



Beyond Words

Wellness Resources

# What's Happening with Me? Caring for Ourselves During COVID-19

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# For Today...

- ▶ What's happening with me?
  - ▶ Awareness and Naming our Threshold Emotions
- ▶ Trauma and Grief
  - ▶ Individual and Collective
- ▶ Self-Care
- ▶ Practice
- ▶ Questions?



**What am I feeling?**

**What is my greatest  
fear?**

**What has been hardest  
for me?**

**What is helping?**



Threshold Emotions: If we name it,  
perhaps we can manage it

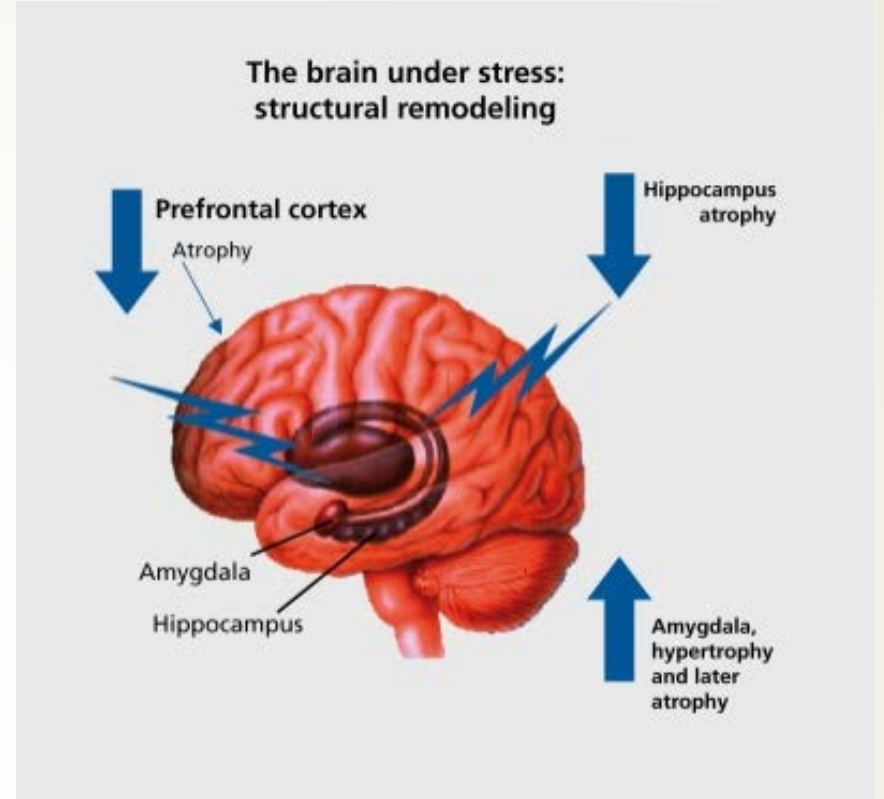
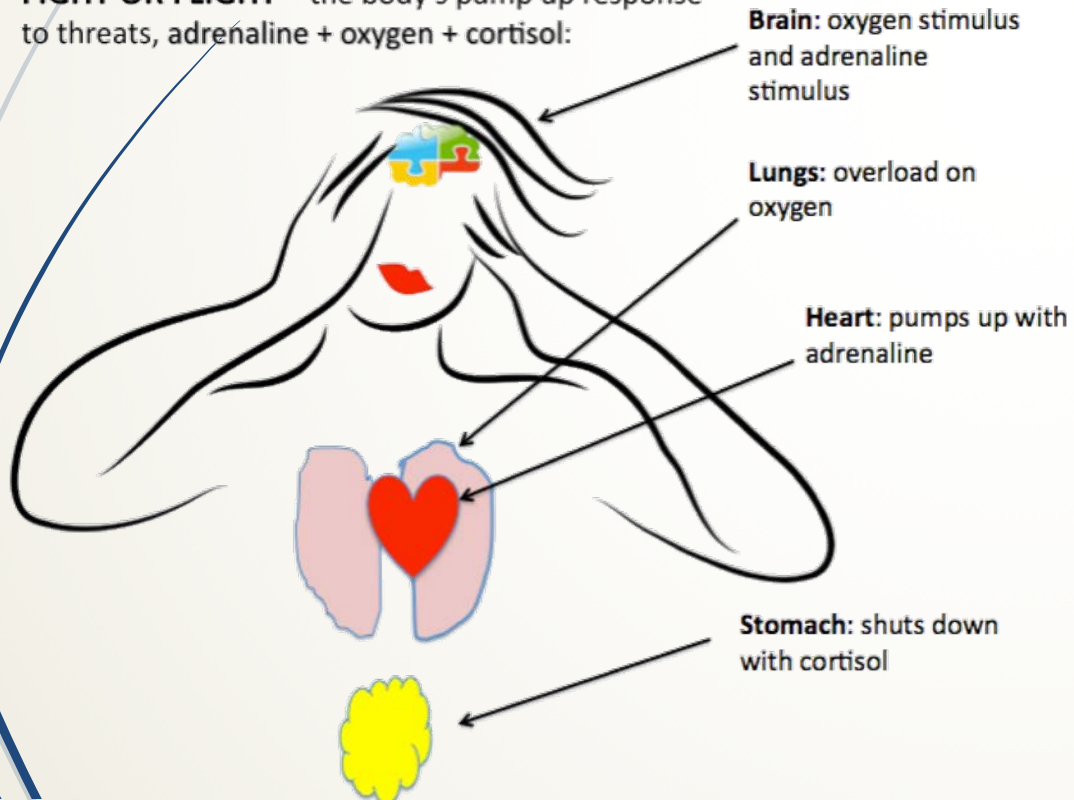


# Sympathetic Nervous System Activated

↓  
**Adrenaline  
Cortisol  
Noradrenaline**  
↓

## Flight, Fright, Freeze or Fold

**FIGHT OR FLIGHT** – the body's pump up response to threats, adrenaline + oxygen + cortisol:



# Parasympathetic Nervous System Activated

↓  
**Dopamine  
Serotonin  
Oxytocin**  
↓

**Growth Mindset**



# THREATS

Resources

Resources

# COVID as a Traumatic Event



**SAFETY**



**SATISFACTION**



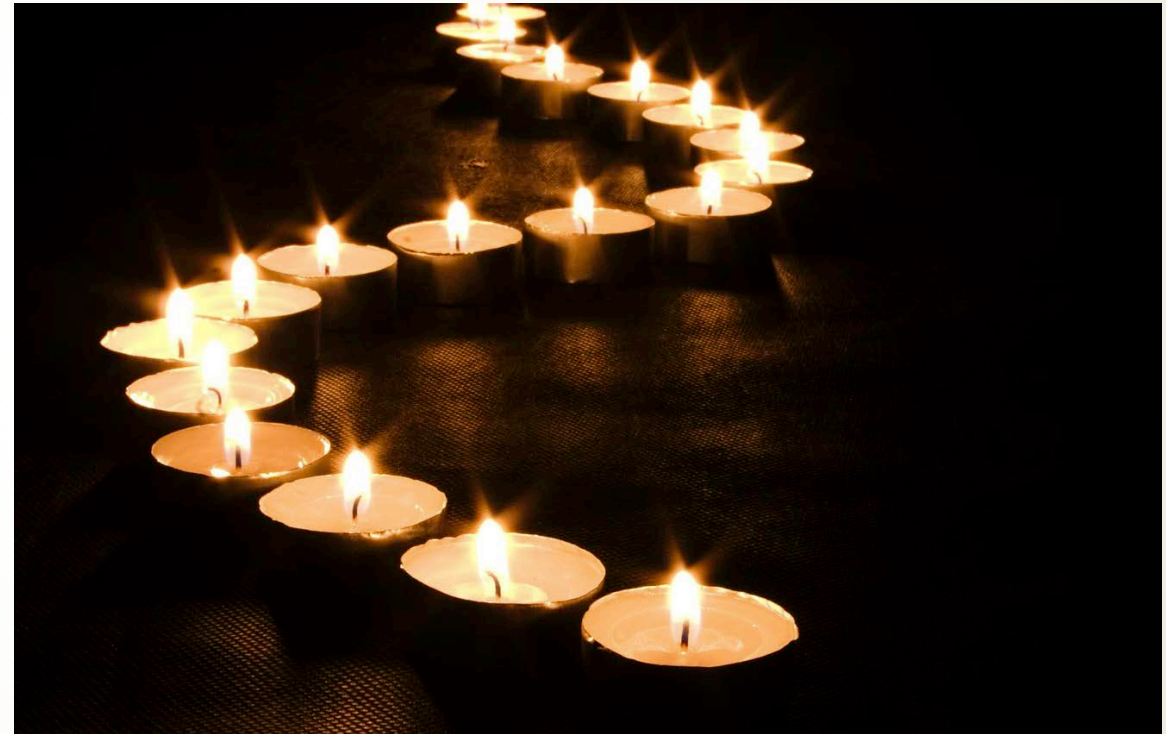
**CONNECTION**

## UNIQUE INFLUENCES

- Past Experiences (Triggers)
- Past Experiences (Resilience)
  - Uncertainty
  - Personality
- Individual Situation

# COVID as Grief

- Different Kinds of Grief: Loss, Anticipatory and Collective (micro and macro)
- Five Stages: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Sadness (Depression), Acceptance
- Sixth Stage: Meaning Making and Post Traumatic Growth (not there yet)



Berinato, Scott "That Discomfort Your Feeling is Grief" (3/23/20) Harvard Business Review

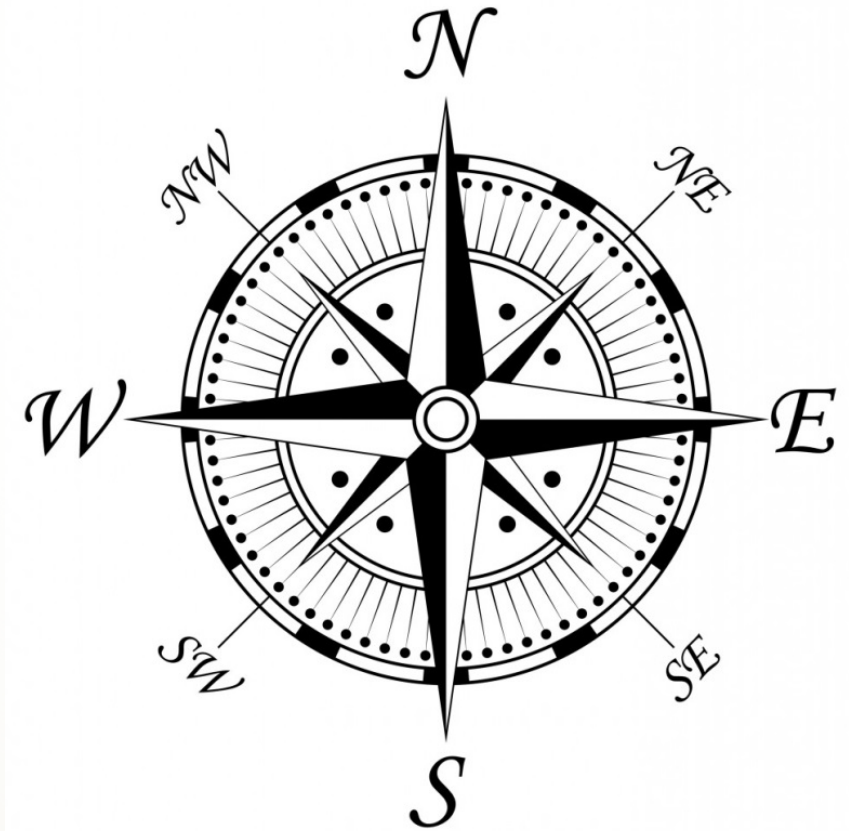


# Self-Care During COVID



# 7 Essentials of a Self-Care Plan: Give *the best of you, not the rest of you!*

- Authentic to You
- Sustainable
- Holistic
- Scalable
- Carefully Boundaried
- Mindfully Created
- Values Driven



# 5 Dimensions of Self-Care

- Physical
- Emotional
- Intellectual
- Social
- Spiritual



# Compassion

**INSTINCT**

**RESOURCE**

**A warmhearted sensitivity to suffering and call to action**

**Core Value**

**COURAGE**

**VIRTUE**



**Humans are wired for compassion**

**Compassion is good for us individually and collectively**

A pair of hands with red-painted nails gently cradles a large, smooth, red heart. The heart is the central focus, and the hands are positioned on either side, with fingers slightly curled around it. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a fabric. Overlaid on the heart is a quote in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The quote reads: "IF YOUR COMPASSION DOES NOT INCLUDE YOURSELF IT IS INCOMPLETE". Below the quote, the name "Jack Kornfield" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

IF YOUR  
COMPASSION  
DOES NOT INCLUDE  
YOURSELF  
IT IS INCOMPLETE

Jack Kornfield

# What is Self-Compassion?



## **MINDFUL AWARENESS**

(vs. Over-Identification)

Taking a balanced and non-judgmental approach to our negative emotions so that feelings are neither suppressed nor exaggerated.



## **SELF-KINDNESS**

(vs. Self-Judgment)

Taking a kind and caring non-evaluative stance towards perceived shortcomings.



## **COMMON HUMANITY**

(vs. Isolation)

Recognizing that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience – something that we all go through.

# Self-Compassion



**“Treating ourselves as we would a dear friend who is suffering in some way.” Kristen Neff  
([selfcompassion.org](http://selfcompassion.org))**

# Benefits of Self-Compassion Practices

- Slows the heart rate and may help reduce the risk of heart disease
- Better sleep and resilience.
- Improves health promoting behaviors
- Increases our sense of well-being
- Less vulnerable to loneliness
- Enhances feelings of self worth, and promotes neuroplasticity—brain growth
- Positive effects extend to those we care for and others who care for them



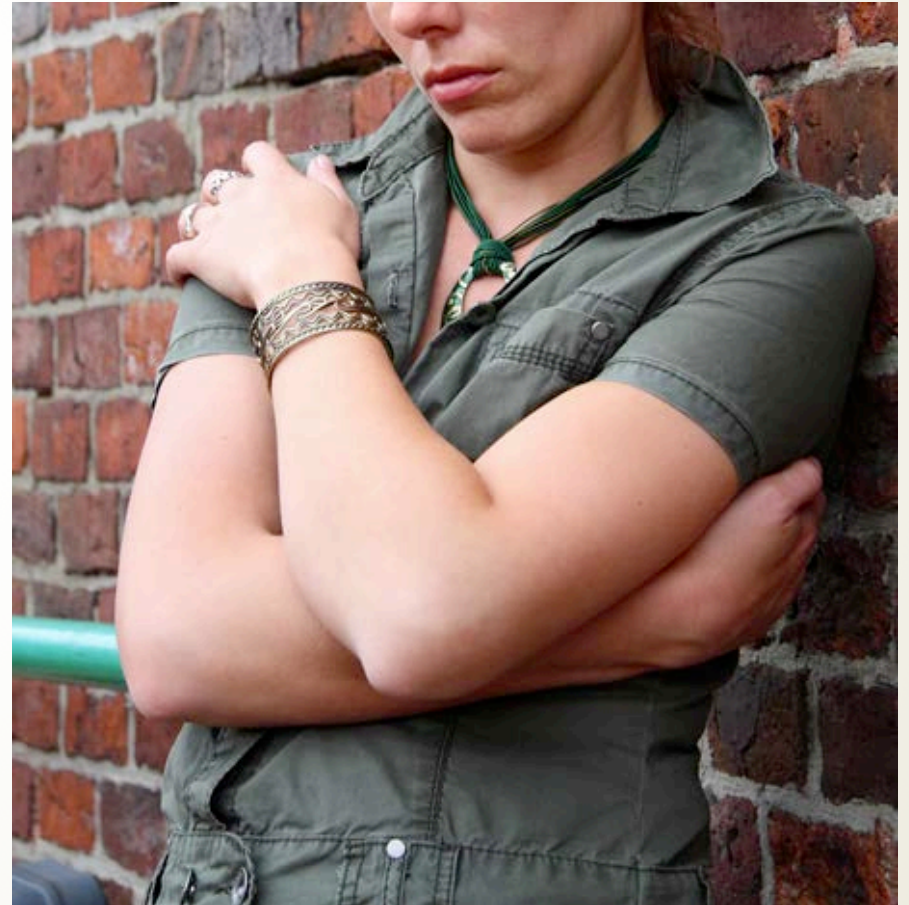
***One moment of self-compassion can  
change your day...  
A string of self-compassionate moments  
can change your life!***


Self-Compassion is the basis of our  
compassion for others



# Self-Compassion Break

- ▶ When Might this be a useful practice?- when difficulties arise in our lives
- ▶ Offers a gesture of soothing touch
- ▶ This practice reminds us to apply the three core components of self-compassion:
  - ▶ Mindful Awareness,
  - ▶ Common Humanity
  - ▶ Self-Kindness



A stack of five smooth, dark grey rocks is balanced on a sandy beach. The rocks are stacked vertically, with the top rock being the smallest and the bottom rock being the largest. The beach is sandy and the water is calm, reflecting the sky. In the background, there are forested hills under a clear sky. The text "PRACTICE: SELF-COMPASSION BREAK" is overlaid in yellow on the left side of the image.

**PRACTICE:  
SELF-COMPASSION BREAK**






“And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.”

~Kitty O'Meara



and then the whole world  
walked inside and shut their doors  
and said we will stop it all. everything.  
to protect our weaker ones  
our sicker ones. our older ones.  
and nothing. nothing in the history of humankind  
ever felt more like love than this.

-CD

# The Gates of Hope

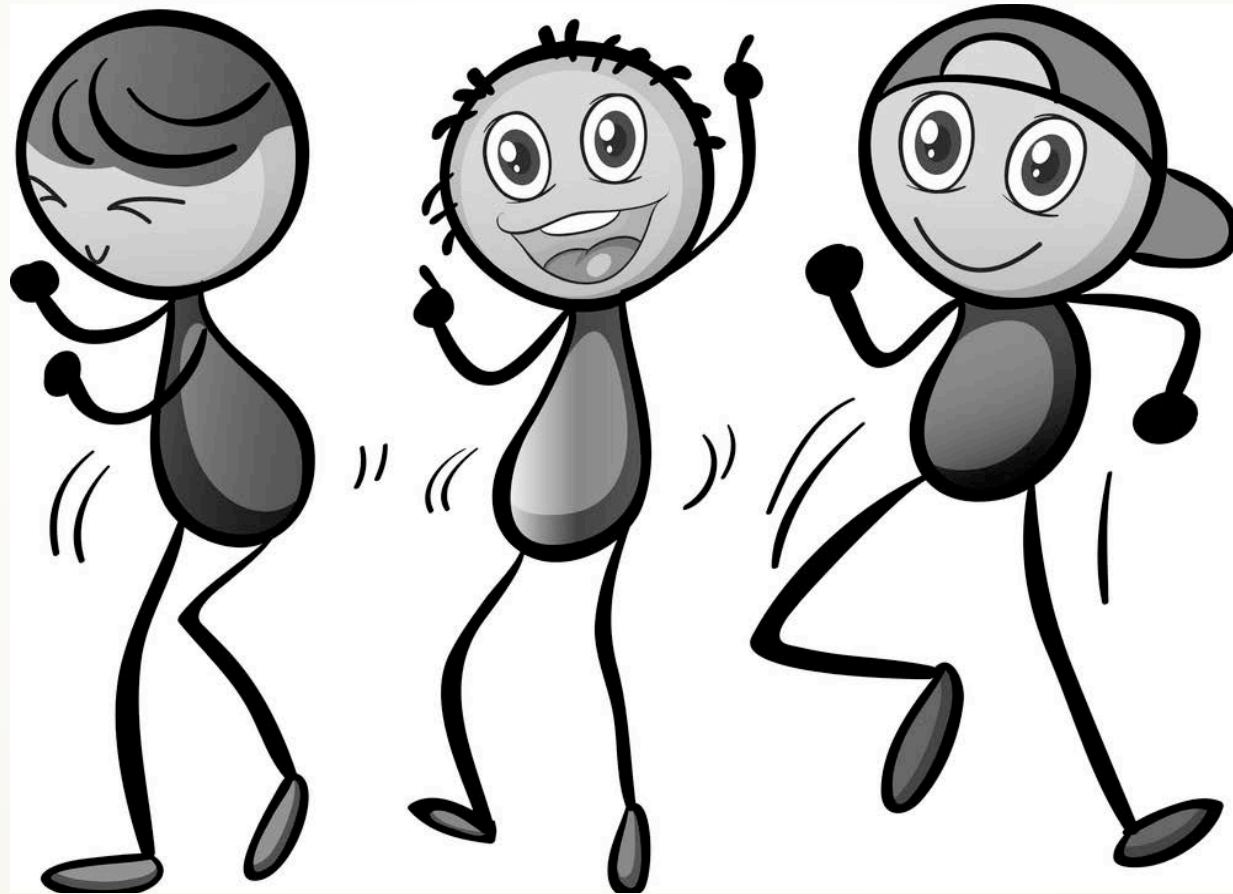
by Victoria Safford

Our mission is to plant ourselves at the gates of Hope —  
not the prudent gates of Optimism, which are somewhat narrower;  
nor the stalwart, boring gates of Common Sense;  
nor the strident gates of Self-Righteousness,  
which creak on shrill and angry hinges  
(people cannot hear us there; they cannot pass through);  
nor the cheerful, flimsy garden gate of “Everything is gonna be all right.”  
But a different, sometimes lonely place,  
the place of truth-telling, about your own soul first of all and its condition,  
the place of resistance and defiance,  
the piece of ground from which you see the world  
both as it is and as it could be, as it will be;  
the place from which you glimpse not only struggle, but joy in the struggle.  
And we stand there, beckoning and calling,  
telling people what we are seeing, asking people what they see.



# Shaking and Dancing Therapy

<https://cmbm.org/thetransformation/resources/>



# References and Resources

- ▶ Berinato, Scott "That Discomfort Your Feeling is Grief" (3/23/20) Harvard Business Review: [https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_campaign=hbr&utm\\_medium=social](https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=hbr&utm_medium=social). Accessed 3/26/20.
- ▶ Gordon, J . (2019) *The Transformation: Discovering wholeness and healing after trauma*. Harper One.
- ▶ Website Center for Mind Body Medicine: <https://cmbm.org/thetransformation/resources/>
- ▶ Center for Mindful Self-Compassion (<https://centerformsc.org>)
- ▶ Hanson, R. (2019) *The foundations of wellbeing: change your brain for the better*. Website <https://www.thefoundationsofwellbeing.com>.
- ▶ Self Compassion, Kristen Neff: <https://self-compassion.org>.
- ▶ Hanson, R. (2018) *Resilient: How to grow an unshakable core of calm, strength, and happiness*. Harmony.





# **Bonus Slides**

# 10 Tips for Self-Compassion Practices

- Know that you can go at your own pace
- Pause at any time to explore something more deeply
- If too difficult, step away and come back later if you'd like to do so
- Small, short, easy and frequent likely create more sustainable change
- As you are learning, choose experiences that are meaningful but not too serious
- Experiment with phrases
- Create visual reminders
- Vow to practice
- Apply your senses
- **SAVOR the experiences!**



***“There are a thousand ways  
to kneel and kiss the  
ground.”  
Rumi***

# Self-Compassion: 4-Point Checklist

- ✓ Am I kind and understanding to myself?
- ✓ Do I acknowledge shortcomings and failures as experiences shared by everyone?
- ✓ Am I keeping my negative feelings in perspective?
- ✓ Am I celebrating the positive?



# Self-Compassion Practices

- Discovery: Self-Compassion Break
- Core Meditation: Loving Kindness Meditation
- Mindfulness: Sense and Savor Walk:
- Self-Kindness: Self-Compassion Journaling



**Practice of Good Will**

**With these practices,  
we are becoming our own best  
teachers**

**The best practice is the one you  
actually do!**

# Self-Compassion Break:

- ▶ When might this be a useful practice? When difficulties arise in our lives, This practice reminds us to apply the three core components of self-compassion: Mindful Awareness, Common Humanity, Self-Kindness (Informal)
  - ▶ Think of a situation in your life (or as one comes up) that causes you stress—health, relationship, work? < choose in the mild-moderate range as you are learning, recent but not immediate>
    - ▶ Visualize the situation clearly in your mind in some detail
    - ▶ Can you feel the discomfort? <if not choose another>
- ▶ Say to yourself: This is a moment of suffering (*Ouch, This hurts, this is stressful, this sucks*)
- ▶ Now try saying to yourself: “Suffering is part of life” (*I am not alone, everyone feels this way sometimes*)
- ▶ Now offer a gesture of soothing touch: Hands on your heart, hug yourself, rub your shoulders, cup your hands in your lap
- ▶ Try saying to yourself: May I be kind to myself, May I give myself what I need (May I forgive myself, may I accept myself, May I begin to accept myself May I be patient)
- ▶ Reflect

# Self-Compassion Practice: Loving Kindness Meditation— How to Develop a Metta Phrase

- ▶ Suggest no more than 5 lines
- ▶ Think about phrases that elicit safety, satisfaction, connection and gratitude
- ▶ Using the word “May” helps to make us feel more hopeful and less attached to outcomes
- ▶ Using the same phrases , insert “I” and focus on yourself; the “**You**” focusing on a loved one, finally if it feels comfortable “**We**” focusing on common humanity
- ▶ Try for 3 times a day minimum (one minute or more)
- ▶ Start with 3 deep breaths, place your hand over your heart if this feels good
- ▶ Begin with “I” focusing on yourself
- ▶ After you finish and throughout the day--Simply Notice and Note what you are feeling

# Self-Compassion Practice: Loving Kindness Meditation



- ▶ May I be Safe
- ▶ May I be Happy
- ▶ May I be Healthy
- ▶ May I Live with Ease
  
- ▶ May You be Safe
- ▶ May You be Happy
- ▶ May You be Healthy
- ▶ May You Live with Ease
  
- ▶ May We be Safe
- ▶ May We be Happy
- ▶ May We be Healthy
- ▶ May We Live with Ease

# Sense and Savor Walk (15- 30 minutes)

- ▶ Find a location that feels good and safe for you
- ▶ Begin to walk at a comfortable pace
- ▶ Gently bring attention to your breath
- ▶ Take a few moments to take in your surroundings and marvel at the awe of Nature
- ▶ When you are ready, begin with focusing on one of your five senses
- ▶ Notice all that you appreciate with this sense
- ▶ Move onto the next sense and notice all that you appreciate
- ▶ Continue as you are comfortable with each of your senses
- ▶ Finish as you began with attention to breath and savoring the awe of Nature




- Cultivates mindfulness
- Helpful for those who prefer to be active
- Added benefit of connecting with Nature



# Self-Compassion Practice: Journaling One Week Exercise

- ▶ Review the days events
- ▶ Write down anything you felt bad about, judged yourself about, or difficult experience that caused you pain
- ▶ Name your emotion, write about it, non judgmental
- ▶ Write about ways your common experience was connected to the larger human experience
- ▶ Write kind and understanding words to yourself and others





Please grant me the serenity  
to stop beating myself up for  
not doing things perfectly,  
the courage to forgive myself  
because I always try my best,  
and the wisdom to know that I am  
a good person with a kind heart.

INSPIRED BY ELEANOR BROWNN

# IS IT WORKING?

TRYING MY BEST



- TO PRACTICE  
SELF-COMPASSION  
IN MY LIFE.



AM I DOING  
IT YET?

