

Exploring mindful self-compassion for individuals with eating disorder symptoms: feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary self-reported health outcomes

Submission date 22/07/2026	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☐ Prospectively registered
Registration date 23/07/2026	Overall study status Completed	☐ Protocol
Last Edited 23/07/2026	Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders	☐ Statistical analysis plan
		☐ Results
		☐ Individual participant data
		☒ Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

This study investigated the feasibility, acceptability, and potential benefits of an online Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) programme for adults experiencing eating disorder symptoms. MSC is an 8-week course that combines self-compassion practices, mindfulness exercises, psychoeducation, group discussions, and home practice to help participants develop a kinder and more supportive relationship with themselves.

Who can participate?

Adults aged 18 years and older with a formal eating disorder diagnosis or self-reported eating-related problem.

What does the study involve?

Participants were recruited through ROS (The Norwegian Eating Disorders Association), a low-threshold support service for individuals experiencing eating-related difficulties. No formal eating disorder diagnosis was required for participation. Participants completed questionnaires before and after the programme. The questionnaires measured eating disorder symptoms, self-compassion, self-esteem, and mental well-being. After completing the programme, participants also evaluated their satisfaction with the course and could provide written feedback on their experiences.

The primary aim of the study was to assess whether an online peer-led MSC programme was feasible and acceptable for individuals with eating disorder symptoms. Feasibility was assessed through attendance and completion rates, while acceptability was assessed through participant satisfaction. The secondary aim was to explore changes in self-compassion, self-esteem, mental well-being, and eating disorder symptoms following participation in the programme.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

This was the first evaluation of an MSC programme for individuals with eating disorder

symptoms in Norway and may provide important information about the potential value of self-compassion-based interventions in this population.

No known risks were associated with participation in the intervention. The study was considered low risk, and no adverse effects related to participation were anticipated.

Where is the study run from?

Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

January 2022 to December 2022.

Who is funding the study?

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, NTNU, Norway.

Who is the main contact?

Prof Mariela Loreto Lara Cabrera, mariela.lara@ntnu.no

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Study information

Scientific Title

Self-compassion, self-esteem and eating disorders

Study objectives

The primary objective was to assess the feasibility and acceptability of the intervention. The secondary objective was to explore the potential effects of the programme on self-compassion, self-esteem, mental well-being, and eating disorder symptom severity.

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 04/01/2022, Regional Committee for Medical and Health Research Ethics, Central Norway (REK Midt) (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) P.O. Box 8905, Trondheim, NO-7491, Norway; +47 73 59 75 1; rek-midt@mh.ntnu.no), ref: REK 271296

Primary study design

Interventional

Allocation

N/A: single arm study

Masking

Open (masking not used)

Control

Uncontrolled

Assignment

Single

Purpose

Health services research

Study type(s)

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Eating disorder symptoms and eating-related difficulties, irrespective of formal eating disorder diagnosis.

Interventions

This was the first online peer-led Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) programme offered to individuals with eating disorder symptoms in a Norwegian context.

The 8-week online peer-led MSC programme consists of weekly 2.5-hour group sessions and a half-day retreat. The programme included guided meditations, psychoeducation, experiential exercises, group discussions, and daily home practice, with the aim of enhancing self-compassion, emotional regulation, and psychological well-being.

Feasibility and acceptability were evaluated through attendance and attrition rates, as well as participant satisfaction with the peer-led intervention. Potential effects of the programme on self-compassion, self-esteem, mental well-being, and eating disorder symptom severity were assessed by comparing self-reported questionnaire data collected before and after participation in the programme.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

1. 1. Feasibility, assessed through attendance rate, completion rate, attrition and dropout rate; acceptability, assessed through participant satisfaction with the MSC programme measured using the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8) at post intervention

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Self compassion measured using the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) at pre- and post intervention
2. Self esteem measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) at pre- and post intervention
3. Eating Disorder symptom severity measured using the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDE-Q) at pre- and post intervention
4. Wellbeing measured using the WHO-5 at pre- and post intervention

Completion date

01/12/2022

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Aged 18 years or older
2. Provided informed consent
3. Participants eligible regardless of whether they had a formal eating disorder diagnosis or self-reported eating-related problem
4. Completion of at least 80% of the Mindful Self-Compassion course
5. Participation in one of the two 8-week course cohorts

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Mixed

Lower age limit

18 Years

Upper age limit

100 Years

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

18

Key exclusion criteria

1. Younger than 18 years
2. Completion of less than 80% of the Mindful Self-Compassion course

Date of first enrolment

10/01/2022

Date of final enrolment

01/12/2022

Locations

Countries of recruitment

Norway

Sponsor information

Organisation

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

ROR

<https://ror.org/05xg72x27>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Funder Name

Fakultet for medisin og helsevitenskap, Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet

Alternative Name(s)

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at NTNU, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences - NTNU, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, NTNU, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU, Fakultet for Medisin og Helsevitenskap, NTNU FAKULTET FOR MEDISIN OG HELSEVITENSKAP, Fakultet for medisin og helsevitenskap, MH

Funding Body Type

Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Universities (academic only)

Location

Norway

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**IPD sharing plan summary**

Not expected to be made available