



## Implementation of Mindful Self-Compassion Group Counseling in Reducing Self-Injury Behavior in Students

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Received: September 28, 2025

Revised: November 18, 2025

Accepted: December 17, 2025

Published: December 17, 2025

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DOI: [10.29303/jppipa.v11i11.13282](https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v11i11.13282)

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**Abstract:** Self-injury behavior is still found among students, especially in junior high school environments. Of course, this should be a concern for parents, schools, and especially Guidance and Counseling teachers to reduce self-injury behavior in students. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the application of mindful self-compassion group counseling in reducing self-injury behavior in students. The research method uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one group pretest-posttest design. The research sample consisted of 9 eighth-grade students who had self-injury behavior, selected using a purposive sampling technique. The research instrument used a self-injury behavior questionnaire with a Likert scale. The intervention was carried out through eight mindful self-compassion group counseling sessions. Data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed ranks test. The results of the study showed that: there was a significant difference in self-injury behavior of students before and after being given mindful self-compassion group counseling treatment; the posttest score was lower than the pretest score; there was a significant decrease in self-injury behavior of students before and after being given mindful self-compassion group counseling treatment. Based on the results of the study, mindful self-compassion is quite effective in reducing self-injury behavior in students.

**Keywords:** Group counseling; Mindful self-compassion; Self-injury; Students

### Introduction

Every individual will go through various phases in their life, starting from babies, children, teenagers, and adults. The teenage phase is a period that will be passed through in every individual's development (Brizio et al., 2015). This phase is the most critical phase in human life (Marc et al., 2024). Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, beginning at age 12 and ending in the early 20s (Mastorci et al., 2024). Desvykayanti, Nirwana, Hariko, & Fikri (2025) state that adolescence is a phase of life heavily influenced by the search for identity. During this period, each individual experiences significant physical, cognitive, social, and personality development. Teenagers will experience various shocks and problems related to themselves (Tetzner et al., 2023). Chen et al. (2024) stated that the challenging psychological dynamics of adolescents can

result in a tendency to over-criticize themselves, to be emotional when experiencing failure, and to judge their weaknesses, which has implications for high levels of depression, post-traumatic stress, and panic symptoms and can encourage self-injury behavior. Self-injury behavior or self-injury is a behavior that involves intentionally injuring oneself or parts of one's body without any warning (Di Norcia et al., 2023). According to Dwi Marta et al. (2022), self-injury is carried out by the perpetrator with the aim of venting negative emotions that are felt to be very painful and difficult to express in words. This behavior is generally more common among adolescents.

Xiao et al. (2022) found that out of a total of 1.505.430 adolescents, 560.337 were in the non-suicidal self-injury group. According to data from the recovery village in 2024, more than 40 countries found that

### How to Cite:

Bunda, T. P., Syukur, Y., Sukma, D., & Fikri, M. (2025). Implementation of Mindful Self-Compassion Group Counseling in Reducing Self-Injury Behavior in Students. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA*, 11(11), 1085–1092. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v11i11.13282>

approximately 17% of all people will engage in self-injury during their lifetime, 45% of people use cutting as a method of self-injury and approximately 50% of people seek help to overcome self-injury, but only from friends and not professionals. At SMP 1 Jatiwangi involving 120 students in grades VII-IX, data were obtained that 24% had injured themselves when angry or disappointed, and 9% did it more than twice a month. Based on an interview conducted on February 5, 2025, at SMP Negeri 29 Padang, the guidance counselor identified two cases of self-injury behavior by students. The first case was discovered during a classical service using art therapy techniques, where a student drew a picture and wrote the words "I want to die." When questioned and treated by the teacher, it was revealed that the student had cut his wrists using a razor. The second case involved a student banging his head against a wall in response to emotional pain due to feeling ignored by his parents (Baker et al., 2025).

Self-injury behavior can arise due to an increase in unpleasant emotional states such as anger, tension (pressure), anxiety, sadness, or self-criticism, where the individual feels unable to control or escape from the situation. When facing problems encountered in daily life, individuals should be able to respond appropriately to the emotions they feel. This response is intended to be adaptive behavior so as not to harm or have a negative impact on themselves or others (Hogan & Bigby, 2024; Maharani & Sukma, 2021). Self-injury behavior has serious impacts on adolescents' well-being, both in the short and long term. Physically, this behavior can cause injuries, infections, permanent scarring, and in severe cases, can be fatal, even if unintentional. Psychologically, self-injury is closely linked to various mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and substance abuse. In line with this, Nowacki & Jirsch (2017) revealed that the impact of self-injury behavior can be immediately apparent from the presence of repeated wounds or scars on certain body parts such as the arms, thighs, or wrists, as well as extreme mood changes, ranging from withdrawal to irritability or crying for no reason, and withdrawal from friends.

Paulus et al. (2021) stated that adolescents who self-injure deserve proper treatment to reduce the stress and disturbance caused by negative emotional conditions that drive them to self-injure and to mitigate the negative impact of self-injury. Of course, self-injury behavior in students requires special attention from both parents and schools, especially guidance and counseling teachers. Syukur, Neviyarni, & Zahri (2019) One technique in guidance and counseling that can be used to reduce self-injury is group counseling services. Ellis et al. (2024) state that group counseling services are one of the services available in guidance and counseling that allows students to have the opportunity to discuss and

resolve personal problems by utilizing group dynamics. The provision of guidance and counseling services in this study focuses on group counseling using approaches or techniques that are appropriate to the students' problems, namely mindful self-compassion. Mindful self-compassion is a combination of mindfulness and self-compassion training, based on self-awareness to identify conditions of psychological suffering as a basis for providing a constructive response to experience and oneself. Mindfulness can reduce rumination (negative thoughts), improve emotional regulation, and reduce emotional reactivity. This skill is crucial for breaking the cycle of emotional triggers leading to self-injury. Self-compassion, meanwhile, can develop healthier ways of responding to emotional distress.

The process of mindful self-compassion tends to activate difficult emotions, at least in the initial phase, thus helping to cultivate broad awareness and equanimity as a basis for compassionate action. Fuochi & Voci (2024) stated that mindful self-compassion has 8 meeting sessions, namely discovering mindful self-compassion, practicing mindfulness, practicing loving-kindness meditation, finding your compassionate voice, living deeply, managing difficult emotions, transforming relationships, and embracing your life. Mindful self-compassion has various benefits, including improving emotional regulation and reducing negative emotions, developing full awareness of suffering, and responding with kindness rather than rejection or judgment. In line with this, (Bluth et al., 2023) found that mindful self-compassion fosters a sense of peace, self-acceptance, and reduces the desire to punish oneself. (Rizki et al., 2021) revealed that mindful self-compassion can improve students' subjective well-being through self-acceptance and mindfulness exercises, resulting in feelings of being calmer, more focused, and having a positive perspective on problems.

Based on the above studies, the researcher feels it is important to conduct research on mindful self-compassion group counseling to reduce self-injury behavior. Unlike previous research, this study focuses on early adolescents and the reduction of self-injury behavior. Most previous studies have focused on adult populations or been conducted in Western countries. This research is important because of the high rate of self-injury behavior in adolescents, which must be reduced or eradicated. Based on the above description, the researcher is interested in examining the effectiveness of implementing mindful self-compassion group counseling to reduce self-injury behavior in students.

## Method

This research uses a quantitative approach with experimental research type. The research design used in this study was a pre-experiment with the One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design, where this study did not use a control group because it only provided treatment to groups experiencing problems by looking at the differences between the pretest on self-injury behavior and the posttest because of the treatment. The sample for this study was determined based on criteria for self-injury behavior based on the instrument completed by the students. Based on this, students who committed self-injury were identified and determined to be as many as nine people. This study uses descriptive analysis with non-parametric statistics with the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test statistical technique, because the sample used is small and the type of data used is ordinal or hierarchical data (Yousefi Afrashteh & Hasani, 2022).

## Results and Discussion

The following is a description of the frequency distribution of self-injury behavior in class VIII students at SMP Negeri 29 Padang.

**Table 1.** Description of the Distribution of the Frequency of Self-Injury Behavior Among Students at SMP Negeri 29 Padang

Category	Interval	f	%
Very high	$X \geq 122$	24	8
High	$101 < X \leq 122$	54	18
Currently	$80 < X \leq 101$	117	39
Low	$59 < X \leq 80$	93	31
Very Low	$X \leq 59$	10	3
Total		298	100

Based on Table 1 above, in general, the description of self-injury behavior in class VIII students of SMP Negeri 29 Padang is in the medium category, namely 39% or 39 students; then the others show a very high category of 8% or 24 students, a high category of 18% or 54 students, a low category of 31% or 93 students, and a very low category of 3% or 10 students who have self-injury behavior.

### Pretest Results of Self-Injury Behavior in Experimental Group Students

The pretest results for students in the experimental group were used to see the picture of self-injury behavior in students before being given mindful self-

compassion group counseling treatment, which can be seen in Table 2.

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the description of self-injury behavior in students in the experimental group before being given treatment (pretest) was in the very high category, namely 33% or 3 students, then the others showed a high category of 44% or as many as 4 students, a medium category of 22% or 2 students, a low category of 0% or 0 students and a very low category of 0% or 0 students who had self-injury behavior.

**Table 2.** Description of the Frequency Distribution of Self-Injury Behavior in Students at SMP Negeri 29 Padang Before Being Given Treatment (Pretest)

Category	Interval	f	%
Very high	$X > 122$	3	33
High	$101 < X \leq 122$	4	44
Currently	$80 < X \leq 101$	2	22
Low	$59 < X \leq 80$	0	0
Very Low	$X \leq 59$	0	0
Total		9	100

### Posttest Results of Self-Injury Behavior in Experimental Group Students

Post test was given to see how the self-injury behavior of students was described after being given mindful self-compassion group counseling treatment. The following are the results of processing the post-test data for the experimental group:

**Table 3.** Description of the Frequency Distribution of Self-Injury Behavior in Students at SMP Negeri 29 Padang After Being Given Treatment (Posttest)

Category	Interval	f	%
Very high	$X > 122$	0	0
High	$101 < X \leq 122$	0	0
Currently	$80 < X \leq 101$	4	44
Low	$59 < X \leq 80$	5	56
Very Low	$X \leq 59$	0	0
Total		9	100

Based on Table 3, the description of self-injury behavior in students in the experimental group after being given treatment (post-test) shows no students in the very high or high categories. The results indicate a medium category of 44% or 4 students, a low category of 56% or 5 students, and a very low category of 0% or 0 students who have self-injury behavior.

### Differences in Pretest and Posttest Results of Self-Injury Behavior of Students in the Experimental Group

The results of the pretest and posttest data processing were compared to determine the differences before and after being given mindful self-compassion group counseling treatment to students who had self-injury behavior, which can be seen in the Table 4.

**Table 4.** Frequency Distribution of Differences in Self-Injury Behavior in Students Before and After Treatment (Pretest and Posttest)

Category	Interval	Pretest		Posttest	
		f	%	f	%
Very high	$X > 122$	3	33	0	0
High	$101 < X \leq 122$	4	44	0	0
Currently	$80 < X \leq 101$	2	22	4	44
Low	$59 < X \leq 80$	0	0	5	56
Very Low	$X \leq 59$	0	0	0	0
Total		9	100	9	100

Based on the frequency distribution in Table 4 above, mindful self-compassion group counseling services can reduce self-injury behavior in students. This can be seen from the difference in frequency between the pretest and posttest. The pretest results showed that 3 students were in the very high category (33%), 4 students were in the high category (44%), and 2 students were in the medium category (22%). Furthermore, in the posttest results, 4 students were in the medium category (44%) and 5 students were in the low category (56%). These results indicate a difference in students' self-injury behavior before and after receiving mindful self-compassion group counseling. All nine students in the group experienced a decrease in scores, demonstrating a change in self-injury behavior after the treatment. These results are also supported by the hypothesis test.

#### Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis proposed in this study is that there is a difference in self-injury behavior in students before and after receiving mindful self-compassion group counseling. This hypothesis was tested using a non-parametric statistical analysis technique, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, using SPSS version 22.0. The calculation results can be seen in the following table.

**Table 5.** Results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Analysis

	Test Statistics	
	Posttest - Pretest	
Z		-2.670b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	

Based on Table 5, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) result is 0.008, which means that the value is less than 0.05 or  $0.008 < 0.05$ . So, it can be concluded that the hypothesis tested in this study is accepted, because there is a significant difference regarding self-injury behavior in the experimental group before and after being given mindful self-compassion group counseling. Thus, the hypothesis tested in this study can be accepted, namely that "there is a significant difference in self-injury

behavior in students before and after being given mindful self-compassion group counseling services." To see the direction of this difference, refer to Table 6.

**Table 6.** Direction of Differences between Pretest and Posttest in Reducing Self-Injury Behavior in Students

Posttest - Pretest	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Negative Ranks	9a	5.00	45.00
Positive Ranks	0b	.00	.00
Ties	0c		
Total	9		

Based on Table 6 above, the results of the directional difference test show that there are nine students in the group who experienced a decrease in self-injury behavior from the pretest to the posttest. Based on this, it can be interpreted that the experimental group experienced a significant decrease after being given mindful self-compassion group counseling services.

#### Discussion

Self-injury behavior is an act of intentionally harming oneself without the intention of committing suicide, which often occurs as a response to emotional stress that is difficult to manage and this action is not socially approved (Keyvanara et al., 2020; Yöyen & Keleş, 2024; Melamita & Syukur, 2022). Dawe-Lane & Flouri (2023); Lurigio et al. (2024) stated that self-injury in adolescents often occurs as a mechanism to relieve negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, or sadness that they are unable to express adaptively. Based on the results of the research data processing, the average pretest score for self-injury behavior of students in the experimental group was 124.2, which is in the high category. In other words, a high pretest score indicates that students have self-injury behavior. This is in line with the findings of Tan et al. (2025); Varo et al. (2025)

that approximately 20-25% of adolescents have self-injured at least once in their lives.

The high self-injury scores in the experimental group before the intervention indicate a lack of emotional regulation and self-acceptance. This is supported by research by Carenys & Adan (2025); Schmidt & Ownsworth (2022), which found that individuals with self-injury have higher brain activity in areas associated with managing negative emotions and difficulty developing healthy self-awareness. In this regard, the mindful self-compassion approach offers a more comprehensive alternative because it focuses not only on behavioral control but also on increasing self-awareness, acceptance, and empathy. After receiving mindful self-compassion group counseling, the average self-injury behavior score based on the posttest results of the students decreased to 76.20, which is included in the moderate category. The data shows variation in the level of change between individuals, although self-injury behavior tended to be in the low category after treatment, but some also fell into the moderate category. This variation indicates that the effectiveness of mindful self-compassion is influenced by individual differences in readiness to accept the concepts of self-awareness and self-compassion.

Furthermore, the decrease in the average posttest score indicates that the mindful self-compassion intervention helped students learn healthier ways to manage their negative emotions. In a study conducted by Finlay-Jones et al. (2020); Gouveia et al. (2018), adolescents who participated in mindful self-compassion training demonstrated better emotional control skills. This is because mindful self-compassion fosters a non-judgmental mindset, allowing students to identify and manage negative thoughts without channeling their emotions into self-injury. The mindful self-compassion group counseling approach is one strategy in an effort to reduce self-injury behavior in students. Providing mindful self-compassion group counseling services helps group members to observe thoughts and emotions without automatically reacting to them, creating space between emotional stimuli and behavioral responses to those emotions, reducing self-criticism, increasing motivation for self-care and healthy behaviors, and developing resilience skills in the face of difficulties (González Moreno & Molero Jurado, 2024; Li et al., 2024).

Syafitri et al. (2024); and Ashok et al. (2025), stated that mindful self-compassion effectively helps adolescents reduce emotional distress and improve well-being. In line with this, Lyon & Galbraith (2023); Sedighimornani et al. (2019) found that mindful self-compassion fosters a sense of peace, self-acceptance, and reduces the desire to punish oneself. Cengiz & Kılıç (2025); Rudaz et al. (2017) revealed that mindful self-

compassion can improve students' subjective well-being through self-acceptance and mindfulness training, resulting in feelings of being calmer, more focused, and having a positive perspective on problems. These results are similar to this study, where students who initially showed a tendency towards self-injury experienced a decrease after participating in a mindful self-compassion-based group counseling session. This confirms that mindful self-compassion plays a crucial role in strengthening emotional regulation mechanisms in adolescents. Furthermore, the decrease in self-injury behavior scores indicates that students are able to develop full awareness of their negative feelings and thoughts without getting caught up in self-judgment.

According to Bruk et al. (2022); Gilbert (2020), mindful self-compassion helps someone face suffering with love and awareness, rather than denial or escape. Students who participate in mindful self-compassion group counseling sessions learn to view emotional pain as a natural part of human life, making them better able to resist the urge to engage in self-injury. Furthermore, research by Lee & Lee (2022; Nguyen et al. (2025) corroborates these findings, finding that eight sessions of mindful self-compassion training successfully reduced stress levels and improved emotional regulation in middle school students. This suggests that mindful self-compassion mechanisms, such as non-judgmental awareness and self-compassion, help students shift negative thought patterns into more adaptive ones.

## Conclusion

Based on the research results obtained, it can be generally concluded that mindful self-compassion group counseling is effective in reducing self-injury behavior in students. Specifically, the research findings indicate that there is a significant difference in the self-injury behavior of students before and after being given the mindful self-compassion group counseling treatment; the posttest score is lower than the pretest score; and there is a significant decrease in the self-injury behavior of students before and after being given the mindful self-compassion group counseling treatment.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor in the Guidance and Counseling Department at Padang State University, who has shared time, thoughts, and knowledge. I also want to thank my parents for their encouragement, both mentally and financially, in completing this article.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, T. P. B; methodology, Y. S.; formal analysis, D. S.; investigation, M. S.; resources, T. P. B.; writing – preparation of original draft, Y. S.; writing – reviewing and

editing, M. S.; visualization, T. P. B; supervision, T. P. B.; project administration, Y. S; obtaining funding, D. S. All authors have read and approved the published version of the manuscript

### Funding

No external funding.

### Conflicts of Interest

No conflict interest.

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