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### Student-Athlete Well-Being at the University of Montana

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# **Student-Athlete Well-Being at the University of Montana**

Olivia Oosterbaan, University of Montana

# About Me

- A tennis player at the University of Montana for three years
- Student–Athlete Committee Member
- Psychology Undergraduate



**OLIVIA OOSTERBAAN**

# **Introduction**

# Background

## **Purpose of Study**

Explore whether self-compassion is related to student-athlete psychological well-being and sports performance.

## **Self-Compassion Definition**

Self-compassion is defined as a healthy form of self-acceptance (Neff et al., 2003).

## **Why Self-Compassion?**

Self-compassion has been proposed as a tool or resource for student-athletes during challenging times in sports programs (Reis et al., 2015).

# The Problem

- Student-athlete well-being is not an NCAA priority.
- The University of Montana athletics program needs a funded sports psychology and wellness program

# Hypothesis

- I hypothesize that student-athletes at the University of Montana will have low levels of self-compassion.

# Objectives

## Guiding Questions

- Do women have lower levels of self-compassion than men?
- Do self-compassion levels change for different sports?
- Do higher levels of self-compassion drive higher levels of sports performance for student-athletes?

# **Research Methods**

Part 2



# Overview of Research Methods

**Self-compassion enables action for growth and encourages change to improve well-being**

A mixed-methods design facilitated the examination of relationships between self-compassion and student-athlete well-being

# Student-Athlete Questionnaire

What year are you in school?

1. Freshman
2. Sophomore
3. Junior
4. Senior

Age (in years)

What sport do you play?

1. Men's Basketball
2. Women's Basketball
3. Men's Football
4. Women's Golf
5. Women's Soccer
6. Women's Softball
7. Men's Tennis
8. Women's Tennis
9. Women's Track and Field
10. Men's Track and Field
11. Women's Volleyball
12. Men's Cross Country
13. Women's Cross Country

## Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)

### HOW I TYPICALLY ACT TOWARDS MYSELF IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Please read each statement carefully before answering. For each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following 1-5 scale. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.

1. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.
2. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.
3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.
4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.
5. I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.
6. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.
7. When I'm down, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.
8. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.
9. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.
10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.
11. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.
12. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.
13. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.
14. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.
15. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.
16. When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.
17. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.
18. When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.
19. I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
20. When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.
21. I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
22. When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.
23. I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.
24. When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.
25. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.
26. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

What is your gender identity?

- Man
- Woman
- Transgender Man
- Transgender Woman
- Gender queer or gender non-conforming
- Questioning
- Something else

# Scoring Key.

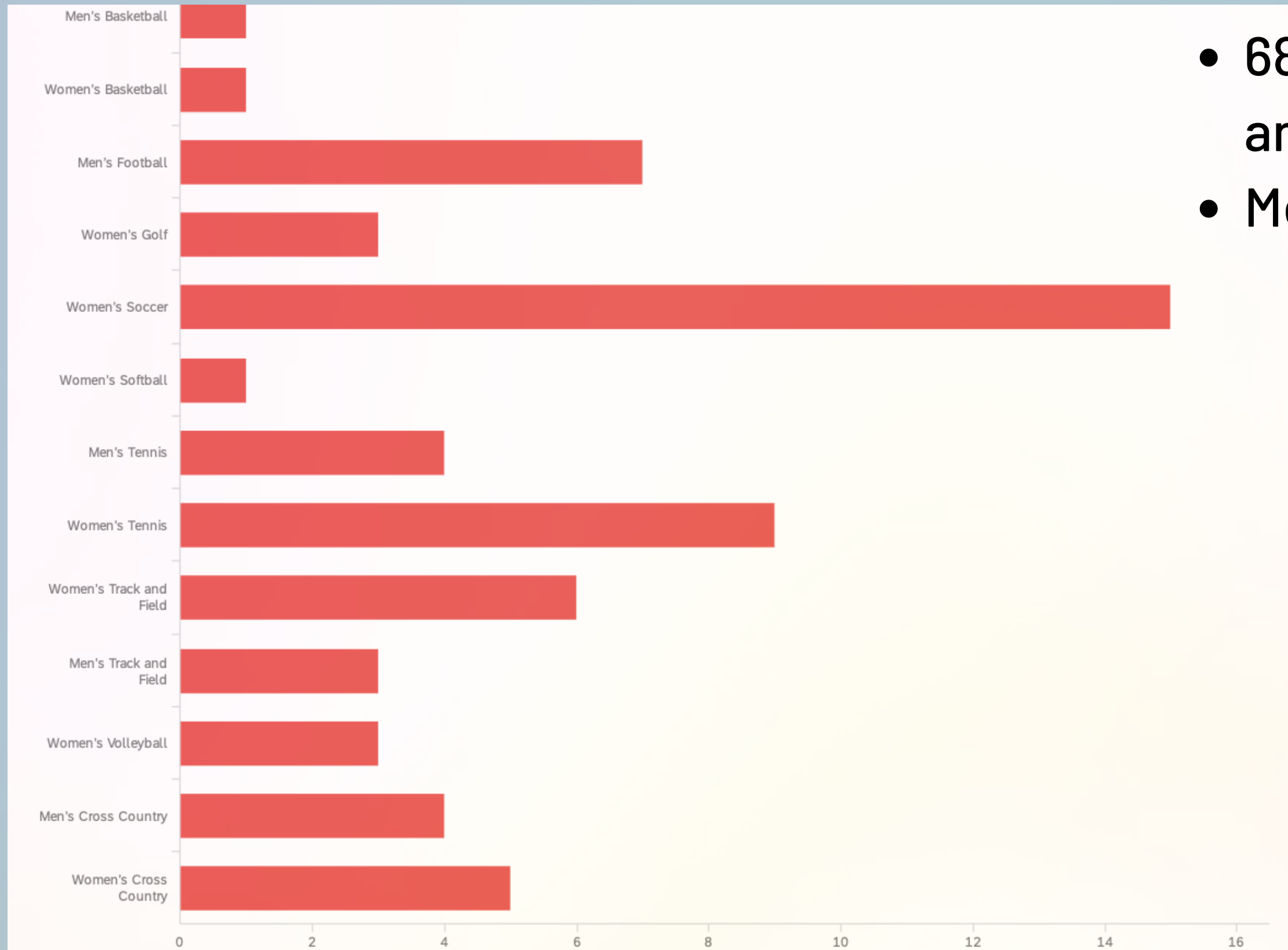
- Self-Kindness Items: 5, 12, 19, 23, 26
- Self-Judgment Items (reverse scored): 1, 8, 11, 16, 21
- Common Humanity Items: 3, 7, 10, 15
- Isolation Items (reverse scored): 4, 13, 18, 25
- Mindfulness Items: 9, 14, 17, 22
- Over-identification Items (reverse scored): 2, 6, 20, 24
- To reverse score items (1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1).

# **Results**

Part 3

# Self-Compassion Levels

Based on Sports

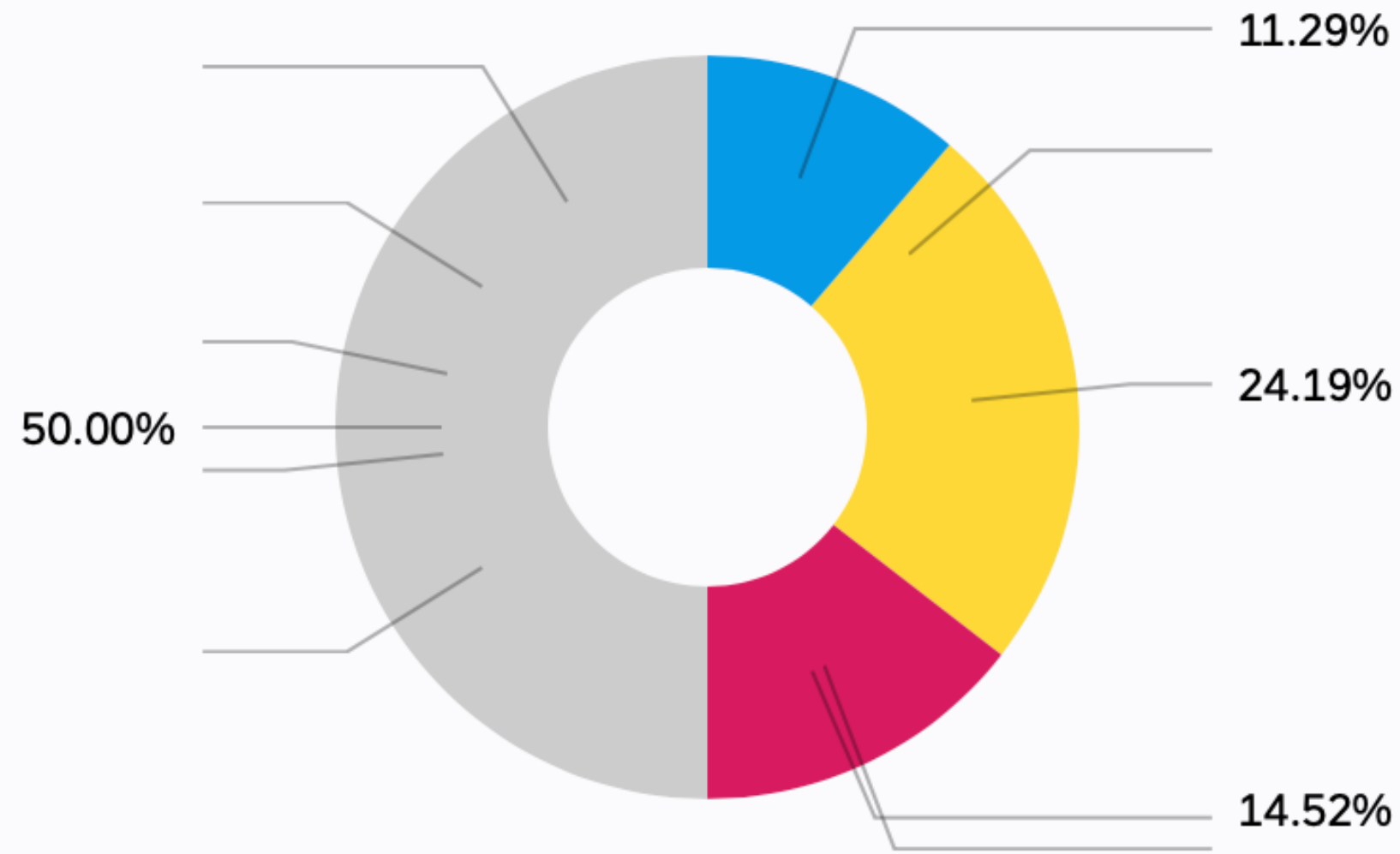


- 68 student-athletes have answered in the last week
- Mean age of participants: 20.9

Total Athletes  
Self-Compassion Score:

**2.59**

# Main Focus



Men's Football    Women's Soccer    Women's Tennis    All Others

Football

Soccer

Tennis

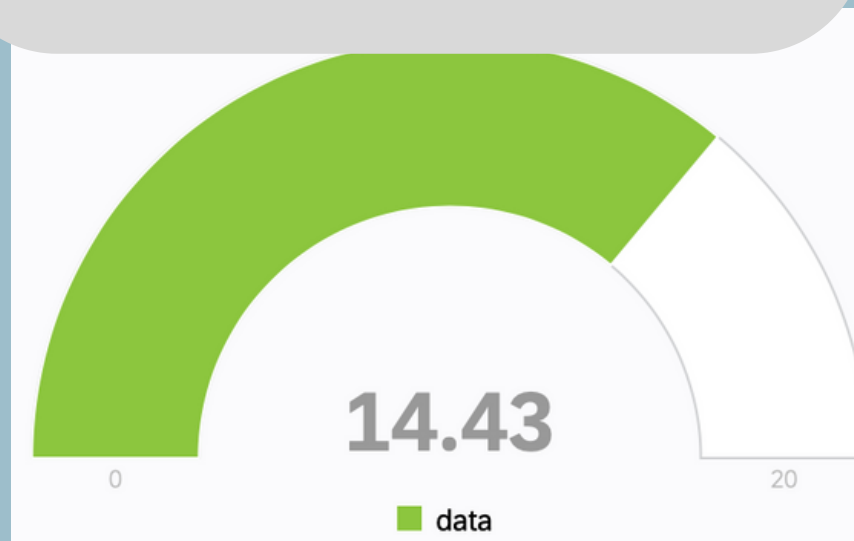


# Men's Football

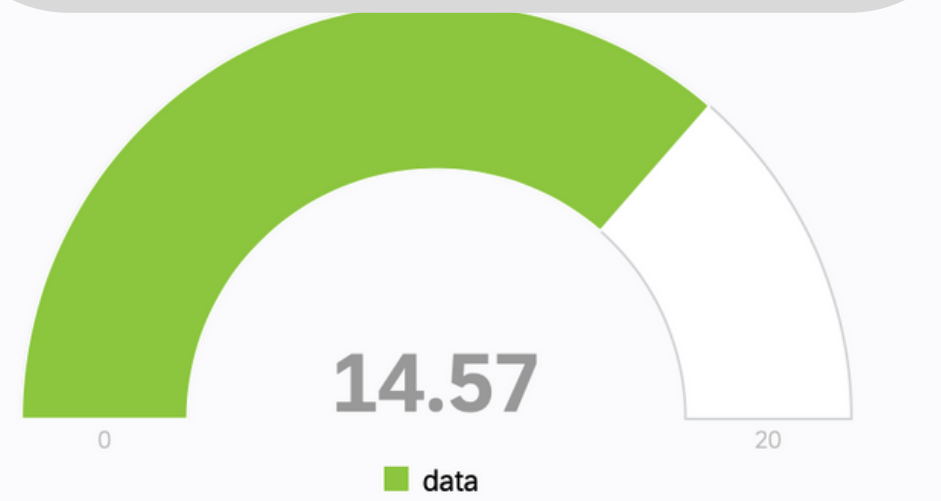
Total Self-Compassion Score: 3.65

## Mean Scores

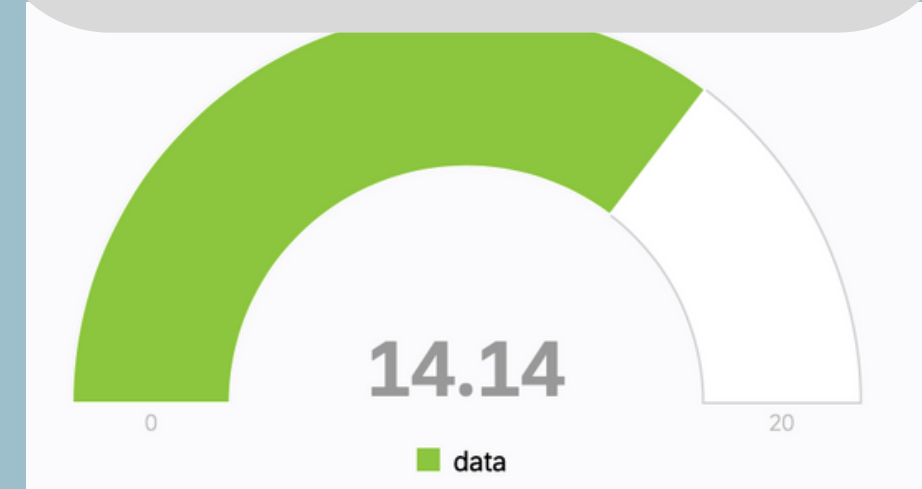
Self-Kindness



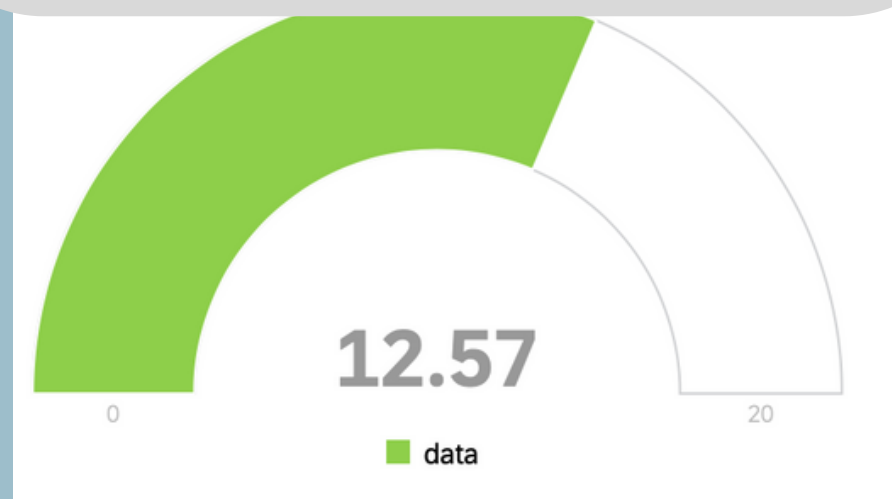
Isolation  
(Reversed Score)



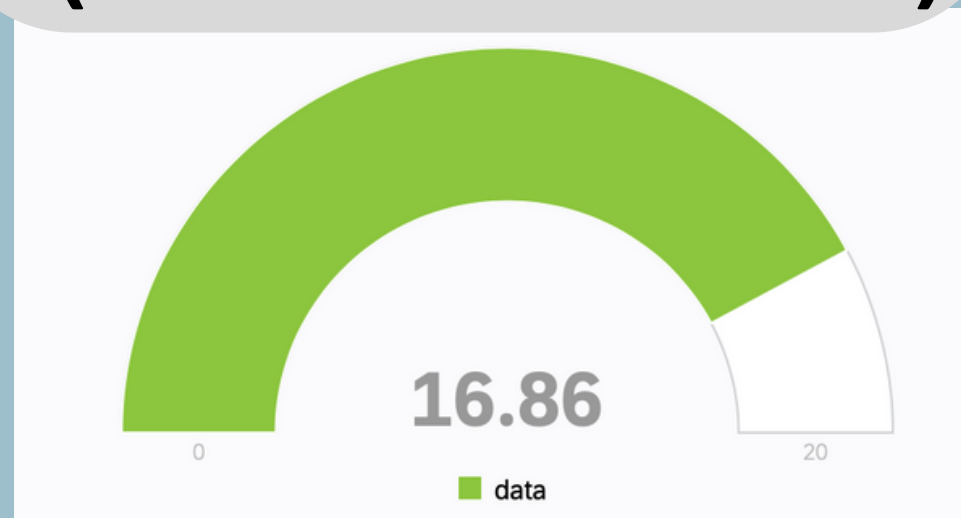
Mindfulness



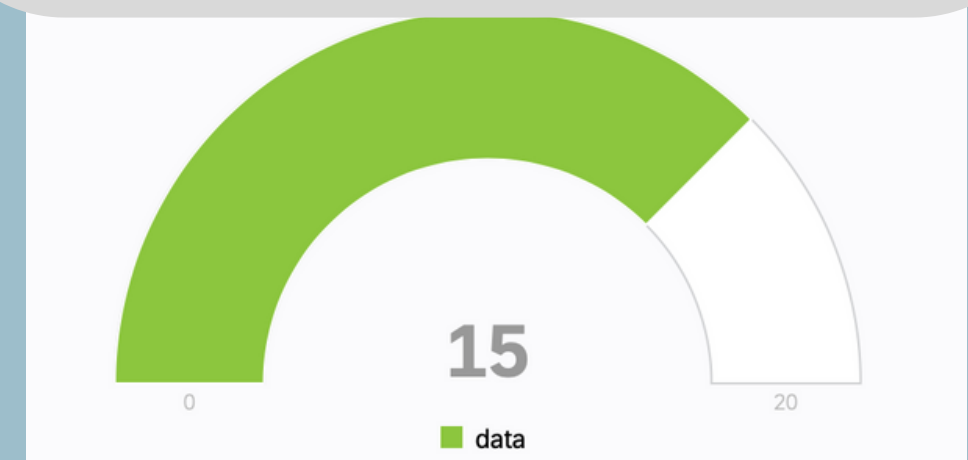
Common Humanity



Self-Judgment  
(Reversed Score)



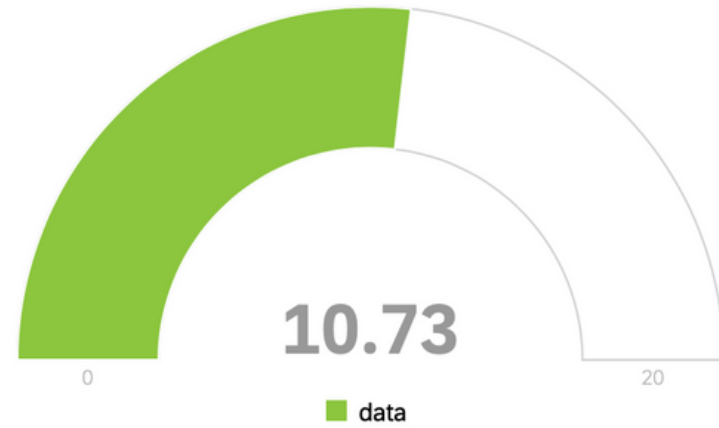
Over Identified  
(reversed score)



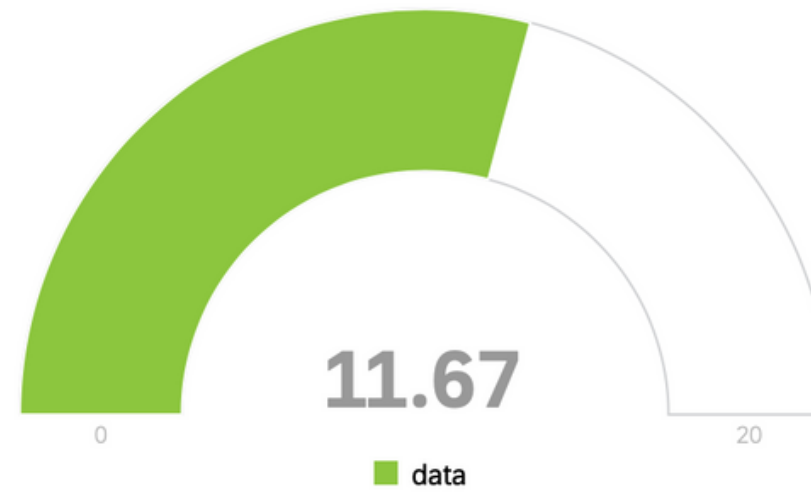
# Women's Soccer

Total Self-Compassion  
Score: 2.48

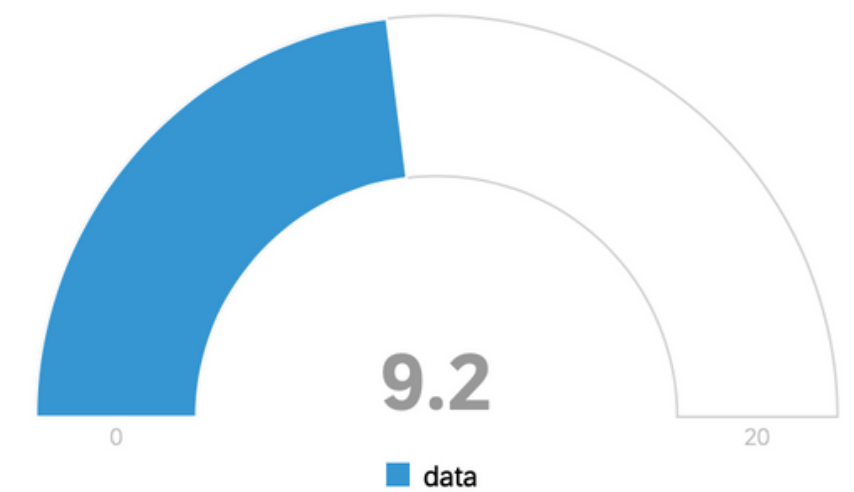
Self-Kindness



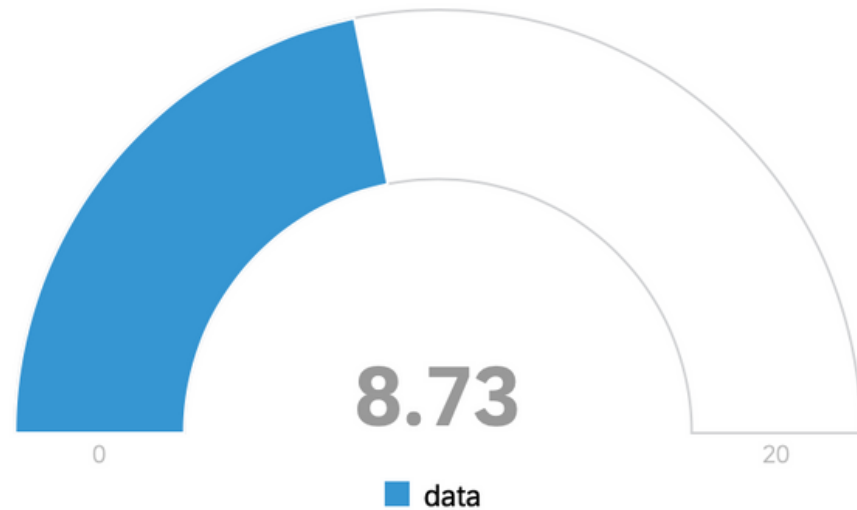
Self-Judgment



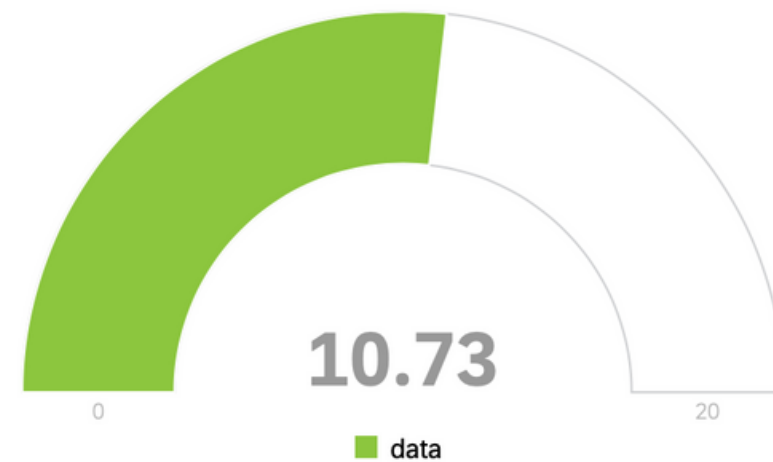
Isolation



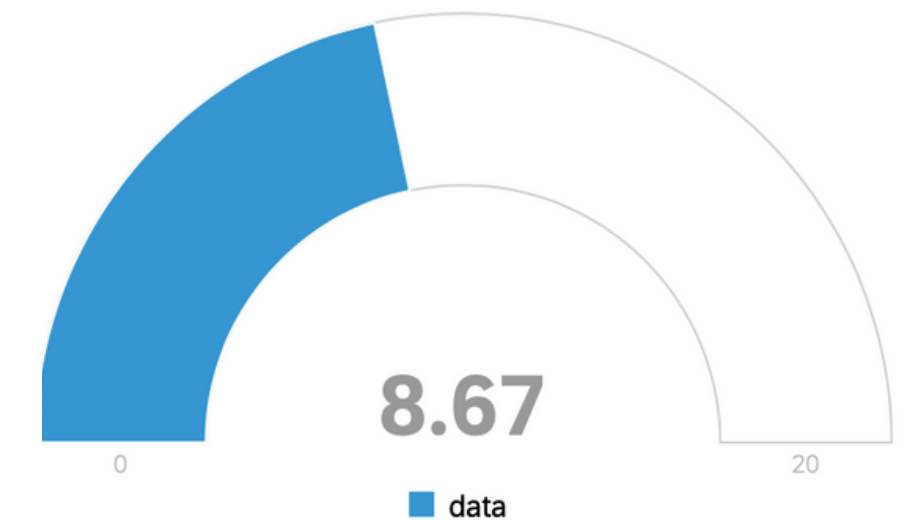
Common Humanity



Over-Identified



Mindfulness

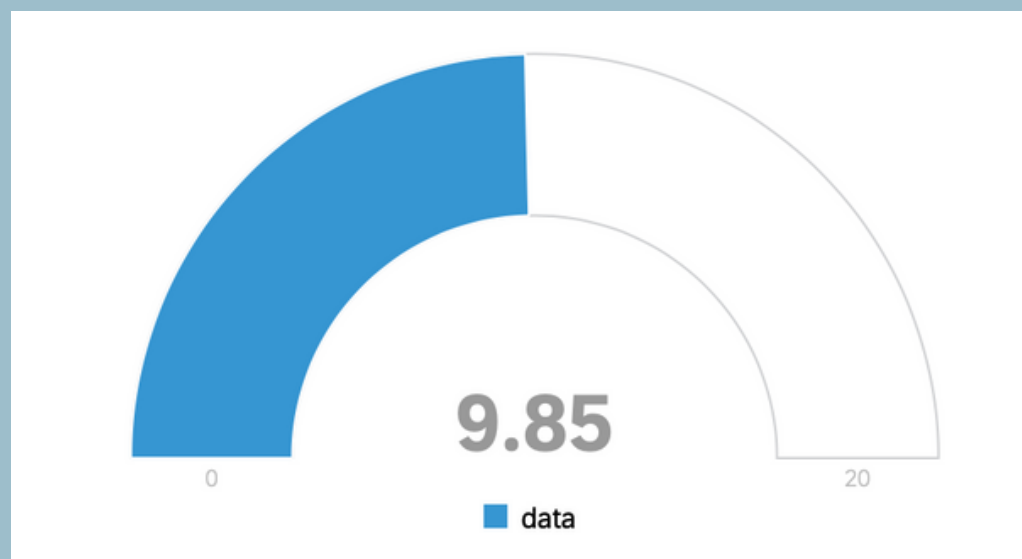




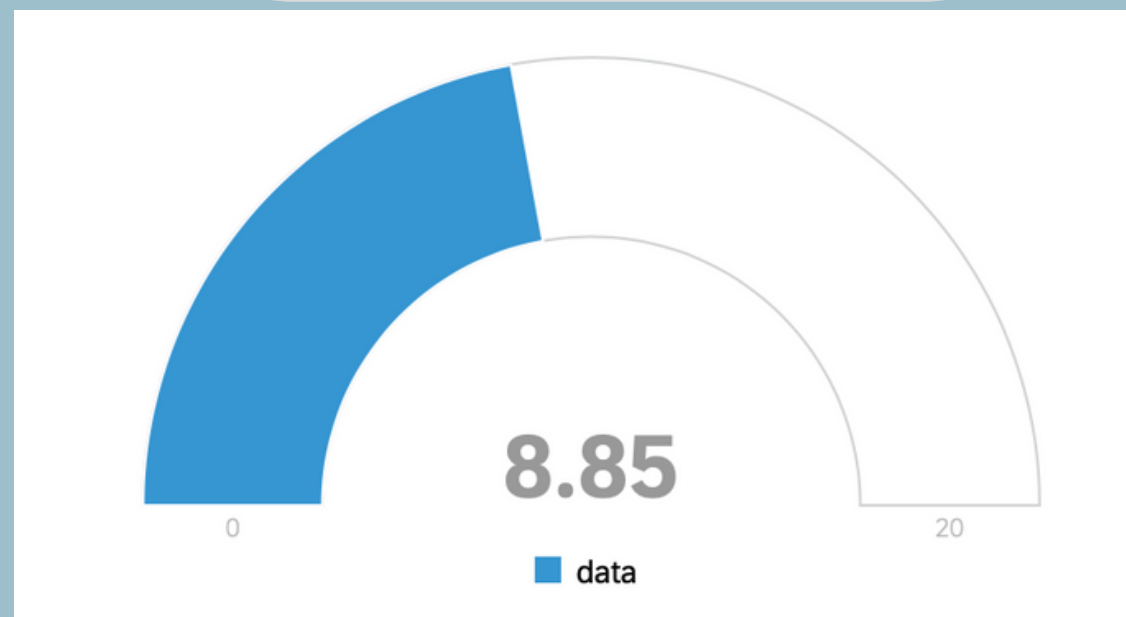
# Tennis (Men's and Women's)

Total Self-Compassion  
Score: 2.24

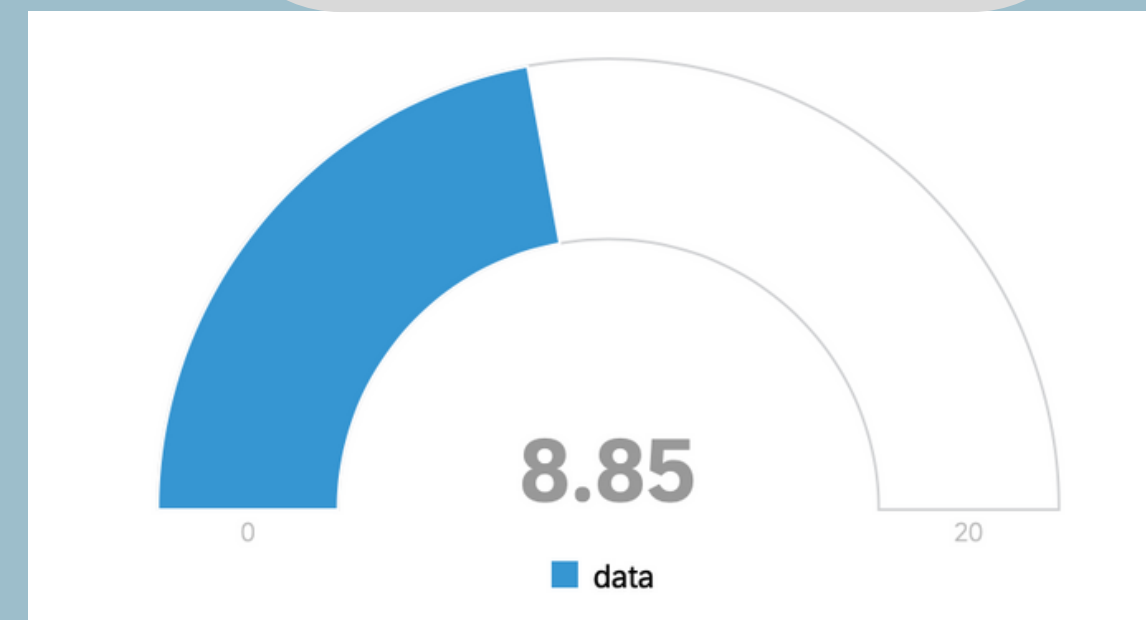
Self-Kindness



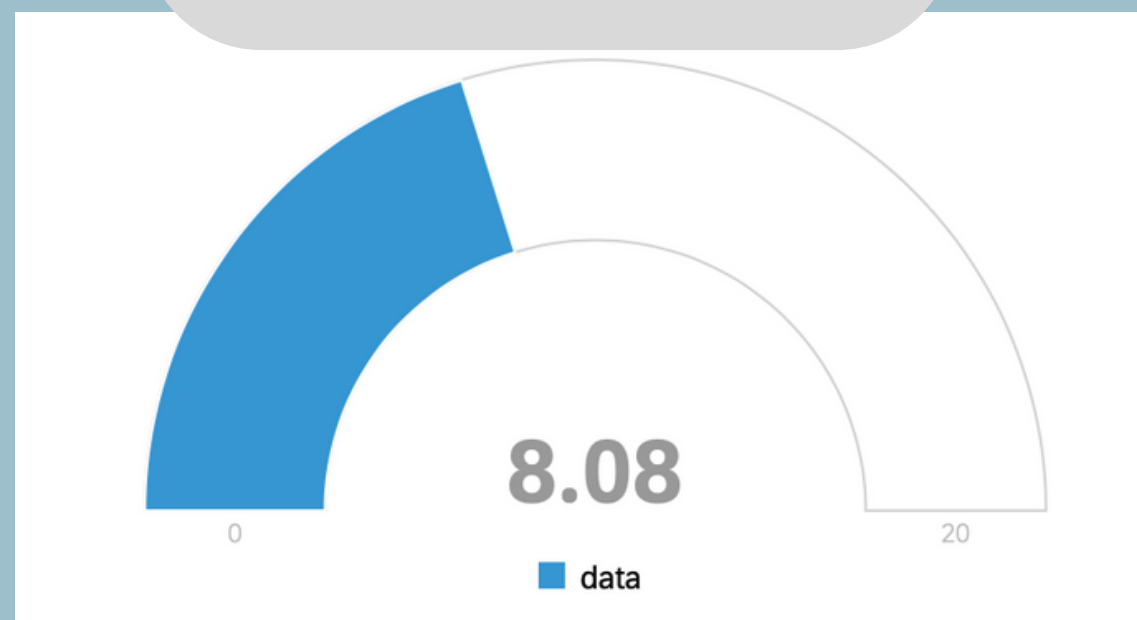
Mindfulness



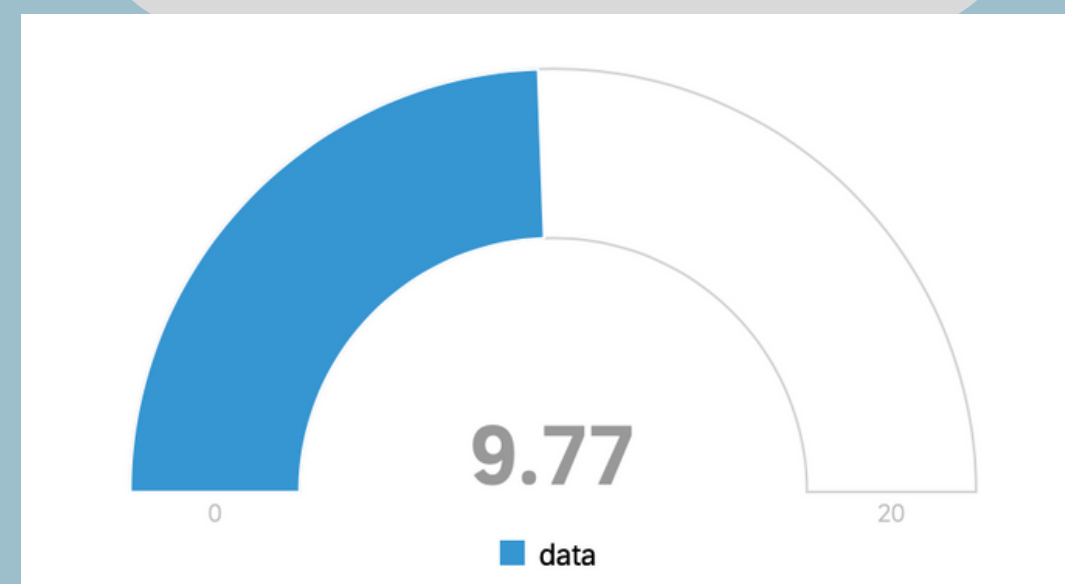
Over-Identified



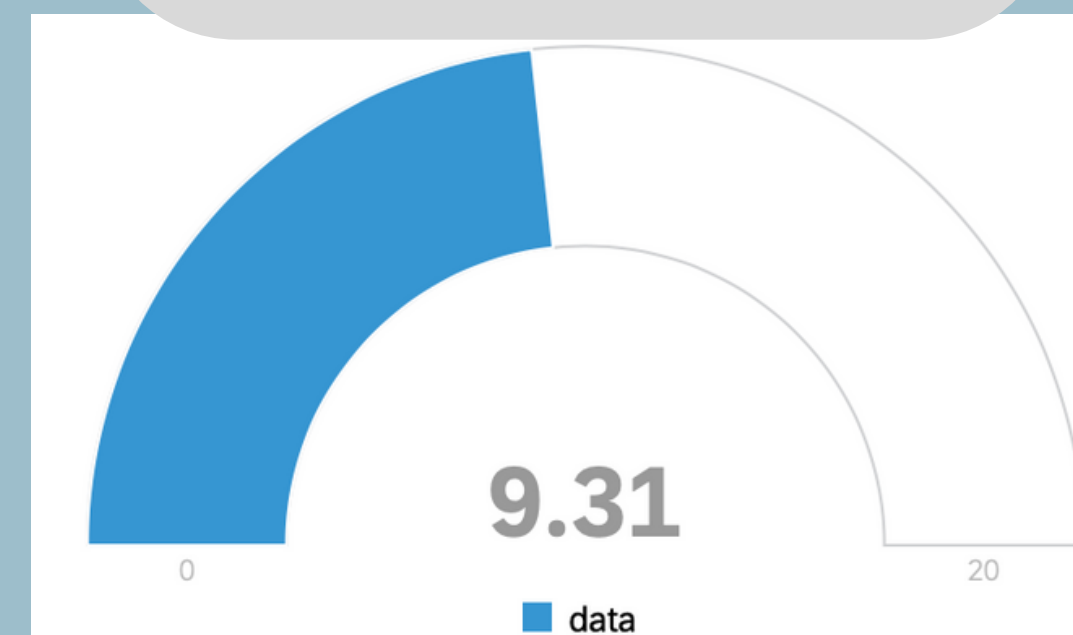
Isolation



Self-Judgment



Common Humanity



# Self-Compassion Levels

Based on Gender

**Men**

**3.82**

Total Score

**Women**

**3.36**

Total Score

**Gender Queer  
or Non-Conforming**

**1.71**

Total Score

# **Conclusion**

Part 4

# **Discussion**

## **Interpretation of findings**

- Regarding preliminary demographic findings, there is a difference between sports and genders
- Student-athletes at the University of Montana have moderate to low levels of self-compassion

## **Applications for those findings**

- Institutional issues
- Team culture
- More available resources

# **Future Directions and Limitations**

## Limitation: Size

- Additional research between University of Montana athletics and Montana State University athletic

## Limitation: Relating Self-Compassion to athletic performance

- Additional research on self-compassion practice and use during athletic performance

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