
Self-Compassion at HCWC

A few years ago, two HCWC counselors attended an 8-week program in Austin developed and held by Kristin Neff, a pioneering researcher into self-compassion. They were very enthusiastic about the skills they learned and wanted to share them with HCWC staff. We decided to hold monthly meetings to explore and practice self-compassion. Our first step was to read, discuss and complete many of the activities in Neff's book *Self-Compassion*.

HCWC staff now realize that healthy relationships begin with self-compassion which can lead to healthy relationships with others. Our staff are talking with clients about self-compassion in Counseling sessions, support groups and when providing crisis intervention and advocacy.

Self-compassion is helping us better understand the dynamics of abuse. We have discovered from workshops and a listening project that often an abuser has contempt for themselves and acts out in frustration that results in abuse.

We truly believe that practicing self-compassion can help everyone in our community. Ultimately violence can be reduced through a wide-spread practice of self-compassion.

Community support and involvement is essential for HCWC's continued success. HCWC is supported by the communities it serves in Hays & Caldwell counties through contributions from local governments, state and federal grants and individual contributions of time and money.

Learn More about Self-Compassion

To learn more about self-compassion:

1. Go to Kristin Neff's website:
www.self-compassion.org.
2. Read Neff's book *Self-Compassion*
3. Go to Brené Brown's website:
www.brenebrown.com
4. Read Brown's book *The Gifts of Imperfection*.
5. Start a Self-Compassion Book Club with discussions and proposed activities in Neff's and Brown's books.
6. Request a Self-Compassion presentation for your group by HCWC's staff. Call Melissa at (512) 396-3404.

To Contact Us

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Self-Compassion



HCWC
HAYS-CALDWELL WOMEN'S CENTER
Serving Victims of Abuse

**Serving Hays & Caldwell
counties since 1978**

*All services are
free and confidential*

What is Self-Compassion?

If you are a supporter of the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center, you must be a compassionate person. We show compassion to victims of abuse and help them find a way to a safe, healthy life for themselves and their family. When you feel compassion for others, you realize that suffering and imperfection are part of the shared human experience.

But what about self-compassion? Self-compassion involves acting the same way towards yourself when you are having a difficult time, fail, or notice something you don't like about yourself. At HCWC, we believe that you cannot show compassion for others without showing compassion for yourself too.

Research has shown that self-compassion is associated with greater emotional resilience and more caring relationship behavior.



Three Components of Self-Compassion

Self-Compassion, as described by Kristin Neff, has three components:

- 1. Self-kindness**—being kind and understanding toward oneself in instances of pain or failure rather than being harshly self-critical.
- 2. Common humanity**—perceiving one's experiences as part of the larger human experience rather than seeing them as separating and isolating. For example, when bad things happen to you, realize that they happen to others too. You are not alone in your experience.
- 3. Mindfulness**—the clear seeing and nonjudgmental acceptance of what's occurring in the present moment.

Experiencing life's difficulties is inevitable. We cannot ignore our pain. Let go of debilitating self-criticism and learn to be kind to yourself. Realize that we are all AVERAGE at most things and we can let go of unrealistic self-expectations.

What Self-Compassion is NOT

Self-compassion is not the same as self-indulgence or self-pity. Self-indulgence may actually harm as in the case of taking drugs, over-eating or watching too much television. Self-compassion provides the safety needed to see the self clearly without fear of self-condemnation and can be a powerful force for growth and change. Self-pity ignores the interconnections with others with a feeling that you are the only one who is suffering. Self-compassion acknowledges that everyone suffers. It is part of our common humanity and eases a feeling of isolation.

Self-Compassion vs. Self-Esteem

Self-compassion seems similar to self-esteem, but they are very different. In Western culture, self-esteem is often based on how much we stand out, are special or different from others. Self-esteem is a feeling that we have to be above average to feel good about ourselves. With self-compassion, you don't have to feel better than others to feel good about yourself. Personal failings can be acknowledged with kindness.