

Self-Compassion

by

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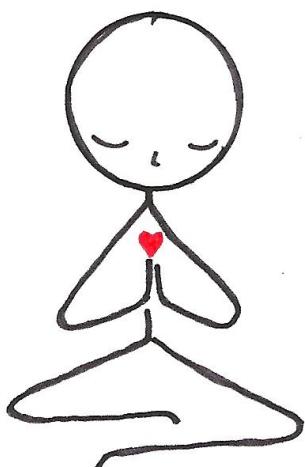
In the therapist/counseling community, self-compassion is a skill we often try to impart on our clients, especially vulnerable, young clients like those specifically entrusted into the care of providers at Best Point Behavioral Health.



Self-compassion has many definitions and most involve advising a mindset of "kindness to the inner self."

I like this one from Stanford University, which defines self-compassion as "...treating oneself with warmth and understanding in difficult times and recognizing that making mistakes is part of being human."

As adults, I think it's easy to say we are all guilty of saying things to our inner self we wouldn't dream of saying to someone else.



We are self-critical. We're hard on ourselves for misgivings. We're even harder on ourselves for mistakes.

Failure is almost unthinkable.

For preteens and teenagers, whose brains are still in various stages of development and maturity, being overly self-critical can potentially be more intense, more harmful, and with more debilitating effects.

In today's digital world there is overt pressure to adhere to social standards. This is coupled with almost instantaneous communication to one's peer group where it is instantly apparent who makes the grade and who does not.

This population self-pressurizes to be the best, to fill their plate with activities and experiences that make them stand out. There is constant stress to be notable, and desirable for inclusion in groups, interpersonal relationships, higher education and/or the work force.

For different reasons, these things are an integral part of the journey to adulthood. But, encouraging a young person to embrace self-compassion can greatly help them to become a well-rounded and healthy person.

As a therapist, I have little doubt that without self-compassion, we compare ourselves to others and often have harsh and negative beliefs about ourselves.



“If you are continually judging and criticizing yourself while trying to be kind to others, you are drawing artificial boundaries and distinctions that only lead to feelings of separation and isolation.”

- Dr. Kristin Neff

Please be mindful that this is true for any adult. Now, imagine how much truer and more adverse it would be to an impressionable and developing child?

Self-compassion is not a weakness.

It's not selfish. It does not prevent achievement.

It's a powerful tool when deployed properly and teaches one to accept responsibility, endure negative emotions and experiences, learn the ability to self-regulate, and imparts the confidence to try again.



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