

# Self-Compassion Handout by Colorado SPIRIT

## Three Components of Self-Compassion

Definition by Dr. Kristin Neff, Ph.D. || <https://self-compassion.org/>

### Self-Kindness



### Focus on Common Humanity



### Mindfulness



*Self-compassion has 3 components: being as caring toward yourself as toward others, recognizing that suffering is a universal human experience and you're not alone, observe feelings without amplifying or suppressing/denying them.*

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## Self-Compassion during the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Mindfulness

Explore your own feelings, take a few deep breaths and **observe the feelings** that arise; there's no need to act on the feelings, just observe (e.g. I'm feeling down. I've been irritable today. This is stress)

### Self-Kindness

Validate your feelings, **offer gentleness and warmth**; "may I be kind to myself", "may I accept myself as I am"; place a hand on your heart

### Common Humanity

These feelings are normal responses to an abnormal situation; **I'm not alone**; this is a very challenging time; other people feel this way too

### (+) Action

Compassionately and intentionally plan ways to take care of yourself; reach out for compassion and support from others.

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## Research on Self-Compassion

Self-compassion has been strongly correlated with **greater mental well-being and lesser symptoms of mental illness** across more than 98 research studies. Self-compassion has been shown to be a powerful source of strength/resilience in the face of various difficult life events (Bluth & Neff, 2018). More information on the empirical research supporting self-compassion can be found online <https://self-compassion.org/the-research/>

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## Activity 1: How would you treat a friend/loved one?

1. Think about a situation where a dear friend or family member feels terrible or is suffering in some way. Think about how you would respond to that loved one (including how you would feel and what you would do/say).

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2. Now think about a time when you are feeling terrible or suffering in some way. How do you typically respond to yourself?

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3. Did you notice a difference? If so, what might contribute to that difference? What would happen if you responded to your own suffering in the way you respond to a dear loved one?

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*Many people are more comfortable and skilled at offering compassion toward others (especially loved ones, friends, family members, and children). Compassion for others is a perfect starting point for turning compassion toward yourself and offering yourself the empathy, warmth, and support you deserve.*

## Activity 2: Compassionate Letter Writing

Think about something you are struggling with right now and write down what thoughts/feelings run through your mind about this struggle.

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Now write yourself a letter from the perspective of **an unconditionally loving, kind, compassionate person** who loves you for exactly who you are; someone who sees all of what you are going through and have gone through until this point in your life; someone who accepts you no matter what. What would this compassionate other say if they were able to know the thoughts/feelings you wrote above?

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After writing, step back for a few moments & then re-read and feel the soothing of your compassion.

*\*Exercises were developed by Dr. Kristin Neff and are available online (<https://self-compassion.org/>)*