

Self Compassion

Teaching Others and Training Self



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Topics to be covered

- Essential elements of self-compassion
- Myths dispelled
- Research studies
- Relationship to mindfulness
- Experiential exercises
- Video clips of clients' experiences

Acknowledgements & Resources

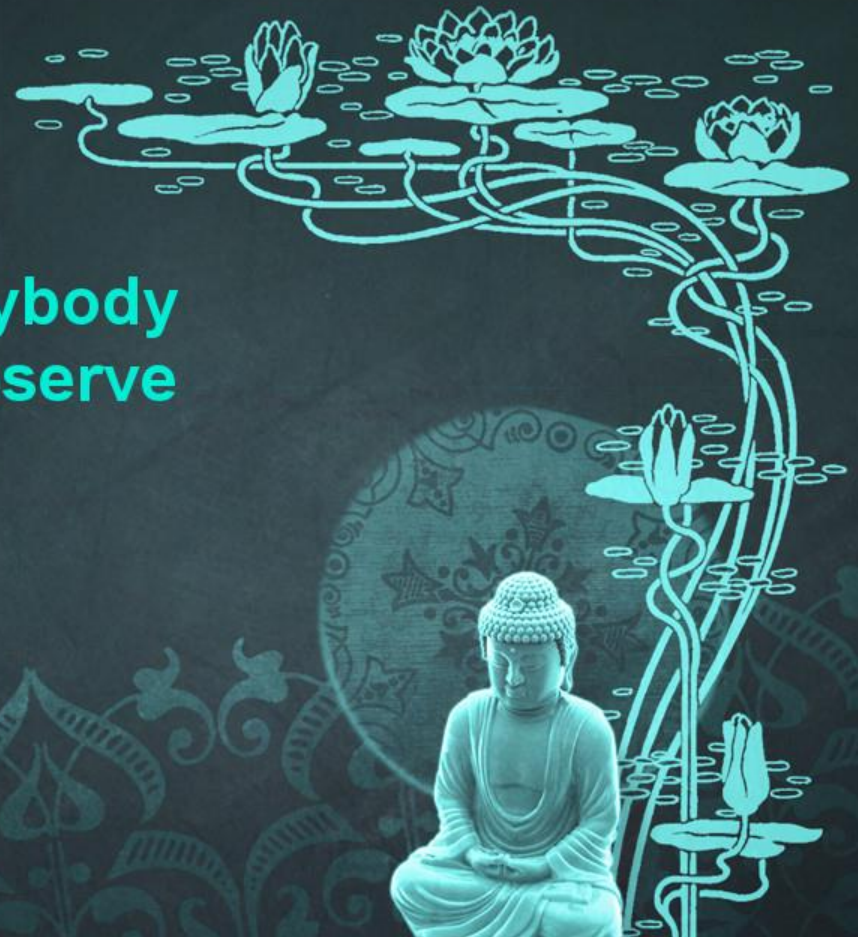
- Kristin Neff: <http://self-compassion.org/>
- Christopher Germer: <http://www.mindfulselfcompassion.org/>
- Neff & Germer: <http://www.centerformsc.org/>
- Bobbi Emel: <http://tinybuddha.com/blog/self-compassion-learning-to-be-nicer-to-ourselves/>
- Self-Compassion, Stress, and Coping: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2914331/>

A part of many other methods...

- Seeking Safety: <http://www.treatment-innovations.org/seeking-safety.html>
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: <https://contextualscience.org/act>
- Smart Recovery: <http://www.smartrecovery.org/>
- Brene Brown: <http://brenebrown.com/>

**You, yourself, as much as anybody
else in the entire universe, deserve
your love and affection.**

-Buddha





Questions



What is self-compassion?

What is self-compassion?

- **Self-compassion** is extending compassion to one's self in instances of perceived inadequacy, failure, or general suffering.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-compassion>

- "Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others." - Christopher Germer

Kristin Neff

According to Dr. Kristin Neff, self-compassion is composed of three main components:

- Self-kindness
 - Common humanity
 - Mindfulness
-
- Also often included: maintaining perspective in challenging circumstances - Bluth & Blanton, 2013



Questions



Why is self-compassion important for us and the people we serve?

Questions

- “You cannot serve from an empty vessel.”
— Eleanor Brown
- “Taking good care of yourself means the people in your life receive the best of you rather than what is left of you.”
- Lucille Zimmerman



Questions



Why doesn't self-compassion come easily for so many of us?

Questions

- Culture
- Trauma
- Religion
- Media
- Lack of role models

Brenda's Experience





Elements of Self-Compassion

- Self-kindness
- Sensing oneself as part of a common humanity
- Maintaining perspective in challenging circumstances
- Mindfulness

Self-Kindness

What forms might that take?



Self-Kindness

- Constructive self-talk
- Relaxing
- Having fun
- Spending time with loved ones
- Doing anything that is enjoyable and healthy for yourself
- The opposite of self-judgement/neglect

Sensing Oneself as Part of Humanity

- Recognizing that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience – something that we all go through rather than being something that happens to “me” alone. This promotes adaptive coping. - K. Neff
- Belongingness & Connectedness – Facets of mindfulness
- The opposite of feeling isolated

Maintaining Perspective in Challenging Circumstances

- Being mindful of one's thoughts and feelings
- Not judging self or others
- Positive cognitive restructuring
- The opposite of over-identification



"If you want to be a complete human being, if you want to be genuine and hold the fullness of life in your heart, then failure is an opportunity to get curious about what is going on and listen to the storylines. Don't buy the ones that blame it on everybody else, and don't buy the storylines that blame it on yourself, either."

- Pema Chödrön

Mindfulness

A photograph of a stack of smooth, light-colored stones. A single reddish-brown stone is balanced on top of the stack, forming a small arch. The background is a clear blue sky and a calm ocean.

- having the intention

- to be in the present moment

- without judgment

Relationship to Mindfulness

Self compassion also requires all of the above

- Willingness to practice and change
- Becoming aware of our self-criticism, overwork, and other non-self-compassionate habits
- Discernment instead of judging self

Relationship to Mindfulness

- Self-compassion is an essential part of mindfulness and vice versa – cant have one without the other.
- Non-judging/acceptance includes the self:
Non-reactivity and non-judging of inner experience have validity in predicting psychological symptoms; both may be seen as ways of operationalizing acceptance (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer & Toney, 2006)

Relationship to Mindfulness

“When we practice, we observe how much peace, happiness, and lightness we already have. We notice whether we are anxious about accidents or misfortunes, and how much anger, irritation, fear, anxiety, or worry are already in us. As we become aware of the feelings in us, our self-understanding will deepen. We will see how our fears and lack of peace contribute to our unhappiness, and we will see the value of loving ourselves and cultivating a heart of compassion.” - Thich Nhat Hanh



Myths About Self-Compassion

I'm indulging myself if I'm self-compassionate

“It’s common to beat ourselves up for faults big and small. But ... that self-criticism comes at a price: It makes us anxious, dissatisfied with our life, and even depressed.” - Jason Marsh

Research: self-compassionate people:

Show more -

- emotional regulation (Allen & Leary, 2010)
- positive affect (Neff et al., 2007)
- life satisfaction (Neff et al., 2008)

Myths About Self-Compassion

I won't be motivated if I don't criticize myself

- Self-compassion is positively associated with variables that predict action-oriented coping such as optimism, curiosity, exploration, and personal initiative (Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007)

Research: self-compassionate people:

- Show more intrinsic motivation (Magnus et al., 2010).
- Have less perfectionism, but still may have performance standards adopted for themselves (Neff, 2003a).
- Are more likely to see a doctor, and sooner (Terry et al., 2010).

Myths About Self-Compassion

It's selfish for me to be compassionate toward myself

“It's not selfish to love yourself, take care of yourself, and to make your happiness a priority. It's necessary.” –
Mandy Hale

“Self-care is never a selfish act – it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others..” - Parker Palmer

Research: self-compassionate people:

- Show more positive relationship behavior (Neff & Beretvas, 2013).

Myths About Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is for wimps

“Awakening self-compassion is often the greatest challenge people face on the spiritual path.”

- Tara Brach

“Love yourself first, and everything else falls in line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world.” – Lucille Ball

Research: self-compassionate people:

- Are more likely to maintain abstinence from smoking (Kelly et al., 2010).
- Show less strong responses to negative events (Leary et al. 2007)
- Acknowledge their role in negative events without feeling overwhelmed with negative emotions (Leary, Tate, Adams, Allen, & Hancock, 2007).

Other Research: self-compassionate people:

- Show less anxiety and depression (Neff, 2009 for a review)
- Have greater perspective and less feelings of isolation regarding their problems (Leary, et al., 2007).
- Are less likely to come from dysfunctional families, have critical mothers, and have insecure attachment (Neff & McGeehee, 2010).

Connie's Experience



Self Compassion vs. Self Esteem

“Self-compassion and self-esteem both involve positive emotions toward the self. But self-esteem is about judging yourself positively: I am good. Or, unfortunately, ... that I am bad.

Self-compassion does not involve judgment or evaluation. Self-esteem is present when we succeed. Self-compassion is a way of relating to ourselves kindly when we fail.” - Kristin Neff



Kevin's Experience



Presenter's Experiences



When should I use self-compassion?

Try Using Self Compassion When:

- You're feeling frustrated and disappointed with yourself
- You're comparing yourself unfavorably to someone else
- You feel lost, confused, or overwhelmed about how to solve a problem
- You've broken one of your "rules"
- You've done avoidant coping and you're now suffering the negative consequences
- You're feeling angry, jealous, envious, entitled, selfish

Try Using Self Compassion When:

- You are thinking "should" thoughts
- Anxiety, other emotions, or competing demands, are making it hard to enact a value
- Have repeated the same mistake again
- You are feeling guilty, ashamed, regretful
- You're criticizing your self for ...**anything!**

From: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-practice/201206/20-uses-self-compassion>

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.” –
William James







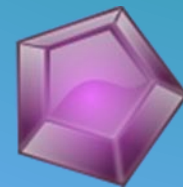
Questions?

Ideas?

Other thoughts?



“To be beautiful means to be yourself. You don’t need to be accepted by others. You need to accept yourself.” – Thich Nhat Hanh



Thank You...
for being self-compassionate!

