

When we practise compassion	My insights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we try to engage with compassion, we are connecting with a part of our deepest nature – our fundamental wholeness and wellbeing. Automatically we tap into the richest and most effective parts of our self – so, as we work with others, we are working with ourselves at the same time. • We have a natural capacity for compassion; it is part of who we are. As we learn to express this, it is as if an inner door in our heart opens and we can communicate more directly and effectively. Stress, on the other hand, can have the effect of closing this inner door as we seek to defeat any threat to our wellbeing, and we tighten up as we try to do so. • We have seen that compassion involves using constructive emotions such as love, kindness, patience, tolerance and forgiveness. Constructive emotions, unlike destructive ones, enhance our peace of mind and contribute to the development of lasting happiness. So, by being compassionate we are engaging with behaviour that is <i>beneficial</i> to our wellbeing. By being willing to be available to others, we are automatically taking care of ourselves and behaving in ways that will reduce our own stress responses. • When we can make the connection between our own difficulties and the difficulties of others, this allows us to recognise these difficulties as part of the human experience. When we show compassion, we are acting in accordance with our understanding of the deep interconnectedness between ourselves and other people and the knowledge that we all experience stress, suffering and pain at various times in our lives. This helps to reduce the intensity of our own feelings of stress and to see things from a wider perspective. 	