



Self-Compassion

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Self-compassion is an approach whereby we treat ourselves the way we would treat a close and beloved friend who is going through a challenge and may have feelings of inadequacy.

Components of self-compassion:



- **Mindfulness:** Being aware of moment-to-moment experiences in an open and non-judgmental manner.
- **Self-kindness:** Treating ourselves with warm-hearted generosity and grace. When we notice our failures, mistakes, and shortcomings, we approach ourselves with support and encouragement to protect ourselves from harmful thoughts and provide unconditional love.
- **Common humanity:** Suffering and pain are part of the shared human experience. We all have limitations and share in this vulnerability.

Self-compassion is NOT:

- **Self-pity:** When we pity ourselves, we surrender to our pain and add suffering through resistance. We forget that others feel pain and neglect the concept of interconnectedness and shared humanity.
- **Self-Indulgence:** Being compassionate to oneself requires us to recognize the importance of experiencing happiness both in the short term and long term without simply indulging in immediate pleasures that aren't aligned with our best interests.
- **Self-esteem:** Self-esteem refers to our senses of self-worth and self-perception. Self-esteem is predicated on our unique gifts and differences relative to others. Self-esteem fluctuates with our successes and failures. Self-compassion, however, is NOT based on self-evaluation and self-valuation.

Physiologic Stress response & self-compassion

Stress Response	Stress Response Turned Inward	Self-Compassion
Fight	Self-criticism	Self-kindness
Flight	Isolation	Common humanity
Freeze	Rumination	Mindfulness

Benefits of self-compassion

Less	More
Depression	Happiness
Anxiety	Life satisfaction
Stress	Self-confidence
Shame	Physical health

References: Neff KD, Germer CK. *The Mindful Self-Compassion workbook: A proven way to accept yourself, find inner strength, and thrive.* New York: Guilford Press 2018. <https://self-compassion.org>