

Be Kind to Yourself Workbook

Name:.....

Date of course:.....



Be Kind to Yourself Session

What is compassion?

Compassion can be defined in many ways. In Latin, “compassion” means “co-suffering” because it involves “feeling for another”. It involves allowing ourselves to be moved by physical, mental and emotional pain, and wanting to help ease and prevent the suffering of others and ourselves.

Why is Kindness / Compassion Important?

We can often be supportive, understanding, kind and compassionate towards others, but yet we can be much harder and critical towards ourselves.

Learning to be kinder and more compassionate to ourselves leads to a calmer mind, better relationships, less anxiety and depression, and an increased sense of self-worth.



Why being kind and compassionate to myself is important to me?

One way to think about compassion is that it is made up of different qualities and skills.

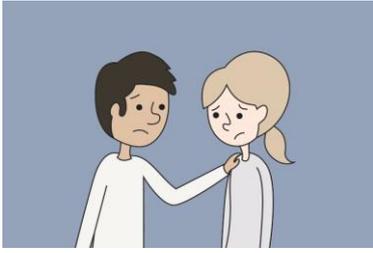
Six Qualities of Compassion:



1. Making a decision to try to be compassionate. In other words, we want to become more compassionate and caring towards ourselves and others to help reduce suffering and help to flourish (we could assume that you are already feeling this way by being here on this course!)



2. We make an effort to train our minds to become sensitive to our own feelings, thoughts and our needs. It is difficult to be self-compassionate if we are unaware of our own pain, upset, wants or needs. So we learn to notice our thoughts and feelings as we experience them, along with the feelings and needs of others.



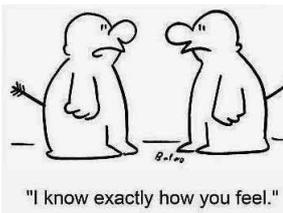
3. Compassion requires us to be **emotionally open to ours and others' suffering**. This means we are emotionally touched, moved and sympathetic to suffering. Sympathy is an emotional reaction to our and other people's emotions. For example, it is that immediate wince if we see someone fall over heavily or cut themselves. Sympathy can also mean we are moved and happy when we see someone else do well.



4. **We can only be truly open to feelings if we can tolerate them.** We can experience different feelings e.g. sad, angry, anxious or happy. However sometimes we:

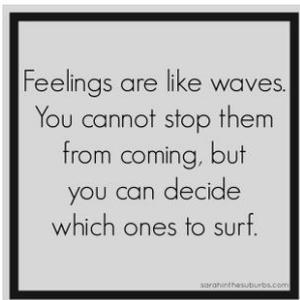
- Are critical of our feelings (e.g. it is bad to feel angry)
- Try to run away from them, hide them, or push them down (e.g. we may have been told we are not allowed to show our emotions),

But when we are compassionate we learn to be open, tolerant (e.g. we are able to manage them), accepting of, and kind to our feelings. For example, knowing 'it is ok to feel sad, or angry'.



5. **Empathy** - this is about **how we understand and think about our thoughts and feelings**. We want to know why we feel what we feel, or think what we think, so things can make sense to us. When we have empathy for others, we make an effort to think about things from their point of view, to try to understand that they may think and feel differently to us.

Showing empathy can be hard. For example, if someone hurts you but you realise they were under a lot of stress or not well at the time, then you don't take it personally and you forgive them; **this is you showing empathy**.



6. **Developing an accepting and non-judging way of being and thinking of ourselves and others.** For example, a distressed mind can be filled with condemning and critical thoughts of ourselves or others. Giving this up is becoming kind and mindful; we become more aware of thoughts and feelings but from an observational point of view.

We don't judge our thoughts or feelings of ourselves or others, nor do we push them out of our minds or try to avoid them. Rather, we learn to notice them, but not act on our feelings. For example, I am noticing I am feeling angry (but not acting on them).

These qualities of compassion **can be developed in small stages, step by step**. They are all associated with feelings of warmth and a genuine desire to relieve suffering in order to grow and flourish.

Skills of Compassion:

These skills are what we are going to discuss and practice in today's session:

1. Be gentle with yourself (directing your attention in a compassionate way)
2. Compassionate/kind mind
3. Being kind to yourself (behaving in a compassionate way to yourself).

1. Be gentle with yourself *(directing your attention in a compassionate way)*

Attention is what we direct our focus towards, what we look at, what we listen to, what we remember and how we do those things.

When something negative happens or you are unhappy with yourself, instead of focusing on the negatives or what we are unhappy with, we need to train ourselves to re-direct our attention to something that is helpful, positive, or to something that we are happy with ourselves about (our strengths and positive qualities). This is compassionate attention and it's very important.

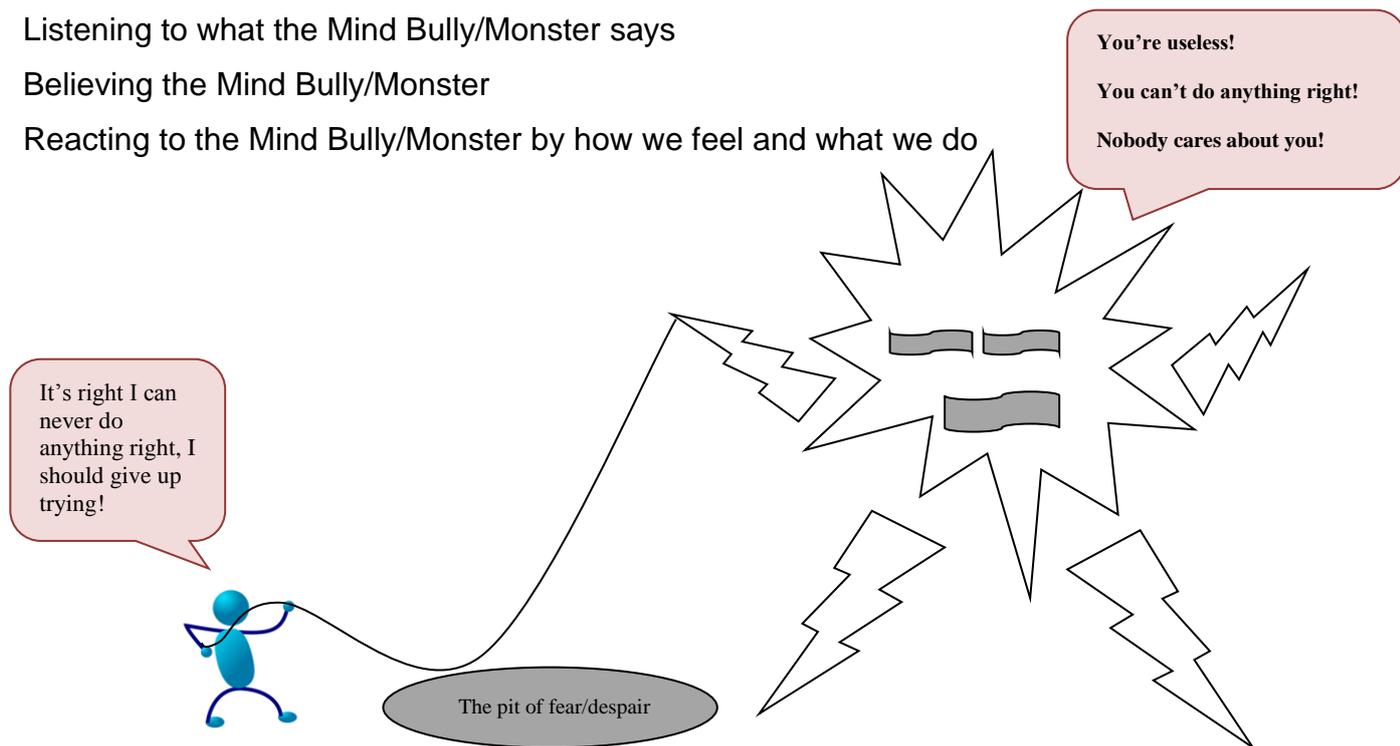
What can get in the way of being gentle with yourself *(Compassionate Attention)?*

We all have an internal conversation in our heads, it can often be self-critical and we judge ourselves harder than the way we judge other people. This can seem like our very own Mind Bully/Mind Monster.

The Mind Bully/Monster may seem very strong and big. It may say very upsetting and critical things to us and try to pull us into a pit of fear and despair...so we automatically pull harder on the rope to stop us being dragged into the pit. This tug of war is constant and exhausting. The harder we pull, the harder the monster pulls.

We feed the monster and make it bigger and stronger by:

- Pulling harder on the rope
- Listening to what the Mind Bully/Monster says
- Believing the Mind Bully/Monster
- Reacting to the Mind Bully/Monster by how we feel and what we do



www.getselfhelp.co.uk (Carol Vivyan 2014. Originally from Harris 2009).

What my Mind Bully/Monster says to me?

What my Mind Bully/Monster looks like: *(you can write a description or draw a picture of it here):*

Overcoming the Mind Bully/Monster:

What would happen if we could let go of the rope? The monster would still be there, saying what it says, but it would not have any power to pull us towards the great pit (as we have let go of the rope).

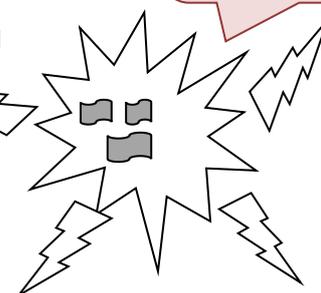
We therefore need to let go of the rope:

1. **Notice and acknowledge the Mind Bully/Monster**
2. **Don't believe everything it says or you think**
3. **Shift your focus of attention to something positive**
4. **Respond with gentleness and supportive understanding**

I'm not rubbish, I'm clever



The pit of fear and despair



I told you you're rubbish!
Are you even listening to me?!!
Can you hear me?!

www.getselfhelp.co.uk (Carol Vivyan 2014. Originally from Harris 2009).

If we have listened to, and paid attention to what the Mind Bully/Monster has said, over time we begin to believe it, particularly if we have had some difficult life experiences or challenges that have made us feel the same way. Some of these can include:

- Difficult childhood experiences
- Difficulties at school/work
- Being bullied by family members, friends, or others at school/work.
- Hearing critical and unpleasant voices.

The longer we have been doing this, the stronger we believe that what it is saying is true and we can rarely question it. However, as we stop feeding the Mind Bully/Monster, gradually it will get weaker, smaller and quieter.

Focusing on the Positives:

Instead of focusing on the Mind Bully/Monster, the negatives or what we are unhappy with, we need to train ourselves to re-direct our attention to something that is helpful, positive, or to something that we are happy with ourselves about (our own strengths and positive qualities).

Below are a number of personal qualities, strengths and skills that you could start to shift your focus of attention to in future. **Circle any that you can relate to, there is a box at the bottom to add in any others that are not on the list.**

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--|----------|-----------------|------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| | | Kind | Good at cooking | Nice | Strong | Caring | |
| Good at football | | | | | | | Bubbly |
| Polite | | | | | | | Energetic |
| Loving | | | | | | | Sociable |
| Talented | | | | | | | Funny |
| Artistic | | | | | | | Helpful |
| Smart | | | | | | | Tidy |
| | | Friendly | Well dressed | | Motivated | | |

Successful Talented
 Energetic Active Confident Independent
 Generous Elegant Loved Passionate Indefatigable
 Articulate Sexy Adventurous Respected Kind Appreciative
 Inspiring Spiritual Healthy Entrepreneurial Funny Beautiful
 Organized Composed Determined Thoughtful Free Spirited
 Friendly Reliable Patient Supported Positive Efficient Humble
 Respected Fabulous Responsible Awesome Blessed
 Intelligent Classy **I am...** Engaging Creative
 Loving Proactive Genuine
 Empowered Intentional Unstoppable Encouraged
 Exciting Interesting Present Compassionate
 Perfect Vibrant Amazing Complete
 Outgoing Motivated Patient
 Peaceful Optimistic
 Helpful Decisive
 Driven Happy
 In Control
 Loyal
 Fun
Join the movement at Kaneisha.com

My positive qualities/strengths/skills:

What good qualities (personality traits, characteristics, strengths) do I have? What good qualities have I shown in the past? How might others describe me in a positive way? What positive things have others said about me in the past and currently? (Parents, partners, children, other family, friends, colleagues, managers, teachers, other....)

It is important to keep a daily log of your positive qualities (personality traits, characteristics, skills and strengths), that you have, or have had in the past. **Write them down!**

It's easy to dismiss or minimise positives, as we tend to filter out the positives and only notice the negatives (remember the Mind Bully/Monster).

Notice that your mind does that, **then write your positives or read your diary/list of them to remind yourself of them.**

How I am going to record my positive qualities/strengths/skills:

(This can be using the sheet provided, a diary, the memos on your smartphone, notebook etc.)

2. Compassionate/Kind Mind

Our emotions can direct our thinking in many ways. When we're angry, we think in angry ways, and when we're anxious, we'll think in anxious ways. **Compassionate and kind thinking helps us to think in more kind and helpful ways.**

Kind Mind/Compassionate Mind helps us to be more mindful of our thoughts and how we talk to ourselves.

To help us think kindly and compassionately to ourselves, we can ask ourselves these questions:

- Is this thinking helpful to me?
- Would I teach my child or a friend to think like this? If not, how would I like to teach them to think about these things?
- Is this thought kind to me or others? What WOULD be kind, right now?

Then choose your new focus of attention (e.g. you can think about your positive qualities).

Creating a Compassionate Image:

Creating and build an imaginary idea of compassion/kindness is important. It is best to use an object or idea that is NOT a REAL person. This is important, as nobody is perfect.

Whatever image you choose, it needs to have specific kind/compassionate qualities e.g. understanding, kind, all-knowing, forgiving and totally accepting (of you, your past etc.).

We're going to talk you through creating a kind and compassionate image in a moment. As we do you are welcome to draw images and write words that come to mind, in the box on the next page.

We're going to start by asking you to slow down, and think about your breathing. Slow down your breathing a little and notice the rhythm of your breathing.

Notice what images come up and if you can use one of them. Build the image by thinking about:

- *What would they look like? Human, animal, light, nature?*
- *What expression would they have as they look at you with wisdom, understanding, compassion and acceptance?*
- *How else would you like them to look?*
- *How would they communicate with you?*
- *What voice would you give them?*
- *What would their voice sound like for them to sound wise, understanding, kind and accepting?*
- *What colour do you associate with wisdom, understanding, compassion and acceptance?*
- *How else would they communicate or interact with you?*
- *What does your compassionate image want you to know? What words are they saying?*
- *What do you feel as you spend time with your compassionate image? What do you notice?*



What my compassionate/kind image looks like: *(you can write a description or draw a picture of it here)*

Things my compassionate/kind image would say? *(It could even remind you of your positive qualities, strengths and skills etc.)*

Now that you've created your compassionate/kind image **you can bring it to your mind and imagine seeing it, and hearing the kind things it says to you, whenever you want!**

You may want to do this when you notice the Mind Bully/Monster or when you want to be gentle and kind to yourself by thinking more compassionately.

You can even use your imagination to visualise your kind/compassionate image becoming bigger, stronger and louder than the Mind Bully/Monster. This will help to make the Mind Bully/Monster weaker, smaller and quieter.

Your imagination is a strong and powerful tool and so you could for example...

Imagine that the Mind Bully/Monster is made out of a balloon....

...now visualise yourself shrinking it or taking out some of the air.....

...you could even imagine that you are throwing it away....

...or trapping it in a force field whereby you can't see it or hear what it is saying.....

...you could imagine yourself grabbing it....

...throwing it...(you may even want to physically go through the motions of throwing it)....

...or putting it in a rocket and sending it to space...

3. Being kind to yourself: *(behaving in a compassionate way to yourself)*



Compassionate behaviour is about doing things to help you and/or others deal with suffering, or develop, flourish and improve.

There may be times when you're angry or frustrated and don't want to look after yourself or being kind to yourself. This is understandable of course, but, **do your very best to notice this and then be kind and compassionate to yourself.**

Compassionate Kit/Box

A Compassionate Kit/Box is a place to put reminders for your compassionate self, so you can use the contents to help you be kind and compassionate to yourself.

You can use any bag or box or other container, and decorate it as you wish.

Keep it in a visible place where you see it and are reminded of it every day.

Collect together items that are meaningful, or those you know will be helpful. You might find these items inspiring, empowering, calming, soothing, motivating, bringing confidence, strength, calm composure and wisdom.

Some items you might choose may have some sadness attached by their association with an event or person. You will need to decide if it is right to include this item.

If you physically cannot put the item in the bag or box, then perhaps use a reminder of the item, for example, a picture of an iPod, mp3 player or a scented car air freshener in the same fragrance - instead of a candle.

Start small. You may have some items that you immediately know would fit in this compassionate kit bag. Other items can be added gradually, over time.

Choose items that make you feel good about yourself - perhaps they bring up a positive memory, or represent something that is important, inspiring, motivating or gives you a boost in some way. Consider:

- Your list of your positive qualities
- Music
- Picture
- Smells
- Reminder of compassionate image
- Book, poem, quotes
- Letter from your compassionate self
- Objects with meaning
- Hobby
- Reminders of your strengths
- Grounding or soothing objects



Keep your compassionate kit/box nearby, maybe next to your bed to remind yourself every day.

What I am going to put in my Compassionate Kit/Box: (e.g. positive qualities; Music; Pictures; Smells; Reminder of compassionate image; Book, poem, quotes; Letter from your compassionate self; Objects with meaning; Hobby; Reminders of your strengths; Grounding or soothing objects).