

Self-Compassion Break Practice Guide



What is a Self-Compassion Break?

The Self-Compassion Break is a brief mindfulness practice developed by Dr. Kristin Neff to help you respond to moments of difficulty with kindness and understanding rather than harsh self-judgment. This practice incorporates all three components of self-compassion: mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness.

When to Use This Practice

Use the Self-Compassion Break whenever you:

- Notice you're being self-critical
- Feel overwhelmed by difficult emotions
- Face a challenging situation
- Experience disappointment or failure
- Feel stressed or anxious

The Practice: Step by Step

Step 1: Acknowledge Your Suffering (Mindfulness)

- Place your hands over your heart or use another soothing touch (like hugging yourself)
- Take three deep breaths
- Acknowledge that this is a moment of suffering by saying to yourself:
 - "This is difficult"
 - "This hurts"
 - "This is stress"

Step 2: Recognize Our Common Humanity

- Remind yourself that suffering is part of being human:
 - "I'm not alone in this feeling"
 - "Everyone experiences difficulty sometimes"
 - "This is part of being human"

Step 3: Offer Yourself Kindness

- Speak to yourself with compassion:
 - "May I be kind to myself"
 - "May I give myself the compassion I need"
 - "May I learn to accept myself as I am"
 - "May I be patient with myself"

Step 4: Supportive Physical Touch (Optional)

- Notice how the physical touch feels
- Allow the warmth of your hands to soothe you
- Feel the natural rise and fall of your breath

Making It Your Own

Customize the phrases to make them feel authentic to you. What matters most is the intention behind the words—to acknowledge your pain, remember that suffering is universal, and treat yourself with care.

Practice Consistently

The Self-Compassion Break takes only 1-3 minutes. With regular practice, you can develop the habit of responding to difficulties with self-compassion rather than self-criticism.

About Dr. Kristin Neff

Dr. Kristin Neff is a pioneer in the field of self-compassion research and has developed evidence-based practices to help people cultivate self-compassion. Learn more about her work at self-compassion.org.

This resource is provided by Positive 4 Mind. Visit positive4mind.com for more mindfulness and self-compassion resources.