



Psychology

with Dr Jenna Gilchrist

Talking points

Knowledge & Comprehension

1. What emotions might students experience when starting university, and why?
2. What is emotion regulation, and why is it important?
3. What does it mean to be self-compassionate?

Application

4. How could Jenna use her research findings to support high school students before they start university?
5. If Jenna discovers that first-generation students find it harder to adapt to university life, what specialised support systems could universities provide to help them?
6. What questions would you ask members of the Self-Attitudes Lab to find out more about their research?

Analysis

7. Once a student has adapted to university life, why do you think they typically experience less extreme emotional swings?
8. What do you think are the pros and cons of collecting data using 'self-reporting' techniques, such as asking students to record their emotions?

Evaluation

9. To what extent do you practise self-compassion? How do you think you could benefit from being more self-compassionate?
10. What emotions do you expect to experience when you embark on the next chapter of your life? What do you think could help you adapt during this transition?

Activity

Create a self-care box

Think of someone you know (it could be yourself!) who will soon be embarking on a new chapter of their life – perhaps they will be leaving school, moving away from home, starting at college or university, starting a new job, or retiring from work. What emotions do you think they will feel during their transition? Create a list of challenges they may be worried about and experiences they may be excited about.

Create a self-care box containing ten items to help them adapt as they transition to this new chapter of life. How will these items improve their self-attitudes? “Some important self-attitudes are self-esteem (the overall value you place on yourself), self-efficacy (the belief in your own ability to succeed in specific situations) and self-compassion (being kind to yourself in instances of difficulty),” says Jenna.

For example, you might include photos to remind them of happy memories, some of their favourite (non-perishable) foods to make them feel comforted, or quotes to remind them to see the bigger picture when they are stressed. What objects will help them feel better about themselves during times of struggles and encourage them to practise self-compassion?

Give your box to the person you made it for or use it yourself when you finish school and move on to the next chapter in your life.

More resources

- Explore the other research topics conducted in the Self-Attitudes Lab: www.uwaterloo.ca/self-attitudes-lab
- Learn more about practising self-compassion from the Compassionate Mind Foundation: www.compassionatemind.co.uk