The Benefits of Self-Compassion Following Hurricane Florence

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Introduction

Self-Compassion

- Involves being kind to oneself, recognizing that all people experience suffering, and not getting carried away with one's emotions (Neff, 2003)
- Negatively correlated with depressive symptoms (Zessin, Dickhäuser, & Garbade, 2015)
- Buffers against trauma-related effects for victims of traumatic events (Kaurin, Schönfelder, & Wessa, 2018)

Coping Self-Efficacy

- Belief that one has the ability to cope after a traumatic event
- Predicts recovery for individuals who experience various traumatic events (Benight, Shoji, James, Waldrep, Delahanty, & Cieslak, 2015)
- Affects one's state of overall well-being following traumatic events (Benight, Shoji, James, Waldrep, & Delahanty, 2015; Kaurin, Schönfelder, & Wessa, 2018)

Positive Cognitive Restructuring

- Involves reframing negative situations in a more positive light and can be helpful when dealing with traumatic experiences (Larsson, Hooper, Osborne, Bennett, & McHugh, 2016)
- Lessens the effects of PTSD and depressive symptoms (Mueser, Gottlieb, Xie, Lu, Yanos, Rosenberg, & McHugo, 2015)
- The coping strategy most closely associated with self-compassion (Allen & Leary, 2010)

Hypothesis

- Self-compassion will be related to more positive outcomes for hurricane survivors
- Self-compassionate participants will experience less negative psychological outcomes like depression
- Self-compassion involves more positive cognitive restructuring which increases perceived coping self-efficacy and results in less depression

Method

Participants

- We recruited from Robeson, Scotland, Bladen, and Columbus counties, which were all heavily impacted by the storm.
- $N = 261$ (88.5% women)
- Ages 19 to 81 ($M = 44.07$ $SD = 12.79$)

Design

- Participants were asked to complete an online baseline survey upon enrollment.
- The participants then completed follow-up surveys 3- and 6-months post enrollment.

Measures

- Self-compassion Scale (Neff, 2003)
- Hurricane exposure scale
- Hurricane Coping Self-efficacy Scale (Benight, Ironson, & Durham, 1999)
- Self-compassion Scale (Positive items only; Neff, 2003)
- Brief COPE Inventory (Carver, 1997)
- Coping Self-efficacy Scale (Benight, Shoji, James, Waldrep, & Delahanty, 2015)
- Center of Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977)
- PTSD Scale (Blevins, Weathers, Davis, Witte, & Domino, 2015)
- Perceived Support (Zimet, G., Dahlem, Zimet, S., & Farley, 1988)
- Received Support (Freedy, Shaw, Jarrell, Masters, 1992; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993; Hobfoll, Tracy, & Galea, 2006; Littleton, Axsom, & Grills-Taquechel, 2011)
- Provided Support (Freedy, Shaw, Jarrell, Masters, 1992; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993; Hobfoll, Tracy, & Galea, 2006; Littleton, Axsom, & Grills-Taquechel, 2011)
- Solidarity (Hawdon, Räsänen, Oksanen, & Ryan, 2012)

Data Analysis

- Correlations and Serial Mediation Model (SPSS Process Model 6)

Results and Discussion

- Correlational analysis shows that self-compassion is associated with more positive outcomes
- Serial Mediation Model (SPSS process Model 6) revealed the relationship between self-compassion and depression is mediated by Positive Cognitive restructuring and Coping self efficacy

Limitations

- All data was self-report
- Data collection started five months after the event
- Majority of sample was female

Implications

- It would be beneficial to include training in positive cognitive restructuring and coping self efficacy in emergency preparedness programs

	Pearson Correlation	P-Value		Pearson Correlation	P-Value
Depression	-.597**	<.001	Cognitive Restructuring Coping	.529**	<.001
Received Support	.231**	<.001	Express Emotion Coping	.392**	<.001
Perceived Support	.437**	<.001	Social Support Coping	.483**	<.001
Provided Support	.129*	.037	Problem Avoidance Coping	-.048	.436
Solidarity	.440**	<.001	Self-criticism Coping	-.404**	<.001
Coping Self-efficacy	.475**	<.001	Social Withdrawal Coping	-.511**	<.001
Hurricane Coping Self-efficacy	.474**	<.001	Resource Loss/Gain	.578**	<.001
Wishful Thinking	-.301**	<.001	PTSD	-.523**	<.001
Post traumatic Stress Disorder	.517**	<.001			

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table #1

September 16, 2018
Pembroke, North Carolina

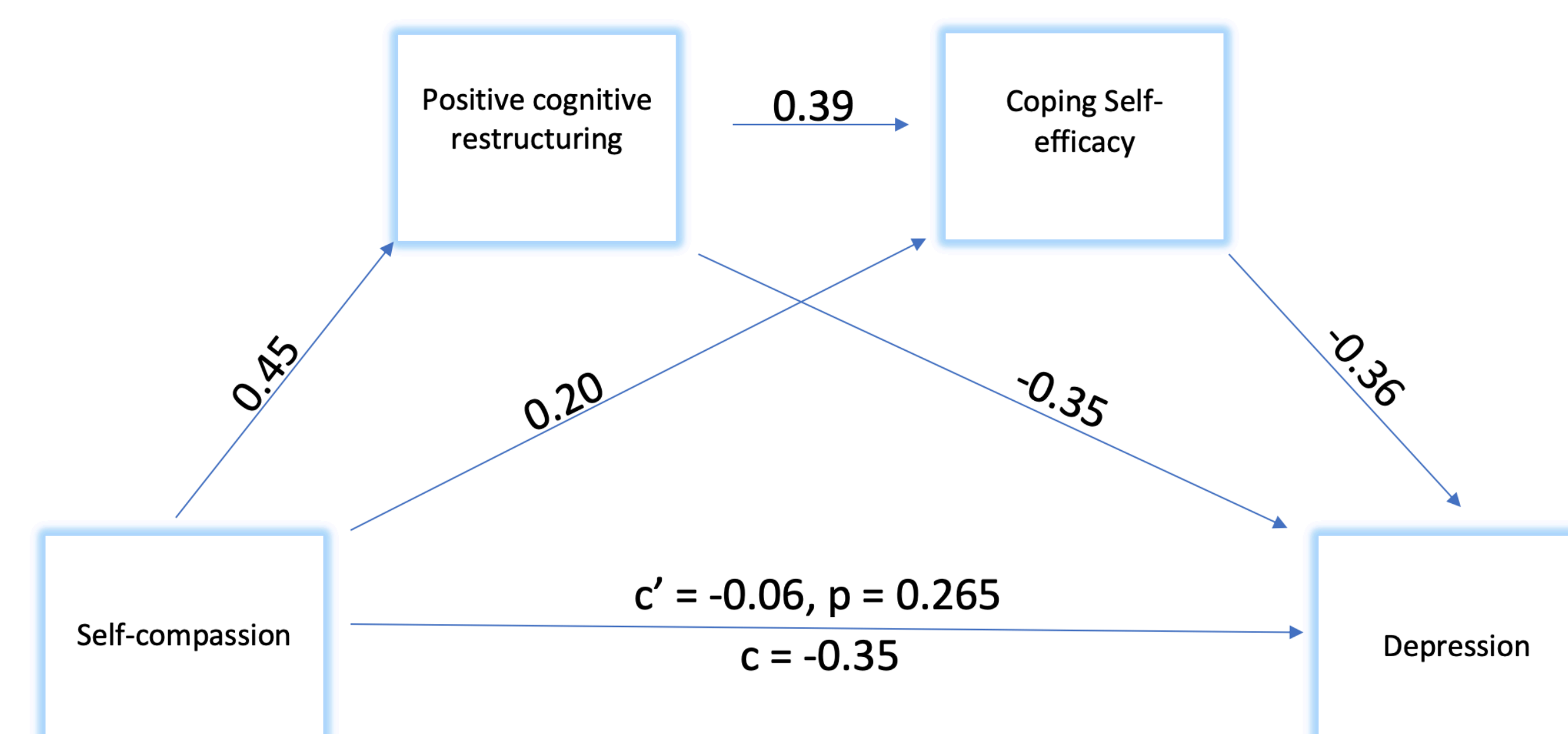April 22, 2019
Laurel Hill, North Carolina

Positive cognitive restructuring — 0.39 → Coping Self-efficacy

0.45   0.20   -0.35   -0.36

Self-compassion → c' = -0.06, p = 0.265 / c = -0.35 → Depression

Figure #1