

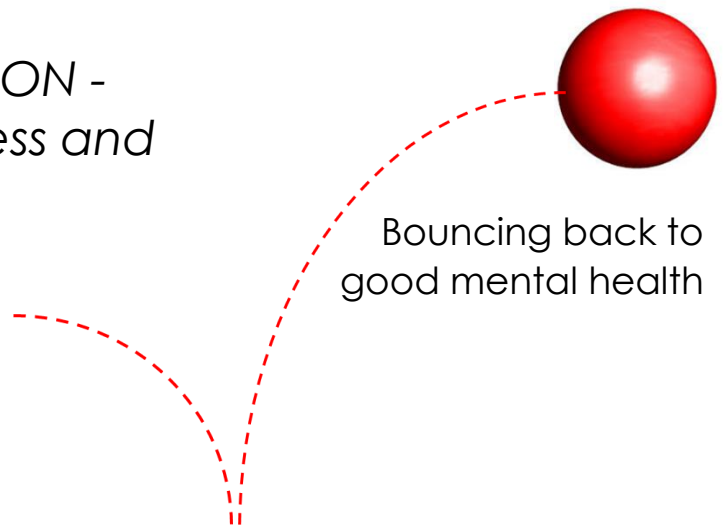
BUILDING RESILIENCE

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Section #6

FOSTER SELF-COMPASSION - Mindfulness, Self-kindness and Connectedness



What is Self-Compassion?

What does Self-Compassion mean to you?



What forms of Self-Compassion do you currently practice?

There are 3 key elements to Self-Compassion:

MINDFULNESS



noun: **MINDFULNESS**

1. the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something.
2. a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

Mindfulness. It's a pretty straightforward word. It suggests that the mind is fully attending to what's happening, to what you're doing, to the space you're moving through. That might seem trivial, except for the annoying fact that we so often veer from the matter at hand. Our mind takes flight, we lose touch with our body, and pretty soon we're engrossed in obsessive thoughts about something that just happened or fretting about the future. And that makes us anxious.

The Types of Mindfulness Practice

While mindfulness is innate, it can be cultivated through proven techniques. Here are some examples:

- Seated, walking, standing, and moving meditation (*it's also possible lying down but often leads to sleep*)
- Short pauses we insert into everyday life (*5 minute silence during the day*)
- Merging meditation practice with other activities, *such as yoga or sports.*

The Benefits of Mindfulness Practice

When you meditate it doesn't help to focus on the benefits, it's better to just do the practice. *However, there are benefits or no one would do it!*

When you're mindful, [you reduce stress, enhance performance, gain insight and awareness](#) through observing your own mind, and increase your attention to other people's well-being.

Mindfulness meditation gives you a time in your life when you can [suspend judgment and unleash your natural curiosity](#) about the workings of the mind, approaching your experience with warmth and kindness - to yourself and others.

Here's a simple seated meditation for you to try....and to do whenever you can.

- **Take your seat.** Whatever you're sitting on - a chair, a meditation cushion, a park bench - find a spot that gives you a stable, solid seat, not perching or hanging back.
- **Notice what your legs are doing.** If on a cushion on the floor, cross your legs comfortably in front of you. *(If you already do some kind of seated yoga posture, go ahead.)* If on a chair, it's good if the bottoms of your feet are touching the floor.
- **Straighten - but don't stiffen - your upper body.** The spine has natural curvature. Let it be there. Your head and shoulders can comfortably rest on top of your vertebrae.
- **Situate your upper arms parallel to your upper body.** Then let your hands drop onto the tops of your legs. With your upper arms at your sides, your hands will land in the right spot. Too far forward will make you hunch. Too far back will make you stiff. You're tuning the strings of your body - not too tight and not too loose.
- **Drop your chin a little and let your gaze fall gently downward.** You may let your eyelids lower. If you feel the need, you may lower them completely, but it's not necessary to close your eyes when meditating. You can simply let what appears before your eyes be there without focusing on it.
- **Be there for a few moments. Relax.** Now get up and go about your day. And if the next thing on the agenda is doing some mindfulness practice by paying attention to your breath or the sensations in your body, you've started off on the right foot - and hands and arms and everything else.
- **Begin again.** When your posture is established, feel your breath and think to yourself *"I'm breathing in, I know I'm breathing in. I'm breathing out, I know I'm breathing out"* as you breathe a little deeper than normal. Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. When you get around to noticing this - in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes - return your attention to the breath. Don't bother judging yourself or obsessing over the content of the thoughts. Come back to your breath. If you go away again, just come back again.

That's it. That's the practice. It's often been said that it's very simple, but it's not necessarily easy. The work is to just keep doing it. Results will be better the more you practise.

SELF-KINDNESS

noun: **SELF-KINDNESS**

Regard for one's own well-being or happiness; kindness directed towards oneself.

For example: *"I'm going to be kind to myself"*

"I'm going to treat myself the way I would treat my very best friend"



We all know how important it is to be kind to others, but why do we forget how to be kind to ourselves? The golden rule is 'Treat others the way you want to be treated', and that includes how you treat yourself. Self-kindness is more than a healthy habit, it is the foundation of your emotional wellbeing. The past year has shown how prioritising mental health is vital in daily life.

Something to try:

Think about how you talk to your friends when they need help. Write down what you would say and how you would say it (*tone of voice, words etc*).

Then, put yourself in the place of your friend, and read out what you would say to them. When we treat ourselves as we would a friend, we can begin to be kinder to ourselves.

Write down some of the things you catch yourself saying to yourself (self-sabotage). Then write down a kinder way to talk to yourself (self-kindness)

Self-sabotage

Self-kindness



For times when you do feel overwhelmed and need a helping hand, remember to **RAIN**.

R.A.I.N is an easy four-step technique to help soothe you during anxiety or stress. It is another grounding technique, as it reinforces awareness and calmness. Give it a go!

- **R**ecognize what is happening now.
- **A**llow yourself to feel the experience.
- **I**nvestigate with kindness how you are feeling.
- **N**urture the experience lovingly and remember to let it go.



Make a list of things you could do differently to be kinder to yourself:

connectedness

cohesion commitment
collaboration confidence



noun: **CONNECTEDNESS**

1. the state of being joined or linked.
"the connectedness of hospitality and tourism"
2. a feeling of belonging to or having affinity with a particular person or group.
"it's about partnering, trust, and connectedness"

Human connectedness is a powerful human need that occurs when an individual is actively engaged with another person, activity, object or environment, resulting in a sense of well-being.

This goes hand in hand with finding your tribe. Surrounding yourself with like-minded people, or people who inspire you. It's being part of something. It's a feeling of belonging. It's spending time with people who share the same interests. Connectedness helps relieve loneliness and isolation which can creep in during times of stress or crisis.

In what areas of your life do you feel there is a **connectedness** that contributes to your wellbeing? (*Clubs, support groups, sports etc*)

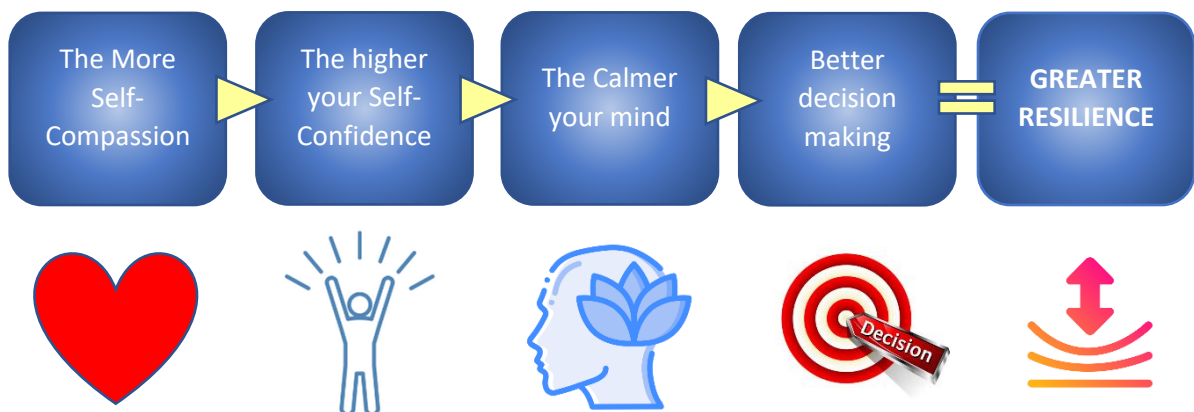
What could you do to increase **connectedness** in your life? *(What activities have you stopped doing, that you would benefit your wellbeing if you started them again? What new things could you try?)*

Why practise Self-Compassion?

Research shows that people who are more self-compassionate are:

- **HAPPIER** – Practising self-compassion leads to more happiness, optimism, gratitude and better relationships with others.
- **LESS STRESSED** – Self-compassion is a powerful antidote to self-criticism and perfectionist thinking that can lead to stress and anxiety.
- **MORE RESILIENT** – Self-compassionate people bounce back more easily from set-backs and are more likely to learn from their mistakes

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-COMPASSION



Self-care is not a luxury.....it's a priority!