

SELF COMPASSION

Learning to love yourself



SELF COMFORT

When you feel alone or overwhelmed, you can put your hand over your heart and take a few deep breaths. It may help to close your eyes. When you do this, your brain actually releases comforting hormones, oxytocin and opiates. You can also say kind words to yourself, such as "I have value", "I am loved," "I am kind," "I am beautiful," "I am strong." Whatever you are going through, remember that just being a teen is already a LOT to handle.

SELF-COMPASSION IS HARD FOR MOST

**80% OF PEOPLE ARE KINDER TO OTHERS
THAN THEY ARE TO THEMSELVES**

You are not alone! What you are experiencing—feelings of insecurity, exclusion, or sadness, for example—is common to all teens and many adults (even though it may not seem that way). For teens, there are actually biological reasons, changes happening in the brain, that make you feel the way you do. It is NOT your fault and there is nothing wrong with you.

"GROUNDING" - BEING PRESENT

The first step to self-compassion is learning to feel what you feel without reacting or judging yourself harshly. When you feel overwhelmed with emotions, as if you are about to burst, you can focus instead on your feet. That's right, your feet. Think about how the bottom of your feet feel touching the floor. Feel the pressure, the texture, and other physical sensations. As your mind wanders, that's okay and normal. Just bring your attention back to the bottom of your feet. This called a "grounding" exercise, and [*here are 30 more you can try!*](#)

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO YOUR BEST FRIEND?

What would you say if a good friend was going through the exact same thing as you? In all likelihood, it is probably a lot kinder and more supportive than what you are saying to yourself. Practice talking to yourself the way you would talk to your best friend. If it helps, write it down as a letter to yourself!

IGNORE THE BAD COACH

Many of us are self-critical. We speak to ourselves harshly. Imagine these negative phrases as coming from a bad coach or instructor, when you make a mistake or do a poor job, they say things like, "You're not good enough," "you're a failure", "you'll never get any better." That is a BAD coach. A good coach would say things much more constructive, such as "keep trying your best," "let's work on that more until we get it down," or "let's focus on your strengths for a while and get back to this later." The good coach is supportive and is helping you grow and improve.

STOP SHOULDING YOURSELF

Our energy levels and productivity can improve when we begin to understand that love is much more helpful and motivating than fear. You may have a lot of homework and no desire to do it, and you keep saying "I should study more" or "I should do that assignment." Instead of saying lots of shoulds, begin to identify what you really want and why. It is a lot easier to be motivated once you figure out the positive reason to do something. For HW, some examples are you want a job that you love, you want to be able to explore your passions, you want to help others, you want to travel the world. It may also help to think about what you do already enjoy and why, and see if you can translate some of those reasons to other areas of your life. And if that is still too hard, you can always reward yourself! When you do something you need to but don't want to do, you can then do something you want to do after and give yourself a break from all those "shoulds."

