



Compassion Contagion: How to Create a More Engaged Classroom Community

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Overview / Abstract

Students do not engage or perform well when they do not feel socially supported, and they have less opportunities to engage communicatively with each other in our increasingly digital world.

This session will help instructors to learn how to create a more compassionate and socially supportive classroom, using evidence-based and evidence-informed mindfulness and compassionate communication techniques.

This 90-minute session will blend compassionate communication exercises with mindfulness practices, to support attendees in their own self-awareness as well as their ability to provide and share these practices with their students.

Attendees will leave the session with access to a "toolkit for compassionate classrooms" which they can then use in the future, for their own self-compassion and self-care and to support their students' self-care, self-compassion, and learning capacity.



Learning Objectives / Take Aways

Participants will be able to independently practice mindfulness, mindful movement and compassionate communication techniques, and will also be able to lead these practices in their classrooms to support a more compassionate classroom culture.

Today's Agenda

- ▶ Welcome and Introductions!
- ▶ Mindfulness Exercise
- ▶ Our Problem: Stress Contagion in the Classroom
- ▶ Our Proposed Solution: Compassion Contagion in the Classroom
- ▶ Compassion and Self-Compassion
 - ▶ Defining Them
 - ▶ Measuring Them
 - ▶ Practicing Them
- ▶ Toolkits
 - ▶ Self-Care Resources
 - ▶ Self-Compassion Resources



**Introductions Activity:
What is the nicest thing that
someone has ever said to you?**

Introductions: Your Compassion Coaches



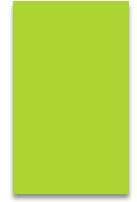
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Mindfulness Exercise

- ▶ What is your body telling you today?
- ▶ What healing/helpful messages would you like to tell your body today?

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Our Problem: Stress is Contagious in the Classroom

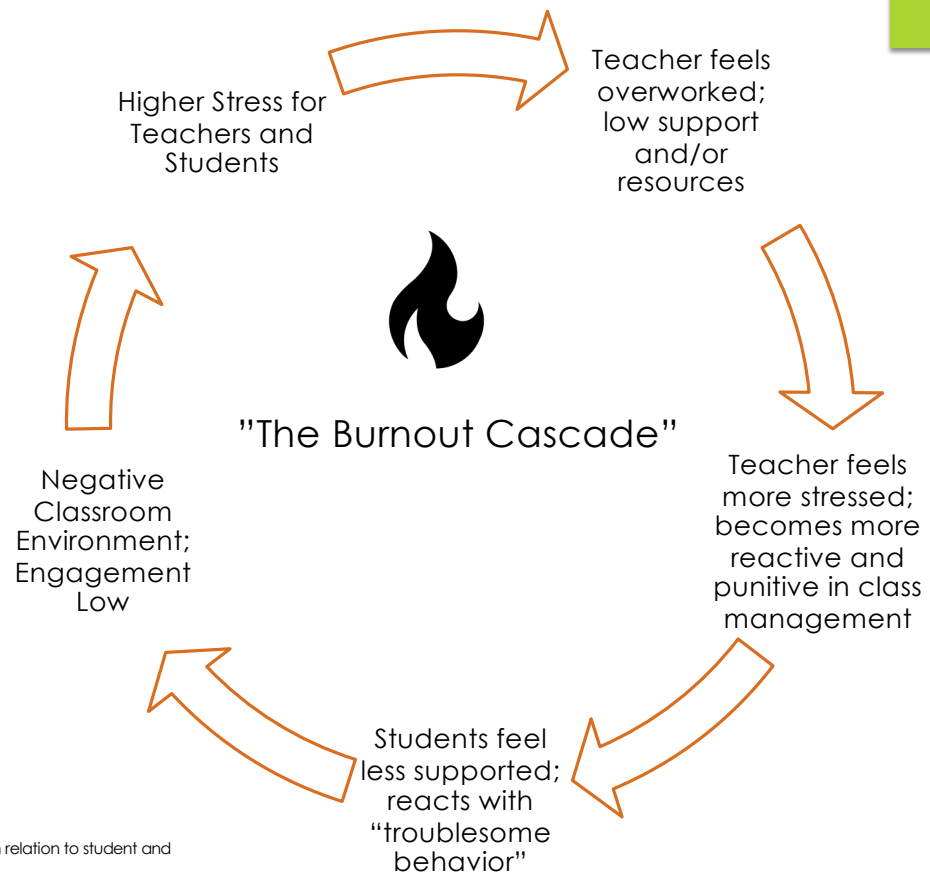


“This is the first study to show that teachers' occupational stress is linked to students' physiological stress regulation...”

Using Multilevel Modeling, we found that children's morning cortisol levels significantly varied between classrooms (10% variability). Higher levels of classroom teacher burnout significantly predicted the variability in morning cortisol. Teacher burnout reduced the unexplained variability in cortisol at the classroom level to 4.6%.”

Teacher Burnout Linked
To Student Cortisol Levels

Our Problem: Stress is Contagious in the Classroom



Sources Cited in Oberle, E., & Schonert-Reichl, K. A. (2016):

Jennings, P.A., Greenberg, M.T., 2009. The prosocial classroom: teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Rev. Educ. Res.* 79 (1), 491e525. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693>.

Marzano, R.J., Marzano, J.S., Pickering, D.J., 2003. *Classroom Management that Works*. ASCD, Alexandria, VA.

Osher, D., Sprague, J., Weissberg, R.P., Keenan, S., Zins, J.E., 2008. A comprehensive approach to promoting social, emotional, and academic growth in contemporary schools. In: Thomas, A., Grimes, J. (Eds.), *Best Practices in School Psychology*, vol. 4. National Association of School Psychologists, Bethesda, MD, pp. 1263e1278.

The Teacher View: Teacher Burnout Prevalence



▶ Who Has It?

- ▶ 1 out of every 2 teachers burns out in first five years
- ▶ The most qualified and committed are most susceptible

▶ What Is It?

- ▶ Burnout² = “A progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose experienced by people in the helping professions as a result of the conditions of their work.”³
- ▶ Symptoms / Characteristics^{3, 4}
 - ▶ Physical and emotional exhaustion
 - ▶ Depersonalization
 - ▶ Inefficacy
- ▶ “While not a psychiatric disorder, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) does list it as a problem condition (Z-73) under life-management difficulty.”



How is Burnout Experienced? The Individual Level



Body

Headaches

Abnormally high blood pressure,

Gastro-intestinal discomfort

Heart disease

Possible weight loss or gain

Physical exhaustion & fatigue



Mind

Lower expectations for
student achievement

Cynicism

Depersonalization

Job dissatisfaction

Less Ethical Decisions



Heart

Less empathy

Anger

Anxiety

Depression

Guilt

How is Burnout Experienced? The Population Health Level



High Performers in High
Consequence Fields =
“Super Hero Syndrome”
(Well-Being Ultimatum, 2015)

One estimate is that stress and the related illness, absenteeism, and presenteeism, costs organizations as much as **\$300 billion a year**.

Healthcare

1 out of 2 Physicians & Nurses Burned Out
Physician Suicide > Military Suicide

Education

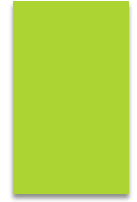
1 out of 2 Teachers Leave within First 5 Years

Legal Field

ABA Has Called all Law Firms Promote Mental Health and
Bring Substance Abuse Out Into the Open (Pledge)

Military & First Response Communities

Office of Performance in the Pentagon
CSAF “Resilience Stand Down” 2019



Reflection | Discussion



- ▶ Have you ever felt these feelings?
- ▶ Has a colleague or a friend ever told you that they were feeling these feelings?
- ▶ What healing/helpful messages did you say to them?
- ▶ What healing messages did you say to yourself?

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 - ▶ Self-Care Resources
 - ▶ Self-Compassion Resources

Our Proposed Solution:

Compassion Contagion in the Classroom



- Building **student-student relationships** is important in developing better academic outcomes for students. Anderson, et. al. (2002)
- **Students who interacted with their peers in the learning community** frequently were more engaged and less likely to depart the university environment. Krause, et. al. (2005)
- **Students who perceived their teachers as accessible** and having a sense of 'immediacy' (physical and psychological closeness) were more likely to be engaged in their studies and to report perceptions of lower workload. Mehrabian, A. (1966); Mottet, et. al. (2005).

Anderson, L. E., & Carta-Falsa, J. (2002). Factors that make faculty and student relationships effective. *College Teaching*, 50(4), 134–138.

Krause, K. L., Hartley, R., James, R., & McInnis, C. (2005). *The first year experience in Australian universities: Findings from a decade of national studies*. Melbourne: Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.

Mehrabian, A. (1966). Immediacy: An indicator of attitudes in linguistic communication. *Journal of Personality*, 34(1), 26–34.

Mottet, T. P., Parker-Raley, J., Cunningham, C., & Beebe, S. A. (2005). The relationships between teacher nonverbal immediacy and student course workload and teacher availability expectations. *Communication Research Reports*, 22(4), 275–282.

Ruiz-Gallardo, J.-R., Castaño, S., Gómez-Alday, J. J., & Valdés, A. (2011). Assessing student workload in problem based learning: Relationships among teaching method, student workload and achievement. A case study in natural Sciences. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(3), 619–627.

Our Proposed Solution:

Compassion Contagion in the Classroom



- **A college seminar on compassion** has been shown to increase mindfulness, self-compassion and compassion, and **decrease a salivary marker of stress.** (Ko, et. al., 2018)
- **Students with higher self-compassion** exhibited
 - lower classroom participation avoidance
 - higher likelihood to ask questions
 - higher likelihood to seek help
 - higher likelihood to speak with their instructors outside the classroom

Ko, C. M., Grace, F., Chavez, G. N., Grimley, S. J., Dalrymple, E. R., & Olson, L. E. (2018). Effect of seminar on compassion on student self-compassion, mindfulness and well-being: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of American college health*, 66(7), 537-545.

Long, P., & Neff, K. D. (2018). Self-compassion is associated with reduced self-presentation concerns and increased student communication behavior. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 67, 223-231. PDF

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Why Compassion Always Wins



“If you want to be happy, focus on compassion.

If you want others to be happy, focus on compassion.”

*Dalai Lama (1995) The Power of Compassion. HarperCollins.
Dalai Lama (2001) An Open Heart: Practising Compassion in
Everyday Life (ed N Vreeland). Hodder & Stoughton.*

What is Compassion?

Compassion is not about being overwhelmed or sinking into our own or other people's pain;

it is not about being superficially nice so people will like us;

it is not weakness, softness or letting people off the hook if they cause harm.

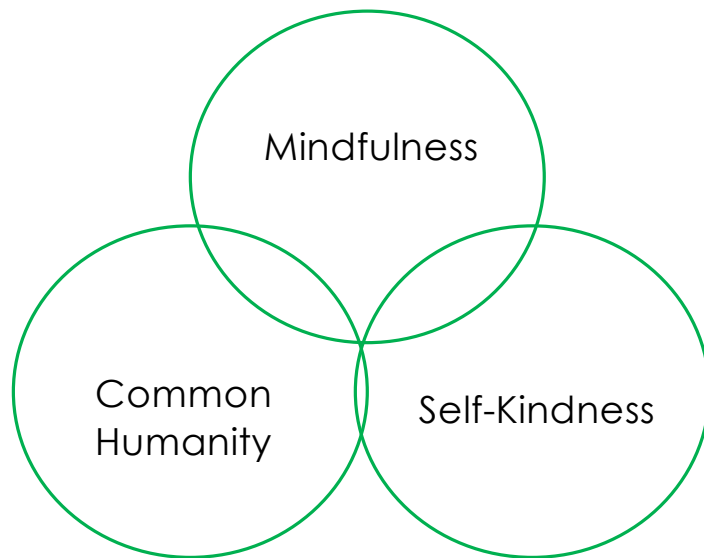
The key to compassion is tuning in to the nature of suffering, to understand it in the depths of our being, and to see clearly into its source; but equally important is to be committed to relieve it and to rejoice in the possibility of the alleviation of suffering for all.” – Gilbert and Choden (2014)

“operationalized as experiencing kindness, a sense of common humanity, mindfulness, and lessened indifference toward the suffering of others.” - Pommier, E., Neff, K. D., & Tóth-Király, I. (2019).



Gilbert, P. (2014). Compassion-focused therapy: Preface and introduction for special section.

Pommier, E., Neff, K. D., & Tóth-Király, I. (2019). The Development and Validation of the Compassion Scale. *Assessment*, 1073191119874108.



What is Self-Compassion?

“Self-compassion is a practice in which we learn to be a good friend to ourselves when we need it most – to become an inner ally rather than an inner enemy.”

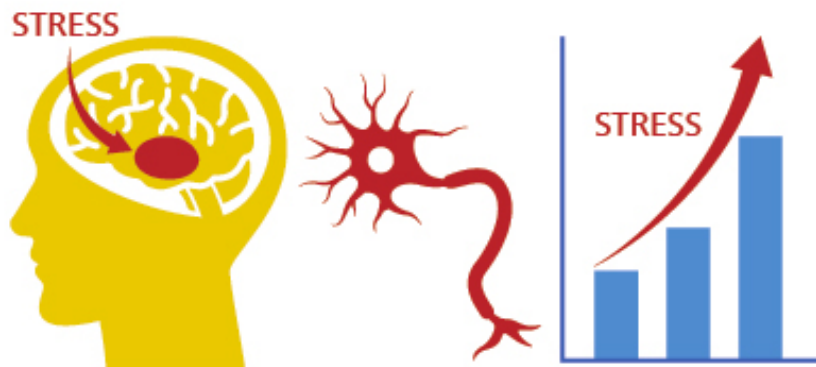
“Self-compassion entails being warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring our pain or flagellating ourselves with self-criticism.”

Neff, K., & Germer, C. (2018). *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook: A Proven Way to Accept Yourself, Build Inner Strength, and Thrive*. Guilford Publications.

Neff, K. (2019). Website: Self-Compassion.org

The Link: Self-Compassion and Stress

SELF-COMPASSION LEADS TO DECREASED STRESS



Harsh self-criticism activates our sympathetic nervous system and elevates stress hormones. The sting of self-criticism can be so intense that it stops us from learning and being resilient in the face of failure.



Self-compassion, on the other hand, may activate our biological nurturance and soothing system which leads to greater feelings of well-being.

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Let's Measure Compassion



Almost Never

1

2

3

4

Almost Always

5

- _____ 1. I pay careful attention when other people talk to me about their troubles.
- _____ 2. If I see someone going through a difficult time, I try to be caring toward that person.
- _____ 3. I am unconcerned with other people's problems.
- _____ 4. I realize everyone feels down sometimes, it is part of being human.
- _____ 5. I notice when people are upset, even if they don't say anything.
- _____ 6. I like to be there for others in times of difficulty.
- _____ 7. I think little about the concerns of others.
- _____ 8. I feel it's important to recognize that all people have weaknesses and no one's perfect.
- _____ 9. I listen patiently when people tell me their problems.
- _____ 10. My heart goes out to people who are unhappy.
- _____ 11. I try to avoid people who are experiencing a lot of pain.
- _____ 12. I feel that suffering is just a part of the common human experience.
- _____ 13. When people tell me about their problems, I try to keep a balanced perspective on the situation.
- _____ 14. When others feel sadness, I try to comfort them.
- _____ 15. I can't really connect with other people when they're suffering.
- _____ 16. Despite my differences with others, I know that everyone feels pain just like me.

Let's Measure Self-Compassion



Almost Never

1

2

3

4

Almost Always

5

- _____ 1. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.
- _____ 2. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.
- _____ 3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.
- _____ 4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.
- _____ 5. I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.
- _____ 6. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.
- _____ 7. When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.
- _____ 8. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.
- _____ 9. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.
- _____ 10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.
- _____ 11. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.
- _____ 12. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.

Neff, K. D. (2003). Development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2, 223-250.

Let's Measure Self-Compassion



Almost Never

1

2

3

4

Almost Always

5

- _____ 13. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.
- _____ 14. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.
- _____ 15. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.
- _____ 16. When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.
- _____ 17. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.
- _____ 18. When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.
- _____ 19. I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
- _____ 20. When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.
- _____ 21. I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
- _____ 22. When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.
- _____ 23. I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.
- _____ 24. When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.
- _____ 25. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.
- _____ 26. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Neff, K. D. (2003). Development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2, 223-250.

Compassion Scale Coding

- 1) Complete the questionnaire
- 2) Separate the questions into the sub-scales below
- 3) Reverse code these three subscales: self-judgement, isolation, and over-identification
 - a. If the score is 5... replace it with a 1
 - b. If the score is 4... replace it with a 2
 - c. If the score is 3... keep it as a 3
 - d. If the score is 2... replace it with a 4
 - e. If the score is 1... replace it with a 5
- 4) Find the Mean of each subscale
 - a. Sum the values you have for each question within each subscale
 - b. Divide that sum by the number of values for that subscale
- 5) Find the mean of the subscales.
 - a. Sum the values of all of the subscales
 - b. Divide that sum by the number of subscales (4)

Example

Kindness

	Actual Score
2.	5
6.	5
10.	4
14.	5

$5 + 5 + 4 + 5 = 19/4 = 4.75$ (Mean)

Mindfulness

	Actual Score
1.	5
5.	5
9.	5
13.	5

$5 + 5 + 5 + 5 = 20/4 = 5$ (Mean)

Subscale Mean

Kindness	4.75
Humanity	5
Mindfulness	5
Indifference	4.5
Total:	$19.25/4 = 4.8$ (Mean)

Humanity

	Actual Score
4.	5
8.	5
12.	5
16.	5

$5 + 5 + 5 + 5 = 20/4 = 5$ (Mean)

Indifference * Reverse Score

	Actual Score	Reverse Score
3.	1	5
7.	1	5
11.	3	3
15.	1	5

$5 + 5 + 3 + 5 = 18/4 = 4.5$ (Mean)



Self-Compassion Scale Coding

- 1) Complete the questionnaire
- 2) Separate the questions into the sub-scales below
- 3) Reverse code these three subscales: self-judgement, isolation, and over-identification
 - a. If the score is 5... replace it with a 1
 - b. If the score is 4... replace it with a 2
 - c. If the score is 3... keep it as a 3
 - d. If the score is 2... replace it with a 4
 - e. If the score is 1... replace it with a 5
- 4) Find the Mean of each subscale
 - a. Sum the values you have for each question within each subscale
 - b. Divide that sum by the number of values for that subscale
- 5) Find the mean of the subscales.
 - a. Sum the values of all of the subscales
 - b. Divide that sum by the number of subscales (6)

Example



Self-Kindness

	Actual Score
5.	5
12.	4
19.	4
23.	3
26.	4
$5 + 4 + 4 + 3 + 4 = 20/5 = 4$ (Mean)	

Common Humanity Items

	Actual Score
3.	5
7.	4
10.	4
15.	5
$5 + 4 + 4 + 5 = 18/4 = 4.5$ (Mean)	

Mindfulness Items

	Actual Score
9.	5
14.	5
17.	5
22.	5
$5 + 5 + 5 + 5 = 20/4 = 5$ (Mean)	

Subscale Mean

Self-Kindness	4
Self-Judgement	2.4
Humanity	4.5
Isolation	3.5
Mindfulness	5
Over-Identification	<u>2</u>
Total:	$21.4/6 = 3.56$

Self-Judgment * Reverse Score

	Actual Score	Reverse Score
1.	4	2
8.	4	2
11.	4	2
16.	4	2
21.	2	4
$2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 4 = 12/5 = 2.4$ (Mean)		

Isolation Items * Reverse Score

	Actual Score	Reverse Score
4.	3	3
13.	3	3
18.	1	5
25.	3	3
$3 + 3 + 5 + 3 = 14/4 = 3.5$ (Mean)		

Over-Identification * Reverse Score

	Actual Score	Reverse Score
2.	4	2
6.	4	2
20.	4	2
24.	4	2
$2 + 2 + 2 + 2 = 8/4 = 2$ (Mean)		

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Let's Try It (Self-Compassion Exercise)



REFLECT: Think upon a time in your life that is causing you stress. (Choose a problem in the moderate range – not a big problem so that we can build self-compassion gradually). Visualize the situation clearly in your mind's eye? What do you see? What did you say? How does your body feel?

REWRITE: Say to yourself "This is a moment of suffering" Or "This is stressful" or "Ouch" [This is mindfulness in practice]. Then think of a "rewrite" statement you could say to yourself instead.*

RELEASE: Say to yourself "Suffering is part of life" [This is common humanity]

Enjoy several deep exhales, where you let go of the "steam" of the stress or suffering and/or Move as though you were shaking off feelings of stress and suffering from your body.

RENEW: Say to yourself one or more of the following to yourself [This is kindness]*

"May I accept myself as I am"

"May be kind to myself"

"May I forgive myself"

"May I be patient"

REJOICE: Express (to yourself or to someone else) how it feels to embrace hope of the alleviation of suffering. This expression may be verbal, or non-verbal, or both.

***If you're having trouble choosing, think of what you would say to someone you care about if they were going through the same difficulty. Now see if you can say the same message to yourself.**



Let's Try It (Compassion Exercise)



Step 1: REFLECT

Ask Your Partner

What is a (harsh or mean) statement you have said to yourself during a time of difficulty, that you would never dream of saying to someone else? [Self-Criticism]

Let's Try It (Partner Work)



Step 2: REWRITE

Using **ONE** of the Chakras of Communication (Carmack, 2017) themes below, rewrite that statement into a positive one. [Self-Compassion]

Respect

I respect that this is a difficult moment for me.

Gratitude

I am grateful that I can go through this challenge because it gives me the opportunity to ask for help.

Commitment

I commit to doing what I can today to transform, with patience and persistence, so that I can see different / desired results tomorrow.

Courage

I embrace the fears that come up within me when I suffer and when I change.

Kindness

I embrace myself with acceptance and compassion, without judgement.

Insight

I keep the big picture "in sight" as I move out of this suffering and toward my joy.

Community

I know I do not have to be in this experience alone; I can reach out for, and offer, help to others in need.

Consciousness

I know that when I change my thinking, I can change my world.



Let's Try It (Group Work)



Step 3: RELEASE

Work with your partner to create a gesture (movement phrase; nonverbal expression) that communicates your theme.

[Compassion]

Let's Try It (Group Work)



Step 4: RENEW

Put your phrase together with your partner's, then share it with another partner group to create a sentence. [Compassion Contagion]

Let's Try It (Team Work)



Step 5: REJOICE

Groups of 4 share their dance “sentence” with the rest of us. [Compassion Contagion]

What We Just Did: A Genius Break (Carmack, 2007; 2012; 2017; 2019)



Movement



Mindfulness



Meaning
(Compassion)



The Big Reveal: These Communication Themes Help Prevent Burnout



Carmack (2019) Compassion
Coaching Exercise.
Well-Being Coach Training.
YogaMedCo

Chakra of Communication Healing Themes

Burnout Prevention Factors

Consciousness

Community

Insight

Kindness

Courage

Commitment

Gratitude

Respect

Sense of Community

Meaningful, Valued Work

High Job / Person "Fit"

Recognition and Reward

Sustainable Work Load

Feelings of Choice and Control

Fairness, Respect and Justice

Let's Review

TakeAway 1: Self-Compassion (Me)

Pulling over to **make sense**, and to **support each other**, helps us to practice the skill of being less reactive and more proactive (and helps us to manage acute and chronic stress)

TakeAway 2: Compassion Breaks (We)

Taking time to Practice **Compassion** in a Mini-Break with a partner helps to improve our ability to problem solve and creates a bonding and belonging (connectedness) opportunity for our team

TakeAway 3: Compassion Contagion (Us)

Practicing the 5 Steps of Compassion and the Chakras of Communication on a regular basis in team and leadership contexts co-creates a **culture of well-being for the organization**...that **prevents burnout** and supports workers in their individual **strategic stress management**

The Theory Behind the Method

Centered Well-Being Theory (Carmack, 2014)

Intrapersonal
Communication:
Story of Self-Self
“Me”



Centered Well-Being

Intercultural
Communication:
Story of Self-Culture
and Self-World “Us”

Interpersonal Communication:
Story of Self-Other (Family, Friends, Colleagues) “We”

Carmack (2019) *Well-Being Coach Training*. YogaMedCo

Carmack, S. (2014). *Making Sense of Well-being: A Mixed-methods study applying sense-making theory to explore the role of communication competence and social support in physical, emotional, mental and comprehensive well-being*(Doctoral dissertation).

Centered Well-Being Theory (Carmack, 2014)



“While well-being is difficult for scholars and the public to define, it functions as a communication **(sense-making)** process in which the individual makes sense of **health outcomes, role identities, life situations, and/or lived experience.**”
(Carmack, 2014)

Carmack (2019) *Well-Being Coach Training*. YogaMedCo

Carmack, S. (2014). *Making Sense of Well-being: A Mixed-methods study applying sense-making theory to explore the role of communication competence and social support in physical, emotional, mental and comprehensive well-being*(Doctoral dissertation).

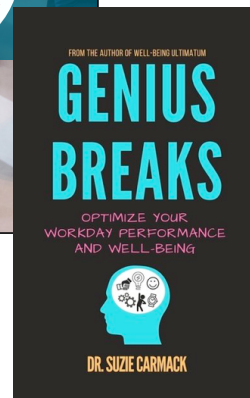
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Toolkit Resource 1: Self-Compassion Genius Break FREE Training



Available for **FREE** at:
www.DrSuzieCarmack.com



Learn how to practice self-compassion through mindfulness, movement, and meaning exercises that you can do anytime during the work or school day – and how to lead these practices in your office or school.

- ✓ E-Book
- ✓ Practices: 10 Genius Breaks (each <10 minutes)
- ✓ Training: Genius Break Mentor Training (one hour)
- ✓ Bonus: Yoga Practice for the Mat
- ✓ Online Community

Resource 2: Self-Care Well-Being Ultimatum FREE Toolkit and Training



Learn how to design your own well-being strategy plan, so you can get more strategic about your self-care and self-compassion, and thrive with less overwhelm and more joy.

- ✓ E-Book
- ✓ Well-Being Webinar
- ✓ WBU Planner
- ✓ WBU Contract
- ✓ Online Community

Toolkit Resource 3: FREE Well-Being Pulse Check

How well are you thriving today?

Why not find out with my FREE well-being pulse check tool. When you click on the button below, you'll be taken through a series of questions designed to help you to discover how well you are thriving today. You'll then receive an email sent straight to your inbox, which will tell you your well-being results. I developed this tool based on my research into the science of well-being, so you would have a great way to baseline your well-being today -- and become inspired to take thriving to a whole new level tomorrow. Let's get started!

YES! I want to take the WB Pulse Check

Available for FREE at:
www.DrSuzieCarmack.com



Toolkit Resource #4: Well-Being Coach Training & Retreats



For further training in the practice and coaching of compassion, please visit YogaMedCo.com





Q and A

Let's Stay In Touch Research Collaborators Wanted



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