

If you think you're bad at self-care, you probably suck at self-compassion.

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Objectives

- Provide an overview of self-compassion and why you should care about it.
- Anticipate and dispel misconceptions about self-compassion.
- Facilitate a self-compassion exercise in order to demystify the concept and spark curiosity.
- Provide resources for the self-compassion curious to take next steps.

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Why should I care about self-compassion?



"If you don't have weights at home, try using canned food or the psychological burden of simply existing in this world!"

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Why else should I care about self-compassion?

- Self-compassion has been associated with:
 - Increased ability to cope with stressors (ex: divorce, trauma, chronic pain)
 - Increased health-related behaviors (ex: eating well, drinking less, exercising)
 - Decreased fear of failure & increased willingness to try again after setbacks
 - Taking increased personal responsibility for one's actions

Sbarra DA et al, Self Identity, 2013. Hiraoka R et al, J Traumatic Stress, 2015. Wren AA et al, J Pain Sx Management, 2012. Magnus CM et al, Self Identity, 2010. Zhang J et al, Person Social Psych Bulletin, 2016. Neff K et al, Self Identity, 2005. Breines J, Person Social Psych Bulletin, 2012.

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What self-compassion IS

- “A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.”
- Self-compassion means that when you are suffering, you treat yourself the same way you would treat someone else in the same position.
- Self-compassion is a PRACTICE.

www.dictionary.com/browse/compassion

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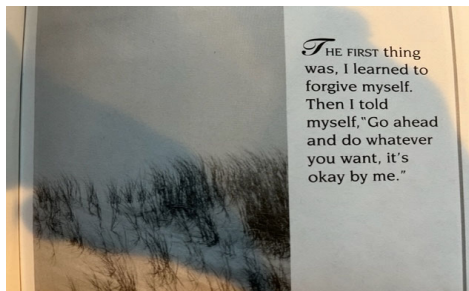
I don't understand.

- Self-kindness (vs. Self-judgment)
 - Avoiding self-criticism
 - Offering ourselves warmth & acceptance
- Common humanity (vs. Isolation)
 - Mistakes & failure are part of being human
 - Pain is part of the human experience & connects us to each other
- Mindfulness (vs. Over-identification)
 - Awareness of current experience
 - Acceptance of thoughts & emotions without avoidance or exaggeration

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What self-compassion is NOT

- Self-pity
- Self-indulgence
- Self-esteem



Neff K, Germer C. The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook, 2018.
Jack Handey, Deep Thoughts.

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Self-compassion is also not self-care!

- Self-care: "focused attention to physiology"
 - Eating, sleeping, resting, relaxing, exercising, connecting with others, etc.
- Self-care is about actions. Self-compassion is about attitude.
- Self-Care says: "It is unprofessional *not* to look after yourself!"
- Self-Compassion says: "You must protect the precious resource of yourself."

Abbott et al, Anesth Anal 2020.

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How do I know if I suck at self-compassion?

- Take the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) test!
 - 26 item SCS or 12 item short form (SCS-SF); Validated
 - [Take the Self-Compassion Test](https://self-compassion.org/self-compassion-test/) (<https://self-compassion.org/self-compassion-test/>)

Consider how you would answer the following:

- “When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.”
- “I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don’t like.”
- “I’m disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.”
- “I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.”
- “When I’m feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.”

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How do I cultivate self-compassion?

- Start by recognizing that it’s important.
- Set an intention to learn to talk to yourself as you would a friend.
- Try these phrases:
 - “I am really struggling right now.” (Mindfulness)
 - “We all struggle, and this would be hard for anyone.” (Common Humanity)
 - “What is it that I think might help me to be kind to myself in this moment?” (Self-kindness)

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Let's practice

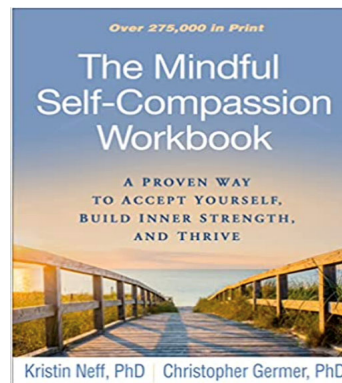
- Imagine a time that a friend (or patient) disclosed struggling and feeling badly about themselves or something they had done or said.
- Remember how you responded in that moment, not only what you said, but how you said it and the emotion that accompanied your council. Reflect on how you felt in this moment and how your friend (patient) reacted.
- Now imagine a situation when you were struggling or did or said something that you felt badly about, and think about how you responded to yourself in that moment. What did you say to yourself about this perceived failing? What adjectives did you use? What was the emotional tone associated with your internal monologue?
- Notice any differences and ask yourself:
 - What is getting in the way of me treating myself with the kindness with which I treat others?
 - How might things shift for me if I learned to treat myself compassionately?

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Resources

Loving Kindness Meditation

- May I be safe
- May I be happy
- May I be healthy
- May I live with ease
- May **you** be safe
- May **you** be happy
- May **you** be healthy
- May **you** live with ease
- May **everyone** be safe
- May **everyone** be happy
- May **everyone** be healthy
- May **everyone** live with ease



www.self-compassion.org

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Thank you.

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