

Self-Compassion

BEING AS KIND TO YOURSELF AS YOU WOULD BE TO SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT

Self-compassion means treating yourself with the same warmth, understanding and support you would naturally offer a good friend — especially during moments of difficulty, failure or self-doubt. It is a skill that can be learned and strengthened with practice.



01 — SELF-KINDNESS

Warmth Over Judgment

Being understanding and gentle with yourself when you struggle or fall short, rather than turning to harsh self-criticism.



02 — COMMON HUMANITY

Connection Over Isolation

Recognising that struggle, failure and imperfection are part of being human — something everyone experiences, not a sign that something is wrong with you alone.



03 — MINDFULNESS

Balance Over Extremes

Noticing painful thoughts and feelings without suppressing them or becoming overwhelmed by them — holding difficulty with clear, balanced awareness.

Why It Helps



Supports Emotional Resilience

Research links self-compassion to lower anxiety and depression, and to a steadier, more stable sense of wellbeing.



Motivates Without Fear

Unlike harsh self-criticism, self-compassion is associated with genuine motivation to improve, rooted in care rather than fear of failure.



Differs from Self-Esteem

Self-compassion does not depend on success or comparison with others, so it offers steadier support during setbacks.



Strengthens Relationships

People who relate to themselves with compassion often find it easier to extend patience and understanding to others too.

How to Practise Self-Compassion

1

NOTICE THE SELF-CRITICAL VOICE

Pause and notice when you're speaking to yourself harshly. Simply naming it — "I'm being self-critical right now" — creates a small but important gap.

2

ASK WHAT YOU'D SAY TO A FRIEND

Imagine someone you care about was struggling in the exact same way. What would you say to them? Try offering yourself those same words.

3

USE A SOOTHING PHYSICAL GESTURE

Placing a hand on your chest, or gently holding your own arm, can activate a physical sense of care and safety — a small act that can shift how a moment feels.

4

REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Try the phrase "This is a moment of difficulty. Difficulty is part of life. May I be kind to myself right now." This connects your experience to common humanity.

You don't have to earn kindness from yourself. It can be there for you now, exactly as you are.

SOURCES

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NOTE

Evidence-informed educational resource.