Exploring College Students’ Perceptions of Overparenting and Levels of Self-Compassion
Casey Hoffman, Nicholas Peterson, Samuel Schwiebert, and Danielle Rockwell
Faculty Mentor: Mary Beth Leibham, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Department of Psychology

Background
While parent involvement has been linked to many positive young adult outcomes (e.g., autonomy), recent research has highlighted potential negative outcomes (e.g., anxiety) of excessive levels of parent involvement (Schiffrin et al., 2013; Segrin et al., 2012). Overparenting is the term used to refer to excessive levels of parent involvement, and more specifically, overparenting refers to developmentally inappropriate levels of parent involvement. Many of the studies examining overparenting among college-aged students define overparenting as high levels of parental monitoring, advice, and communication (Segrin et al., 2012; Segrin et al., 2015).

Self-compassion is a way of responding to one’s personal inadequacies with kindness and gentleness and it does not entail blaming or judging oneself (Neff, 2011). Self-compassion has been associated with lower levels of anxiety, depression, and fear of failure (Neff, 2015). Levels of Self-Compassion

Method
Participants
A total of 134 undergraduate college students (26 males; 108 females; 51 first-year, 38 sophomores, 22 juniors, 20 seniors, 3 fifth-year or more) participated in this study.

Materials
• Self Compassion Survey: The Self Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003; 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree). This scale consists of 6 subscales:
  - Self Kindness (5 items; e.g., “I’m tolerant of my flaws and inadequacies.”)
  - Self-Judgment (5 items; e.g., “When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.”)
  - Common Humanity (4 items; e.g., “I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.”)
  - Isolation (4 items; e.g., “When I fail at something I tend to feel alone in my failure.”)
  - Mindfulness (4 items; e.g., “When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.”)
  - Overidentification (4 items; e.g., “When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.”)

• Overparenting Survey: The Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Supporting Behaviors Survey (Schiffrin et al., 2013). 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree. This scale consists of 2 subscales:
  - Helicopter Parenting (9 items; e.g., “My parent monitors who I spend time with.”)
  - Autonomy Support (6 items; e.g., “My parent encouraged me to choose my own classes.”)

Procedure
Students completed the questionnaires in an online (Qualtrics) context. Surveys were distributed using the Psychology Department online participation system (SONA). Extra credit was offered as incentive to participate at the discretion of each professor.

Results

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means, SD and ranges for measured variables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1. Helicopter Parenting (HP)</td>
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<td>2. Autonomy Support (AS)</td>
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<td>3. SC_OVERALL (SC)</td>
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<td>4. SC_Kindness (SC_K)</td>
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<td>8. SC_Mindfulness (SC_M)</td>
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<td>9. SC_Overidentification (SC_O)</td>
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Students indicated a moderate amount of overall self-compassion by reporting higher levels on the negative subscales of self-compassion (self-judgment, isolation, and overidentification) and slightly lower levels on the positive subscales of self-compassion (self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness).

Correlations
Helicopter parenting was positively correlated with two negative subscales of self-compassion: self-judgment and isolation. Autonomy support was positively correlated with one positive subscale of self-compassion: common humanity.

The overall self-compassion score was not significantly correlated with helicopter parenting.

Future Directions
Although this study extends the research on self-compassion by examining the potential links between self-compassion and overparenting, it is preliminary in nature and should be extended to include more male participants.

Conclusions

Levels of Helicopter and Autonomy Support Parenting
• On average, students reported a low level of helicopter parenting and a higher level of autonomy support parenting. These findings are consistent with college students’ reported levels of helicopter and autonomy support parenting found by Schiffrin et al. (2013).

Levels of Self-Compassion
• Students indicated a moderate amount of overall self-compassion by reporting higher levels on the negative subscales of self-compassion (self-judgment, isolation, and overidentification) and slightly lower levels on the positive subscales of self-compassion (self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness).

References

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