

Practicing Compassionate Self-Care

People who have mental health problems are typically very hard on themselves. They may feel and act like their problems are their fault or that they are somehow “flawed.” Many feel that their past actions and choices are the reasons for their problems and they have an internal dialogue which keeps them from doing the things that might be helpful in solving their problems.

If this sounds like you, then you know that this type of attitude and behavior is no help at all. Rather than being hard on yourself, you can practice compassionate self-care. You can treat yourself with understanding and kindness, just the way you would treat a friend in need.

Practicing compassionate self-care is not being self-indulgent. Self-indulgence is when you give yourself more than you need, like eating two desserts or buying clothes when your closets are already bursting. Compassionate self-care is also not self-pity. Self-pity is when you feel that your problems are worse than the problems of everyone else. Compassionate self-care recognizes the fact that all humans have problems and all humans make mistakes. And that includes you!

In this worksheet, you should list all the ways you would treat a friend who was in need. Think of someone you care about very much and imagine that he or she is having a very difficult time.

What would you say?

What would you do?

Now think of yourself at a low point when your problems seem overwhelming. Write down where you are and what you are doing.

What can you say to yourself that shows compassion and understanding?

What can you do for yourself that shows compassion and understanding?
