to myself I just feel kind of empty.
11. I have never felt compassion for myself, so I would not know where to begin to develop these feelings.
12. I feel that I don't deserve to be kind and forgiving to myself.
13. If I really think about being kind and gentle with myself it makes me sad.
14. Getting on in life is about being tough rather than compassionate.
15. I find it easier to be critical towards myself rather than compassionate.