Boosting Self-Compassion
Wellness Workshop
Student Wellness Services
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.”**
Objectives

— Defining **self-compassion**
— Look at the difference between **self-esteem** and **self-compassion**
— Develop skills for practicing a **self-compassion break**

Student Wellness Services
... 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

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.”

-Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn

http://actforpsychosis.com/pdfs/A10_Three_minute_breathing_space.pdf
Why Self-Compassion?

Positively correlated with:
- Higher levels of happiness
- Optimism
- Social Connection
- Resilience
- Confidence
- Social connectedness
- Adaptive coping strategies
- More accurate self-concepts

Inversely related to:
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Procrastination
- Narcissism
- Reactive anger

What Self-Compassion Is Not

- **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?
Defining Self-Esteem

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

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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 or self-like 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
Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging.

Guilt: I DID something bad.
Shame: I AM bad.
Obstacles to Self Compassion

Academic Culture

Financial pressures

Harsh inner critic

Fear of failure

Seeking perfection

Personal Expectations

Loss of control
Common humanity vs Isolation

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

How to be a friend to yourself
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
Practicing Self-Compassion

SKILL: Develop your own self-compassion mantra

- Reality check the messages and expectations that fuel “never good enough”
“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)
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
Earn the Conflict Management Digital Badge

Conflict management is a key skill for relationship building and achieving success.

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!
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