

**Compassion**

Exercise



1-3 min.



Client



No



Self-Compassion Pause

The topic of compassion generally comes up in response to overt self-criticism or negativity. However, compassion is not just reactionary and, in fact, requires some practice. Practicing compassion may allow you to access positive emotions more easily. This exercise can be used to develop a more compassionate way of relating to oneself by creating a new, physical self-compassionate habit in difficult times.

Goal

The goal of this exercise is to create a more self-compassionate attitude and reaction in difficult times.



Advice

This exercise is most effective when used regularly. In this way, a new habit can be created. Sometimes, the physical part of the exercise sounds strange to clients. It can be helpful to let the client first experience how it feels to put their hand on their chest to comfort themselves. If clients still experience resistance, it is wise to skip this step and move on to the last step of self-compassionate self-talk.



Suggested Readings

Neff, K. D. (2011). *Self-compassion: Stop beating yourself up and leave insecurity behind*. New York: William Morrow.



Self-Compassion Pause

Instructions

These techniques work best in day-to-day encounters with stress or discomfort. As soon as you notice that you are experiencing some form of suffering, like stress or discomfort:

Step 1

Pause. Take special notice of your breath. Notice what you feel.

Step 2

Use the power of touch. Put your hand on your chest, or hug yourself.

Step 3

When applicable, remind yourself “This is a difficult moment for me. I am experiencing suffering. Suffering is a part of life. I accept myself as I am.”

Thinking in certain terms or with specific language can also foster a sense of compassion. Try using these words:

- Safety
- Forgiveness
- Happy
- Endurance
- Peace
- Strength
- Kindness
- Protection
- Learning
- Acceptance
- Wisdom
- Respect
- Understanding