



## Pause, Reset, Nourish:

### Self-Compassion Break (Kristen Neff, developer)

#### WHEN TO USE

- This practice can be used when we are struggling with difficult emotions, suffering, or being overly self-critical.

#### CATEGORY

Connection, compassion, mindfulness

#### THE SCIENCE BEHIND THIS PRACTICE

When we experience emotional suffering, our thoughts about ourselves can be self-critical and negative, further increasing our level of stress. Self-compassion practices help us notice our tendencies towards negativity, and to regulate ourselves through kindness. Compassion practices activate brain regions associated with self-reflection and emotion regulation.

#### OVERVIEW

Three short steps that are associated with the 3 components of compassion: Mindfulness, Common Humanity, and Kindness, or Self-Kindness in the case of self-compassion. Mindfulness helps us to observe and describe our emotional experiences, such suffering, without attempting to avoid them. Then, recognizing that we are all part of one humanity and this unites us as people. This helps one to feel less isolated in our suffering. Kindness is the energizing component that drives us to alleviate suffering through kind words, listening, or doing something practical.

WHAT IS NEEDED	This can be done as needed, in the moment.
PAUSE	Take a full, deep breath allowing your attention to focus inward. Noticing what is here for you now in thoughts, emotions and body sensations. Are you noticing signs of anxiety, anger, restlessness, etc. or signs of apathy, detachment, numbing, etc.? If you are familiar with the Mental Health Continuum, is your internal experience reflective of the green, yellow, orange, or red zone?

RESET	<p>Step 1: “This is a moment of struggle/suffering” or label the emotion that is present (e.g. “This is a moment of anger/frustration...” Allow the emotion to be there without getting hooked into a story about it (which will only amplify the emotion).</p> <p>Step 2: “Struggle/suffering is a part of life.” Recognizing that you are part of a common humanity and all people struggle and make mistakes. We are never truly alone in our struggles.</p> <p>Step 3: “Can I respond to myself kindness?” Notice how you are talking to yourself. Can you respond to yourself in a way that you would respond to a good friend with the same problem? This helps to shift the way in which you talk and treat yourself. You can also ask yourself, “what do I need to do right now,” and try to do a small thing to care for yourself. During this step, many find it helpful to use a supportive gesture, like a hand over the heart or belly, or something else that feels comforting.</p>
NOURISH	<p>Notice once again what is here for you now with curiosity and without judgement. You may wish to repeat the practice if you are still feeling agitated or disconnected. Take time to acknowledge the important work that you are doing and that you took a moment to reset and replenish yourself. This is good for you. This is good for others.</p>
FURTHER RESOURCES/ REFERENCES	<p>Self-compassion audio Kristen Neff: <a href="https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#guided-meditations">https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#guided-meditations</a></p> <p>There are a lot of resources on Kristen Neff’s web site: <a href="http://www.self-compassion.org">http://www.self-compassion.org</a></p>

**NOTES/SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:**

If further support is needed please reach out to a trusted colleague, your manager, Resilience Support Team Member, The Peer Support Line, or EAP services.