

A Guide to Self-Compassion

What is Self-compassion?

Self-compassion is no different from regular compassion – except most people find it more challenging!

Compassion is an attitude and way of treating people with kindness, understanding, and acceptance. It says, "It's okay to have difficult feelings, critical thoughts, and to make mistakes – you're only human!".

We can be compassionate to others by simply listening with kindness and offering a shoulder to cry on. Or be more active by giving advice on solving a problem or building a pillow fort!

So, self-compassion is doing all that stuff for yourself!



Why is Self-compassion important?

Self-compassion is vital for mental health and well-being. It involves caring for yourself during difficult times and understanding how to improve your well-being when you're struggling.

Self compassion helps us to feel safe and secure - the foundations of good mental health



HELPFUL TIPS

Self-criticism is the opposite of self-compassion. Try noticing the moments when you say harsh or unhelpful things to yourself – these are the moments when self-compassion is important! Imagine how you might speak to a friend who was in the same situation – would you be mean and judgemental, or kind and encouraging?

What isn't self-compassion?

It's easy to confuse self-compassion with self-pity or self-indulgence.

Self-pity	Self-compassion
Isolating and resistant to change	Connects us to ourselves and seeks positive change
Focuses on problems and suffering	Helps us understand and meet our needs
Lacks kindness and understanding	Embraces kindness and understanding, especially in difficulty
Self-indulgence	Self-compassion
Neglects responsibility and accountability	Takes responsibility and meets personal needs
Prioritizes personal desires	Balances self-care with accountability

Why is Self-compassion hard?

1

Our brains are wired to prioritize our survival, which means being critical to prepare us for fight or flight. However, this approach isn't always helpful for meeting our emotional needs. That's why self-criticism comes naturally, while self-compassion requires patience and practice.

2

Sadly, we often aren't taught to be kind to ourselves early in life. In fact, many don't realise when we're being unkind or that self-compassion is possible! But don't worry, there's plenty of time to practice and get better at it!

3

Self-compassion sometimes gets a bad reputation because it's often confused with self-indulgence, self-pity, or laziness. This misunderstanding arises because we're not used to discussing or practicing self-compassion.

Resources to help with self-compassion

Speak to anyone who supports you at 1625 if you'd like more support to practice being more self-compassionate. Either they will be able to help you, or they can support you to access support from someone else.

There are also LOADS of resources online that you can find, a few good ones are;

- teenselfcompassion.org
- self-compassion.org
- positivepsychology.com/self-compassion-exercises-worksheets

