

Self-Compassion Break

Adaptation from Kristen Neff

I invite you to take your first few breaths, breathing deep down into your belly and extending your exhale out. Take another breath like that, filling your lungs completely with air and then gently and slowly releasing it out. Let's take one more deep breath in, and slowly releasing the breath out.

Feel free to allow your breath to return to its normal rhythm, whatever feels comfortable and natural for you. As you do so, start to notice the feeling of your seat. I invite you to allow yourself to sink a little deeper into your chair or the floor, feeling it support you. Sit up tall with a sense of alertness, stacking your shoulders over your hips and your ears over your shoulders.

Now bring to mind a situation in your life that has been difficult or that has caused stress. If the first situation that pops up feels too intense for this moment, try shifting your focus to another situation that you are a little more removed from or is milder in intensity.

As you bring this situation to mind, notice any physical sensations in your body. Can you actually feel the emotional discomfort or stress? In your mind, notice where this discomfort or stress is in your body and how it feels. Maybe it's a tightness or tension in your muscles... Perhaps you notice your body temperature or heart rate.

Now, take a deep breath and try saying to yourself as you exhale, "This is a moment of suffering."

"This hurts."

"Ouch."

Or "This is stress."

Take another breath in as you repeat that phrase to yourself again on the exhale.

Next, take another inhale and as you exhale try saying one of these phrases to yourself if one feels right in this moment:

"Suffering is a part of living."

"Other people feel this way."

"We all struggle in our lives."

Now, try placing hand on your heart, on your own shoulder or wrap yourself in a hug if that feels right for you in this moment. Feel the warmth and gentleness of your hands as you saying one of these to yourself:

“May I show myself kindness.”

“May I learn to accept myself as I am.”

“May I be patient.”

Let this last phrase echo in your mind for a moment.

Take one last deep breath in and slowly exhale out as you flutter your eyes open.