

## Perfectionism, Self-Compassion, and Emotion Dysregulation: An Exploratory Analysis of Mediation Models in an Eating Disorder Sample

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**Abstract :** As eating disorders are associated with high levels of chronicity, impairment, and distress, it is paramount to evaluate factors that may improve treatment outcomes in this group. Individuals with eating disorders exhibit elevated levels of perfectionism and emotion dysregulation, as well as reduced self-compassion. These variables are related to eating disorder outcomes, including shape/weight concerns and psychosocial impairment. Thus, these factors may be tenable targets for treatment within eating disorder populations. However, the relative contributions of perfectionism, emotion dysregulation, and self-compassion to the severity of shape/weight concerns and psychosocial impairment remain largely unexplored. In the current study, mediation analyses were conducted to clarify how perfectionism, emotion dysregulation, and self-compassion are linked to shape/weight concerns and psychosocial impairment. The sample was comprised of 85 patients from an outpatient eating disorder clinic. The patients completed self-report measures of perfectionism, self-compassion, emotion dysregulation, eating disorder symptoms, and psychosocial impairment. Specifically, emotion dysregulation was assessed as a mediator in the relationships between (1) perfectionism and shape/weight concerns, (2) self-compassion and shape/weight concerns, (3) perfectionism and psychosocial impairment, and (4) self-compassion and psychosocial impairment. It was postulated that emotion dysregulation would significantly mediate relationships in the former two models. An a priori hypothesis was not constructed in reference to the latter models, as these analyses were preliminary and exploratory in nature. The PROCESS macro for SPSS was utilized to perform these analyses. Emotion dysregulation fully mediated the relationships between perfectionism and eating disorder outcomes. In the link between self-compassion and psychosocial impairment, emotion dysregulation partially mediated this relationship. Finally, emotion dysregulation did not significantly mediate the relationship between self-compassion and shape/weight concerns. The results suggest that emotion dysregulation and self-compassion may be suitable targets to decrease the severity of psychosocial impairment and shape/weight concerns in individuals with eating disorders. Further research is required to determine the stability of these models over time, between diagnostic groups, and in nonclinical samples.

**Keywords :** eating disorders, emotion dysregulation, perfectionism, self-compassion

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