

THE POWER OF SELF COMPASSION

CREATED BY THE SYMBIOSIS CENTRE FOR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING (SCEW)

Pandemic, locusts, racial discrimination, protests, cyclones. The world is in flux and these don't even cover the challenges that you may be experiencing at an individual level. To venture out or not venture out? Work from home or brave the virus? Make plans for 2020 or wait and watch? Changes in working, changes in living, changes in everything. And all of this can very easily and understandably create negative emotions. Fear, anger, sadness, disappointment amongst others. It's okay to feel what you are feeling. It is okay to identify and honour those emotions.

But now comes the question- I know what I am feeling, what do I do with it? And to that we say- Self Compassion. For self compassion is the antidote, the cure, the vaccine to all negative emotions. The greatest gift you can give yourself is the ability to self soothe using self compassion. So what is self compassion? Why is it important and how do we practice it? Let's take a closer look.

TALK TO YOURSELF LIKE YOU WOULD TALK TO A FRIEND

We often find ourselves soothing and emotionally supporting other people. This could include a kind word like "it's okay, don't worry, everything will be alright" or "you can do this" or a compassionate gesture. Whatever that may be, emotional support easily flows for others but we rarely give it to ourselves. Being your own cheerleader and recognizing when you are hard on yourself and replacing those critical statements with something compassionate like "it's okay if I don't know what to do right this instant, it's okay to take things a step at a time" can go a long way in soothing negative emotions.

RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU ARE BEING VERY SELF CRITICAL

Our internal self talk determines our emotions and then our actions and then eventually our experiences. When we are very critical or hard on ourselves it is easy to be on edge, get upset, angry and sometimes even anxious and depressed. Sometimes we underestimate our strengths and capacity to manage situations. By redirecting our thoughts towards better feeling ones, we empower ourselves with the ability to manage situations better and have a more positive life experience. This also helps build our self-esteem and decision making skills.



REMEMBER YOU ARE WORTHY AND YOU ARE DOING THE BEST YOU CAN

Being kinder and saying more forgiving statements to yourself when things are not going as planned is an important aspect of self compassion. We can often diminish our worth with the self talk in our mind resulting in low confidence. Feeling a lack of worth can create a whole host of negative emotion. Remind yourself of your positive traits, unique qualities and the value you add to the world. You are doing what you can to keep going during this time and manage the challenges. No matter what the situation, you are always worthy. Take a look at some more examples of these positive affirmations or self soothing statements in the table provided.

Self Critical Statement

I hate that I cannot get things done as I used to.

I am a failure if I don't get to complete my plans for this year.

I am useless if I am afraid of the future

Self Compassionate Statement

I am doing the best I can considering there is a pandemic going on.

Even if I don't get to complete all my goals for 2020, I can try and aim to reach for it in the coming year. It's okay to take it a day at a time.

It's okay if I feel scared right now. This feeling will pass eventually. I don't have to have it all figured out just right now.

SELF COMPASSION IS NOT SELFISH, IT'S SURVIVAL

We might confuse self compassion as only thinking about ourselves or becoming self absorbed, self indulging or even engaging in self pity. It is important to remember that constructive criticism, introspection and reflection is different from self judgement or lack of empathy. Studies have proven that practicing self compassion helps build resilience, motivation, emotional intelligence, positivity and overall life satisfaction. Our internal mood and frequency rises , allowing us to see situations holistically. This makes us more likely to come up with healthier positive long term solutions to problems. People who are more self compassionate are likely to have better immunity and physical health. Research also shows that practising self compassion supports recovery from taxing situations and painful thoughts. This also allows for people to accept their mistakes, move forward and try again.

SELF COMPASSION CAN MANIFEST AS SELF CARE

Self compassion can be experienced both at a thought level as well as a physical experience. You can lend yourself small acts of kindness to raise your mood and good feelings. For different people that could mean different things. For example, taking a warm shower, listening to an uplifting song, a chat with a friend, a hug from a loved one, eating and sleeping on time, turning off the television and taking a quick power nap and so on.

Self-Compassion is:



Self Kindness

Be loving towards ourselves, instead of self-critical.



Common Humanity

Everyone suffers. You are not perfect. No one is. You are not alone.



Mindfulness

Notice our struggle. Feel it, instead of being reactive. Be with it, avoiding self-judgement or overreaction.

From the work of Kristin Neff

LuminateWellness.com

Let's take a look at if we are practising self compassion with the help of these questions.

- **Do I wake up feeling happy for the new day?**
- **Do I enjoy my own company?**
- **Does my self- talk make me smile?**
- **Am I satisfied with who I am? Or do I need someone's opinion, praise, acceptance or love to like myself?**
- **Am I connected with myself or being needy for others company?**



SELF COMPASSION CHANGES HOW YOU APPROACH THE WORLD

When we practise self compassion, our mind will be a more peaceful and a less hostile place. When our mind is at peace , our actions will reflect it and thus improve our interactions with others. When we align with ourselves through unconditional self love, we also release the need to always be right and instead, sometimes choosing to be kind. When we do this, we can extend our compassion to others, viewing them from a place of unconditional acceptance and suspended judgement. This is our contribution to the world. As Mahatma Gandhi once said , “Be the change you want to see in the world”. And to that we say the change starts with your own kindness to yourself.



IF YOUR
COMPASSION
DOES NOT
INCLUDE
YOURSELF,
IT IS INCOMPLETE



Activities to practice self -compassion

We can begin to practice self-compassion by taking small steps. “Journey of miles begins with a single step” -Lao Tzu

- Taking good care of your body by giving it nutritious food and beverages.
- Appreciating yourself even for small good deeds or achievements.
- Writing gratitude, empathizing, appreciation letter to self
- Taking an hour for self (may include practising mindfulness, meditation, reading, eating, yoga, gardening,etc)
- Consciously spending time with your family, friends, relatives,etc.

**IN CASE OF ANY MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES, REACH
OUT TO YOUR SCEW CAMPUS COUNSELLOR VIA PHONE OR
AT MINDHELP@SIU.EDU.IN**

SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL (DEEMED UNIVERSITY)

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