

## **Learning Online: Establishing and Maintaining Motivation: Self-compassion (Slide 1)**

I'm Jennifer Parsons, an Academic Development Specialist at the Student Success Centre. In this video, I'm going to discuss one aspect of maintaining a motivational mindset - the practice of self-compassion.

### **Self-compassion (Neff 2013) .... (Slide 2)**

As Dr. Kristin Neff has noted, having compassion for yourself is not really different from having compassion for others. When we notice another is suffering, often we feel moved to understand their pain, and offer them kindness and care. We can understand that everyone may make mistakes or fail sometimes to achieve their goals. Self-compassion is extending that understanding and kindness to ourselves, recognizing that being imperfect is part of being human (Neff, 2013).

We can ask ourselves, "How can I be supportive to myself when I am suffering?" And then we can determine our best self-care in that moment.

### **What self-compassion is not (Neff, 2013) (Slide 3)**

Let's also notice what Self compassion is not:

#### **Self-pity**

It is not Immersion in your own problems. Rather, self-compassion may allow you to step back and notice a situation in a more balanced way. It can encourage the perspective that you are not alone in your suffering, and that others have faced – and perhaps overcome – similar issues.

It is also not:

#### **Self-indulgence**

There is a difference between self care and unhealthy coping strategies. Self-compassion is not license to do anything that temporarily feels good or blocks out negative emotions. Self-indulgence may ultimately leave us feeling ashamed or depleted. Self-care, on the other hand, nourishes us in a way that will allow for positive growth and change. For example, when you are stressed about an exam, watching TV all day and avoiding studying is an unhelpful and depleting behaviour. Self-compassionate strategies might be to acknowledge your anxiety, go for a walk to clear your head, and then connect with a study partner, recognizing that you are not the only one who finds the material challenging.

Self compassion is also distinct from Self-esteem:

Self esteem is often tied to feelings of self-worth, accomplishment, and perceived value. It may depend on your latest success or failure. Self-compassion allows for kind and positive messages, even when you have not accomplished what you were hoping to do. Again, imagine that a close friend has told you that something important to them has not worked out. You would likely reassure and comfort them, without relating the failure to their worth as friend. Self-compassion allows you to do this for yourself.

## Practicing self-compassion (Slide 4)

If this mindset is new to you, recognize that like any skill, self-compassion does not always come easily at first and may require practice and support. Let's take a moment to imagine an example related to motivation. If you find yourself stuck in procrastination mode, how do you think you could gently encourage yourself to take productive action? How could you acknowledge your feelings? What might your self-care involve in this situation? How could you support yourself to take a positive step forward?

Self-compassion is a helpful mindset for enhancing and maintaining your motivation.

## What's Next? (Slide 5)

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