



## 1-4 Information Sheet: Self-Compassion

Self-compassion refers to responding to our own struggles in the same kind and caring way as we would to a dear friend. Self-compassion consists of three elements:

1. **Mindfulness:** noticing that we are struggling. For example, we might notice when we are struggling with anxiety, depression, or are shaming ourselves for “not being good enough.”
2. **Common Humanity:** recognizing that we are not alone in these struggles and that many other people can relate to our emotional struggles. For example, we realize that nearly every person in the world struggles at some point with believing that they are “not good enough.”

Knowing that we are not alone in our struggles helps!

3. **Self-kindness:** treating ourselves in the same kind and caring way we would a loved one. For example, you tell yourself that “You are loved,” that “You are enough” and “It’s okay; you did your best.”

The kindness we show ourselves actually *enables* us to face up to our weaknesses and challenges and deal with them head on. Treating ourselves with kindness can energize and motivate us so we can pursue our goals.

Practicing self-compassion isn’t easy. Most of us have not been taught to practice self-compassion. In fact, many of us might have been taught that being kind to ourselves is conceited or selfish, or that we will become less motivated if we allow ourselves to be kind to ourselves.

But the truth is that research suggests the opposite. When we are kind to ourselves, we are more likely to be more productive and less selfish. Think about it. When we have more energy, we have more ability to help others. If any of you have ever flown on a plane, you might remember that in case of an emergency you are instructed to put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others. Like the Flash, Wolverine, Dr. Who, or any other hero, we need to heal ourselves first before we can help others.