

# Building Resilience: One Step at a Time

## Self-Compassion

For those of us in the helping professions, compassion is something we offer to people freely, often without judgment. In doing so, we offer them hope and help them heal and recover. *What if we were to provide that same compassion to ourselves?*

Having compassion for oneself is not different from having compassion for another person. However, to have compassion requires the acknowledgment of struggle. There is no compassion in ignoring the suffering of a patient or client, and there is none in neglecting our suffering.

Likewise, there is no compassion for another if one's heart is not moved to respond to the sufferer's pain. Compassion brings warmth, caring, and assistance to a person. It is so with self-compassion, for how will we heal if we offer no warmth, caring, or assistance for ourselves?

Compassion means one recognizes the failures, mistakes, and imperfections of others, treating them with kindness and understanding. Self-compassion offers these same responses to the self, responding to one's faults and failures with grace and acceptance.

Instead of ignoring one's trauma and wounding by trying to maintain a "stiff upper lip," one accepts that this is a challenging time and passage. One can honestly say the self, *"How can I comfort and care for myself at this moment and move toward growth and resilience?"*

Self-compassion does not produce self-pity by which a person can become immersed in their problems and pain. It is not self-indulgence or letting yourself off the hook and being able to get away with unhealthy responses.

With no self-pity or self-criticizing, no focusing on blaming others for the pain, self-compassion moves forward with tenderness and the best care possible that can bring about healing, recovery, and resilience.

### What can you do to practice self-compassion?

- Remember that it is goodwill toward the self, not simply good feelings. Goodwill produces actions.
- Self-compassion mindfully accepts the moment's pain while embracing the self with kindness and appropriate care.
- Self-compassion does not try to make the pain disappear by suppressing it or fighting it. On the contrary, these will worsen the pain without moving us toward healing and recovery.
- Self-compassion always moves us forward into optimal conditions and practices for growth and transformation.
- Self-compassion may take us into uncomfortable understandings of ourselves. Such insight can be challenging. However, remember that when you begin to have healthy compassion for yourself and appropriate self-love, that love will start to reveal all that is not like itself.

Check out the great resources at [WellnessMN.org](http://WellnessMN.org).