

WORKSHEET 1 : COMPASSIONATE IDEAS TO COPE WITH LIFE DIFFICULTIES AND UPSETTING EMOTIONS

Record your regular practice, choosing an activity	Reflections on what helped, what was difficult and what requires practice
<p>Compassionate attention Compassionate attention is about our focus and how we create images and recall helpful memories: Engage and attend to your soothing breathing rhythm (see Chapter 3) Adopt a compassionate body posture and facial expression. Become mindful – hold your attention ‘in this moment’ rather than becoming distracted by ‘what ifs?’ and ruminations (see Chapter 7). Recall times when you’ve coped. Recall times when you were happy. Focus on your compassionate image. Keep in mind that things and feelings change. Create an image of yourself coping or of you at your best. Imagine yourself having got through this difficulty – and really focus on that. Observe thoughts and feelings as patterns created in you – and realize that you can experience many different patterns.</p> <p>Compassionate thinking/reasoning Compassionate thinking/reasoning is about how we think things through – the kinds of self-talk and conversations that go through our minds: Notice if you’re ruminating and decide to move out of it. Notice if your feelings or thoughts are self-critical and decide to switch to a kinder and compassionate focus (see Chapter 13). Imagine yourself as a compassionate person speaking to a friend. Actually speak out loud with a warm voice tone. Listen to yourself offer coping and helpful ideas (see Chapter 8). Put yourself in compassionate self mode and feel compassion for your upset self. Stay in that compassion mode. Compassionately speak to your upset self. If it helps, place a hand just over your heart area. Bring as much wisdom, strength, warmth and non-condemning to this as you can.</p>	

WORKSHEET 1 (continued)

Reflections on what helped, what was difficult and what requires practice

Record your regular practice, choosing an activity

Bring to mind your common humanity and become aware that many humans can struggle with difficult feelings. Feel at one with them rather than alone or different. Recognize how often some of what you feel and especially depression isn't your fault. Focus on the reasons why it isn't (e.g. we did not design our brains or backgrounds). Assume that others will be helpful until you get evidence that they won't. Keep in mind the motto: 'The secret of success is the ability to fail.' Focus on your efforts rather than on results.

Compassionate behavior

Compassionate behavior is behavior that will help you cope with your difficulty. Make a commitment to behave in ways that help you move forward in life, even if this means short-term difficulty. Practise trying out different behaviors and see which ones work for you. Decide to act against your depressive feelings and try to do more. Commit yourself to trying or (even for a short while) some anti-depressant behaviors (see Chapter 12). Do a little (more if you can) thing you will be pleased with. Reach out to others and see if help is available for you. Keep in mind that confidence develops from engaging with the difficulty, and that this trying time you are going through now may, in the long term, build your confidence. Recognize your limits, and when you need to, rest, slow down or take time out. If problems seem large, try to break them down into smaller elements.

Compassionate feeling

Whatever you attempt to do, always try your best to do it with kindness so that you feel your efforts to be ones of support and encouragement, in the service of helping yourself cope and flourish. Remember that coping can be hard and can take practice. There are no oughts or shoulds here, no perfect ways to cope, no freeing or ridding oneself of difficult feelings – just basic kindness for life difficulties that many of us find ourselves in. This won't remove those difficulties but it might ease your path through them – good luck!