

Infographic 1

What is self-compassion?

Treating yourself with the same care you would offer a good friend.

Self-compassion is the practice of relating to yourself with kindness, acknowledging your shared humanity, and holding your difficulties in mindful awareness — especially when you suffer, fail, or fall short.

— adapted from Kristin Neff (2003)

The three components

Self-compassion has three interwoven elements that work together. When all three are present, suffering softens.

<p>Self-kindness</p> <p><i>Instead of harsh self-criticism.</i></p> <p>Speaking to yourself in the warm, understanding tone you would use with someone you love. Offering comfort and care when things go wrong.</p>	<p>Common humanity</p> <p><i>Instead of isolation.</i></p> <p>Recognising that struggle, imperfection and pain are part of being human. You are not alone in this — every person who has ever lived has known difficulty.</p>	<p>Mindfulness</p> <p><i>Instead of over-identification.</i></p> <p>Holding your painful thoughts and feelings in balanced awareness — neither suppressing them nor being swept away by them.</p>
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What self-compassion is *not*

Not self-pity.	Self-pity says, "Poor me — no one suffers like I do." Self-compassion remembers that suffering is part of every human life.
Not self-indulgence.	Indulgence prioritises short-term comfort over long-term well-being. Self-compassion considers what you genuinely need.
Not self-esteem.	Self-esteem depends on success and comparison. Self-compassion is available even — especially — when you have failed.
Not weakness or selfishness.	Research finds self-compassionate people take more responsibility for mistakes, persist longer, and care more for others (Breines & Chen, 2012).

References

Neff, K. D. (2003). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and Identity*, 2(2), 85–101.

Breines, J. G., & Chen, S. (2012). Self-compassion increases self-improvement motivation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38(9), 1133–1143.