



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Mindfulness & Self-Compassion Wellness Workshop

Student Wellness Services

Acknowledging the Land and the People

We acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes

the **Blackfoot Confederacy** (the **Siksika**, **Piikani**, and **Kainai First Nations**), the **Tsuut'ina First Nation**, the **Stoney Nakoda** (the **Chiniki**, **Bearspaw**, and **Goodstoney First Nations**), and **Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III**.

The University of Calgary is situated on land adjacent to where the Bow River meets the Elbow River. The traditional Blackfoot name of this place is “**Moh'kins'tsis**.”

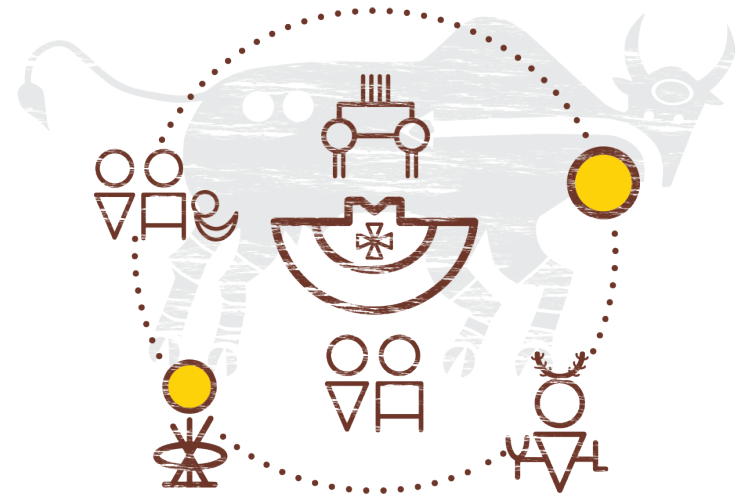



Image: The Cultural Model for the University of Calgary's Indigenous Strategy, ii' taa'poh'to'p

- Introduction to **mindfulness**
- Defining **self-compassion**
- Look at the difference between **self-esteem** and **self-compassion**
- Develop skills for practicing a **mindfulness & self-compassion break**

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgementally” – Jon Kabat Zinn

Your experience with mindfulness?



Little? Some? Lots?
Neutral? Positive? Negative?

Historical Context

- Hinduism 4,000+ years; Vedic meditation, yoga practice
- Buddhism 2500+ years; Sati (awareness) is one of the first of seven factors of enlightenment
- Some argue the history of mindfulness should not be reduced to Buddhism and Hinduism, as mindfulness also has roots in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Trousselard et al. 2014)
- Mindfulness can be considered as a universal human ability embodied to foster clear thinking and open-heartedness. As such, this form of being requires no particular religious or cultural belief system. (Trousselard et al, 2014)
- 1990s, Jon Kabat Zinn founded the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, creates MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction), kickstarts much research and program creation from a Western paradigm
- While the origins of yoga coincide with the origins of Hinduism, so does the recent rise of yoga's popularity in the West coincide with the rise of mindfulness. (Selva, 2021)

Mindfulness

Through mindfulness, we can learn to shift into the **being mode**, where we fully focus our attention and awareness to experiences in the present moment. It can allow us to recognize our thoughts and judgments, and increase our ability to accept the present and, make conscious choices on how we would like to feel and react.



Breathing Space

Benefits of Mindfulness

- Reduced rumination
- Stress reduction
- Boost to working memory
- Boosts focus
- Less emotional reactivity
- More cognitive flexibility
- Increased immune function
- Relationship satisfaction... and lots more!

Keng, S.-L., Smoski, M. J., & Robins, C. J. (2011). Effects of Mindfulness on Psychological Health: A Review of Empirical Studies. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 31(6), 1041–1056. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2011.04.006>

... being **open to and moved** by one's own suffering, experiencing feelings of **caring and kindness** toward oneself, taking an **understanding, nonjudgmental attitude** toward one's inadequacies and failure, and recognizing that one's own experience is part of the **common human experience**

(Neff, 2003, p. 224)

3 Components of Self-Compassion



Self-kindness vs Self-judgment



Common
humanity vs Isolation



Mindfulness vs Over-identification

Positively correlated with:

- Higher levels of happiness
- Optimism
- Social Connection
- Resilience
- Confidence
- Adaptive coping strategies
- More accurate self-concepts

Inversely related to:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Procrastination
- Narcissism
- Reactive anger

Neff, K. (2017). The Role of Self-Compassion in Development: A Healthier Way to Relate to Oneself. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2790748/>

- **Self-pity:** becoming immersed in your own problem and forget others have similar problems
- **Self-indulgence:** letting oneself “get away with everything”
- **Avoidance or apathy**

What is the difference between self-esteem and self-compassion?





What are examples of things that would raise or maintain your self-esteem?

“Self-esteem refers to our sense of self-worth, perceived value, or how much we like ourselves.” (Neff, K. 2017)



What kind of thoughts, feelings, or behaviors do you think needing to raise or maintain our self-esteem might result in?

- Perfectionism & Procrastination
- Approval-seeking
- Narcissism
- Self-serving bias
- Reactive anger
- Hide or refute shortcomings
- Social comparison

Self-Esteem

- Sense of self-worth based on standing apart from others
- Must be maintained or raised
- Increased defense to threats
 - Encourages us to hide shortcomings
 - Fluctuates depending on current situation/success

Self-Compassion

- All people (and I)
 - Deserve kindness
 - Suffer & struggle
- Allows examination of failings/inadequacy
- Not dependent on external circumstances

Academic Culture

Financial pressures

Harsh inner critic

Fear of failure

Seeking perfection

Personal Expectations

Loss of control

HOW TO BE A FRIEND TO YOURSELF



Think of a situation in your life that is difficult, that is causing you stress. Call the situation to mind, and see if you can actually feel the stress and emotional discomfort in your body.

Now, say to yourself:

1. This is a moment of suffering



2. Suffering is a part of life



3. May I be kind to myself



Neff, K. (2018). <http://self-compassion.org/exercise-2-self-compassion-break/>



Practicing Self-Compassion

SKILL: Self Compassion
Meditation

1. Commit to practicing self-compassion

Mindfulness Self-kindness Common humanity

2. Practice self-compassion breaks

3. Think about the ways that you use self-criticism as a motivator.

-How does this make you feel?

-What do you really want?

-What compassionate message can I give myself?

4. Look outward – What can you do to protect yourself from harm?

5. Create a self-compassion mantra

“It becomes understood that happiness is not dependent on circumstances being exactly as we want them to be, or on ourselves being exactly as we’d like to be. Rather, happiness stems from loving ourselves and our lives exactly as they are, knowing that joy and pain, strength and weakness, glory and failure are all essential to the full human experience.”

(Neff, 2011)

Self-Compassion: Stop Beating Yourself Up and Leave Insecurity Behind

Check out our other wellness workshops:

- Healthy Thinking
- Motivation & Time Management
- Managing Stress and Anxiety
- Pushing Past Perfectionism

For the most up-to-date information on our resources and services, visit our website!

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services>

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Increase your confidence in your ability to manage conflicts at school, work and in other parts of your lives. Training within the Conflict Management Digital Badge includes learning about conflict styles, navigating conflict in relationships, and intercultural communication.

Get a virtual LinkedIn badge to show your skill development in this area!



Image References:

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