

Group 2: Podcast Transcript

Self-compassion

Introduction

Good day dear listener.

Welcome to our podcast on self-compassion. My name is Delmarie' and our team is part of the Community Psychology honours group of 2022. Working at a school is a stressful occupation, therefore it is important that the staff at schools practise self-care. How do you personally think you can practise caring for yourself?

Being kind to oneself could allow you to manage your stress as well as maintain a more relaxed state of mind.

What do you understand about the term “self-compassion”? Dr. Kristen Neff defines self-compassion as returning one’s love, kindness and care, that you would give to others, but redirecting it back to your own life with a non-judgmental attitude towards oneself. Have a look at the two pictures attached to the podcast for a better understanding of what self-compassion entails.



Mindfulness

Being aware of the physical, emotional, or mental pain of the moment.



Self-kindness

Treating ourselves with kindness, considering our own needs.






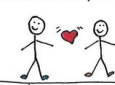





















Common Humanity

Recognizing that these experiences are a normal part of being human.

SELF-COMPASSION IN DAILY LIFE

inspired by the work of Chris Germer

sketchnote by @Haypsych

Physical "soften the body"	Mental "reduce agitation"	Emotional "soothe and comfort"	Relational "connect with others"	Spiritual "commit to your values"
exercise 	meditate 	journal 	meet with friends 	pray 
sleep 	watch a comedy 	daily gratitude 	send a thank you card 	walk in nature 
massage 	read a book 	deep breathing 	play a board game 	help others 
a warm bath 	draw 	visualise a peaceful image 	join a club 	practice yoga 
a cup of tea 	do a puzzle 	listen to soothing music 	give a compliment 	go on a retreat 

Self-compassion involves understanding that negative experiences are part of human nature. Self-love and self-care are very important for living a healthy life. We want every person listening to this podcast to embrace their capabilities, strengths, as well as weaknesses, which makes you unique.

Here are some practical ways we offer that might help you practise self-compassion:

Intervention

1. Listen to music

Music is therapeutic. It can cause the release of dopamine, a hormone that makes people feel good, and endorphins, which are hormones that can induce happy moods and relieve pain. Music promotes relaxation while reducing anxiety and stress. Play a song that has a special meaning to you when you're feeling stressed. Music has a powerful effect on the mind. Different musical genres can quickly change a person's mood, allowing them to experience and process a wide range of emotions, including happiness, sadness, calmness, and thoughtfulness.

Here is a way you can integrate music into your life. Make a playlist with songs that you love. Make sure that these songs extend compassion to oneself - songs that help to increase feelings of self kindness, common humanity and mindfulness. When you are stressed or frustrated, you can just listen to these songs. When feeling down, you can even sing along to these songs. Realizing that you relate to the lyrics can foster a sense of community. Having a sense of community reminds you that human beings share certain experiences. This includes accepting that everyone is imperfect. My top two self-compassion boosting songs are Human sung by Brandy and Superwoman by Alicia Keys. If you want song ideas to start making your own playlist, you can listen to these two songs. Once you have your own playlist, maybe you can also share some of your self-compassion boosting songs with your colleagues.

2. Saying no to your inner critic

Have you ever felt like you are not good enough? You might be thinking: I am a bad teacher, no one appreciates my effort, the parents and the kids don't like me? You can change the way you talk about yourself. Your body and personality are perfectly designed. You are unique and you are still on earth because you have something to offer. Every time you feel you have something negative to say about yourself, say the opposite. For instance: "I am not enough" - change it to - "I am more than enough".

Another practical way you can change your critical self-talk is by confessing positive things about yourself for 2-minutes, whenever you have time. You can also write notes to yourself and stick it on your mirror, in your make-up bag, on your fridge or anywhere you like. For instance putting a note on your fridge that says "I am making a positive difference". Everytime you walk past or open the fridge, you are reminded of a positive aspect of yourself. This note can also have a positive impact on your whole family, since they will be seeing it everyday too. Think for a moment what is something critical you say to yourself, for instance "I can't do this, I am not a good teacher". Next, think of something you can rather say instead that is more neutral or more positive that can rather motivate you? In my example it would be something like, "I am doing my best, I can do this." What can you say to yourself? Okay good, now think where you can write

this new word where you can see it daily? Great, go write it and put it at that place you were just thinking of.

3. Compassionate Mind Training

Similar to changing your critical self-talk, you can practice having a compassionate mind. Compassionate mind training can improve your mental health. It can help with balancing your emotions and your relationships. It can help you deal with issues which pose threats in your life. For instance if you always criticize yourself for not being 100% competent at your job and feel that you are at fault that the learners are not at their best performance. Compassionate mind training will be useful in this instance; for it is most suitable to have a Compassionate state of mind when you are afraid, angry, anxious or need to stay calm.

Compassionate mind training involves various techniques where you become your own motivational speaker.

I mean, we all have bad days, where you would wish for earth to open up and swallow you, at least for a minute, right?

For instance, reflect on how you normally feel during an interview, or when you have a meeting scheduled in an hour and you have hardly prepared for that meeting, or when you are preparing your learners for a test yet you have not finished marking their script due to some personal reasons that you could not avoid.

The effect of these examples might be extremely overwhelming right?

At times like this, you should make it a habit to tell yourself and believe in words of encouragement. We do not want to say things we do not even mean to our precious selves. Is that correct?

Please join us to follow five steps of compassionate mind training together.

1. First, when you feel overwhelmed, take 3 to 5 minutes of time out.

2. Then in your own private space or wherever you feel secure, take a deep breath in and out.

3. Secondly, you then start becoming mindful and aware of how you are feeling.

4. Tell yourself that your emotions are currently not how you want to feel and you are not the first person to feel the way that you do today. Tell yourself that problems and mistakes are a part of our lives and that they are there to shape us and help us grow.

5. Think of what you will do next time you are faced with adversity.

6. Then think of what to do at that moment and get up and do it. In other words, think of a solution for your challenge.

Do not be hard on yourself in the process. Be kind and gentle to yourself and tell yourself that you will bounce back and that you can do this. It takes courage, and self awareness to admit your shortcomings.

Put your hand on your chest and say the words of Maya Angelou. Let it be your motto.

Now let us say it together:

"Still I rise"

4. Relax and enjoy yourself.

How do you usually relax or enjoy yourselves?

By spending quality time with your family and friends. Going on a picnic or to the movies with your family does help with unwinding, correct? It cannot always be about spending time with your loved ones. Not that it is bad to spend time with your families, I mean we all enjoy a good laugh with our families. Our point is do not feel guilty for wanting to have some time for self-care.

In all, making yourself feel well physically, psychologically, or emotionally is the essence of self-care. Create a family artwork by buying a canvas from a local shop, and some paints and get together to make an artwork. Play board games like scrabble, uno, monopoly, and chess. Put together a huge and complex puzzle. Crack each other up: Do you want to reduce your body's stress hormones? Laugh! Invite everyone to share a hilarious story or a joke they enjoy. When it's someone else's turn to speak, make sure everyone is paying attention. Your kids will enjoy the attention they receive. Everyone has their chance to shine. Making time for yourself is crucial if you want to approach tomorrow with clarity and renewed purpose.

5. Create an inspiration box.

For days when you're feeling low, put together a "rainy day" box of encouraging messages, thank-you cards, motivational sayings, and anything else you've had from kids, staff, parents, and others over the years. This might be an excellent approach to give you some motivation and support you on the days when all you want to do is give up. Bonus: Encouragement boxes make wonderful presents for brand-new teachers, retiring coworkers, and anyone else who could use a little extra optimism in their lives.

6. Mindfulness

We need to know when we are suffering in order to bring kindness to our experience and ourselves. Self-Compassion also tends to activate difficult emotions, hence you need to be mindful in order to help endure and stabilize our awareness. Mindfulness is a very useful tool to extract yourself from the cycle of negative thoughts and feelings. Firstly, you need to be aware of your own thoughts. For example, if you are having

thoughts like "I'm not enough, life is never going my way". Take a moment and realize that negative thoughts are forming in your brain then use common humanity. Common humanity involves realizing that you are human and you are allowed to make mistakes or fail. Consider the fact that you are not alone, other colleagues are experiencing similar challenges like stress and job burnout. For instance, when you struggle to reach a certain goal be mindful of your inner dialogues and thoughts. Furthermore, be supportive towards yourself as you would console a child or friend. Let's engage in a mini exercise, take a moment and reflect back to a day where you felt like you didn't have the potential to reach a certain goal and use that as reassurance that you can overcome anything you put your mind in. Second, practice gratitude. Consider for a moment what you regard as positive in your life. Lastly, use mindful breathing to release tension in your body and negative thoughts. Mindful breathing is a very powerful meditation practice. So let's practice mindful breathing step by step. Focus on your breathing. Pay attention to the way you inhale and exhale. You can do this while standing or laying on your bed with eyes closed or open. Now Imagine the negative thoughts leaving your body as you exhale. This can be done during a stressful event where you may feel overwhelmed by workload or approaching dues dates for submissions.

7. Compassionate bodyscan

Sounds like a foreign term, right?

Well, let me tell you how it works.

Say, perhaps on a Friday evening after you have had a very long week at work, a compassionate bodyscan might come to your rescue.

A compassionate bodyscan involves becoming aware of all the sensations in your body, in a head-to-toe direction. A body scan helps with acknowledging the pains in your body, your insecurities and encourages you to be kind to yourself by comforting yourself as though you are comforting a hurting child.

Amanda Blake mentioned that the power of noticing enables experience without obstruction. Where we notice the sensations we are experiencing now.

It should actually be guided, and it takes about 5, 10 or 20 minutes of your time, depending on how quickly you do it.

To give you an idea of the meditation, let us go through the steps together:

1. Firstly, let us sit or lie in a comfortable position.
2. Let us take a deep breath in through the nose, and out through the mouth,
3. As we breathe out, close the eyes and notice how the body feels right now.
4. Starting at the top of the head, gently move your attention to your face, forehead, nose, cheeks, eyes, mouth, and jaw. Just noticing areas with sensations or discomfort or none. Just trying to be curious about it.

-Keep moving from the scalp to the back of our heads. Some of us notice their hair and the temperature in the room, some of us might not feel anything. Just notice the sensations or lack of sensations.

-Now, keep moving to the neck and Shoulders. This is the area in which most of us experience tension. Notice the sensations. Without judging.

-Slowly move from your midback to your lower back. And you just try to notice what you are experiencing there.

It is not uncommon to have areas that are uncomfortable or even painful and it is also common to have areas where you feel nothing at all.

-Bring your attention to your chest, be aware of every sensation in your chest.

Resist your temptation to judge anything that's good or bad.

-Now shift your attention to your hands (moving from upper arm to lower arm to hand), again notice every sensation, it may be the texture of your clothes, a piece of jewellery, a ring or a watch.

- Continue to move your attention to your hips, knees, and thighs. One of the first things you might feel is your clothes, tight jeans, a cloth from a dress.

-Expand your awareness to both your feet, and notice what is there without judging what is good or bad. It might be the pressure of your shoes, or the texture of your sock.

Now, you can take a moment to scan your whole body one last time. Then you can take a deep breath, then open your eyes.

Hopefully, you feel a little refreshed after a long week.

The picture attached gives a practical guide of the exercise.

Also click on the link to access Dr Kristen Neff's guided practice of a compassionate bodyscan:

https://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/bodyscan_cleanedbydanmp3.mp3



Conclusion

For a few seconds, think about some practical ways on how you can practice self-compassion? Buddha said “If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete”. Another quote by Christopher Germer is “a moment of self-compassion can change our entire day. A string of such moments can change the course of your life”. I want to challenge you today to have compassion on yourself and love every part of yourself. Do not feel bad for putting yourself first. Dr. Kristen Neff has a book “Self-compassion: The Proven Power Of Being Kind to Yourself”, I would highly recommend this book. The ebook is attached with the podcast, I really hope you enjoy reading this book. It was an absolute honour being with you today and we really hope that from today you will prioritise yourself. Thank you so much for listening. Have a lovely day.

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