

## THE ROLE OF SELF-COMPASSION IN EATING DISORDERS TREATMENT

Gerard J. Butcher (Ireland); Assistant Professor, Dept of Psychiatry, Trinity College Dublin;  
Cognitive Solutions Clinic, Dublin.

Compassion-Focused therapy (CFT) is recognised as a transdiagnostic treatment approach that aims to build self-compassion and reduce shame-based thinking styles (Gilbert, 2014). In the field of eating disorders, it has been shown that feelings of shame and self-criticism, along with fears of being self-compassionate may contribute to the ongoing psychopathology experienced by those with an eating disorder (Kelly, Vimalakanthana & Carter, 2014). In contrast, targeting shame and self-criticism by increasing self-compassion improve outcomes in treatment of eating disorders (Steindl et al, 2017) and also in body-image experiences (Braun, Park & Gorin, 2016). More recently, it has been suggested that targeting self-compassion barriers early in treatment may be helpful in facilitating overall recovery from eating disorders (Geller et al, 2022).

This 90-minute workshop will focus on practical applications of Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) in the treatment of eating disorders. Attendees will be presented with some of the background research showing current trends in this area of eating disorders treatment along with practical exercises that can be utilised in therapeutic settings. Attendees will also be encouraged to participate directly in related role-play exercises and to share their own experiences of engaging in this type of workshop.

### References:

Braun TD, Park CL, and Gorin A (2016) Self-compassion, body image, and disordered eating: A review of the literature. *Body Image*. June 17:117-31.

Geller J, Samson L, Maiolino N, Iyar MM, Kelly AC, Srikaneswaran S. Self-compassion and its barriers: predicting outcomes from inpatient and residential eating disorders treatment. *J Eat Disord*. 2022 Aug 6;10(1):114. doi: 10.1186/s40337-022-00640-8. PMID: 35933458; PMCID: PMC9357312.

Gilbert P (2014) The origins and nature of compassion-focused therapy. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 53, 6–41.

Kelly AC, Vimalakanthan K, Carter JC. Understanding the roles of self-esteem, self-compassion, and fear of self-compassion in eating disorder pathology: an examination of female students and eating disorder patients. *Eat Behav*. 2014 Aug;15(3):388-91. doi: 10.1016/j.eatbeh.2014.04.008. Epub 2014 May 10. PMID: 25064287.

Steindl, S. R., Buchanan, K. , Goss, K. and Allan, S. (2017), Compassion focused therapy for eating disorders: A qualitative review and recommendations for further applications. *Clinical Psychologist*, 21: 62-73