

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Coping Skills: Practicing Self-Care

Self-Compassion Taking Care of You Grade 6-8

Overview:

Self-compassion is an important part of self-care. It is about treating ourselves with the same kindness that we would treat a good friend. It is about responding to our mistakes, inadequacies, and failures with compassion instead of harsh judgement. It is acknowledging that imperfection is a shared human experience. In these lessons, children learn to celebrate what they are good at, to treat themselves as a good friend, and give themselves a break.

Objectives:

Your child will develop self-compassion by understanding their shared humanity.

Child Goals:

I can develop compassion for myself.

Vocabulary: compassion, self-compassion

Learn- 5 minutes

The Take Care of Yourself Discussion discusses the importance of self-compassion as a key to mental health and well-being. Self-compassion is loving and caring about ourselves. It is understanding that mistakes, failures, hard times, and imperfections are part of being human.

Some strategies for being kind to yourself include:

- Be Your Own Compassionate Friend
- Forgive Yourself
- Be Kind to Yourself

Discussion Questions

- What is self-compassion?
- Why is self-compassion important for your well-being?
- What are some ways to practice self-compassion?
- Tell about a time when you showed yourself some compassion.

Practice-10 minutes

The From Compassion ...to Self-Compassion Activity asks students to think about how they respond to the mistakes, failures, hard times, and imperfections of their friends and then asks student to turn it around a personalize the responses for themselves.

Organize children into groups if possible. Place each Compassion Chart in a different station around the room, along with a marker.

Provide each child with a set of Compassion to Myself Cards. Assign each group of children to one of the Compassion Chart stations.

Have them read the scenario on the Compassion Chart and respond with words of encouragement as a compassionate friend. Allow groups about 2 to 3 minutes and then ask each group to rotate to another Compassion Chart and repeat with the next scenario.

After the groups have rotated to three Compassion Charts, ask a volunteer from each group to share the words of encouragement on the Compassion Chart.

Ask the children to return to their seats and create a set of Compassion to Myself Cards with words of encouragement from the Compassion Charts written to themselves. For example, You got this! could be written on a card as I got this!

Have them to put their cards together in a plastic bag or with a rubber band. Encourage them to keep the cards in a place where they can refer to them when they need a little self-compassion. Repeat process.

Resource

Dear Families/Caregivers,

Self-compassion is an important part of self-care. It is about treating ourselves with the same kindness that we would treat a good friend. It is about responding to our mistakes, inadequacies, and failures with compassion instead of harsh judgement. It is acknowledging that imperfection is a shared human experience.

In this lesson, your teen learned to develop self-compassion by understanding his or her shared humanity and that mistakes, failures, hard times, and imperfections are part of being human. Some strategies for being kind to yourself include:

Be Your Own Compassionate Friend

The next time you find yourself being hard on yourself, step outside of yourself and look at yourself through the eyes of a compassionate friend.

Forgive Yourself

It's impossible to grow and learn if we're wallowing in the past. Accept that you did the best you could at the time and move on.

Be Kind to Yourself

Loving yourself and showing yourself self-compassion involves loving yourself as you are, not in spite of who you are.

If you see your teen being too hard on him or herself, help your teen to take a break and be kind to him or herself. Share your own experiences of hardship or struggles to help your teen understand that he or she is not alone in feeling this way.

Taking time to show self-compassion is important for everyone's social and emotional health.

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Deeper Dive – 5 to 10 minutes

The Showing Kindness to Myself Activity challenges children to write about a mistake, failure, hard time, or imperfection and then respond as a compassionate friend to themselves.

Provide child with a Showing Kindness to Myself Activity.

Ask the child to write about a mistake, a failure, hard time, or imperfection that they struggle with.

Then have the child write themselves a letter from the viewpoint of a compassionate friend.

Allow time for them to share their letters with a partner. Invite volunteers to share their letters with the family, school community via text or phone.

Resource 1

Compassion Chart Scenarios

Your friend is worried they won't be promoted because they failed the STAAR test again.

Your friend is upset because they messed up in a relationship/friendship by saying something they did not mean.

Your friend is embarrassed because they keep wearing old shoes to school and people are teasing them.

Your friend is sad because their parents are going through a divorce.

Your friend is upset because they didn't make the team.

Your friend is upset because they struggle when called upon to read out loud.

Your friend is upset because they can't wear their hood in school because their hair is not cut or done.

Your friend hates the fact that they struggle with math.

Your friend hates the way they look.

Tier 2 Strategies Accommodations and Modifications

Learn

Prior to the lesson, talk with the child about what self-acceptance is and ways to practice self-acceptance.

Provide preferential seating, e.g. by having the child sit toward the front of the room.

Practice

Prior to the activity, talk with the child about some encouraging phrases they might say to a

friend who was struggling. Write the phrases down and allow them to use the notes.

Allow the child to choose their group or assign them to a group with children who will encourage their participation.

Dive Deeper

Prior to the activity, talk with the child about a mistake, failure, hard time, or imperfection they are struggling with and ways they can show compassion to themselves.

Choose a partner for the child to work with during the activity who will serve as a model for completing the project.

The Rethink Ed Self-Care Series aligns with CASEL Core Competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, and Responsible Decision-Making.

Self-Compassion

We live in a world where we can easily get overwhelmed by the number of causes requiring attention and where we feel our lives are too hectic to do anything about it. Every day we see things on the news and in our communities that affect us emotionally or cognitively. We may find ourselves saying “I need to DO something!”. But, each day, we may see a something new that we want to devote our time to. We get sad, or angry, but tend to have moved on or get burnt out by the next new cycle. How do we maintain that fire to contribute without getting distracted?

The key is to focus and make a plan. Just follow these steps!

1) Identify an injustice or need.

Like mentioned above, this is usually the easiest part of the process. The media does this for us. The difficult part is to select a cause that is important to you and to follow through with the rest of the steps. While there are many things that may speak to you, choose the one that is closest to your heart. For example, you may have always wanted to advocate for the environment. Or, if you work with young children, you may be energized by standing up for children’s rights. Even within these categories, there may be countless issues that need to be addressed. Pick one at a time to focus your energy on. Too many and you may get disorganized, frustrated, or distracted.

2) Innovate a solution.

Think about the issue you’ve chosen and what the solution may be. In the first part of this step, you are not creating a solution that you are necessarily taking on by yourself. Most injustices or needs that we identify will have solutions that are far beyond what we can do alone. However, think on a larger scale about what changes need to be implemented in order to improve the situation. This will likely involve cooperation between people and groups. Next, identify the piece of this solution that you can work on. To do this successfully, evaluate your resources (e.g. time, money, connections) to see where you can be most effective. Depending on what you feel you have to offer at this moment in time, it may be a small solution (e.g. calling your senators) or a larger one (e.g. organizing a rally).

3) Create a plan.

In this phase, you are making a step-by-step guide for yourself. This means that you have decided on what your solution is in the previous step. No matter how big or small we feel that our contribution may be, it’s important to break it down into small, manageable goals. Make a to-do list. Give yourself deadlines. Motivate yourself to stay on task so that you can see it through to the end. In this step, make sure you are clear – include what you’ll do, how you’ll do it (including what you need to do it), where you’ll do it, and who you need to work with.

4) Work the plan.

Do it! You’ve made all the decisions, you’ve thought out a plan, now get started. Stick to your list of goals and your deadlines. With each task you accomplish you have made a contribution to the society you live in. Well done! Keep it going!

5) Pick your next cause!

Once you've done this once, you'll feel more comfortable taking on the next issue that moves you AND you'll know how to tackle it. Before you know it, making social contributions will be second nature!

Practice

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Activity

Showing Kindness to myself

Write about a mistake, failure, hard time, or imperfection that you are struggling with.

Dear _____,