

# Self Compassion Part II

All of the exercises in this chapter are from my teacher training in self compassion with Kristy Arbon

## Self-Compassion & Neuroplasticity

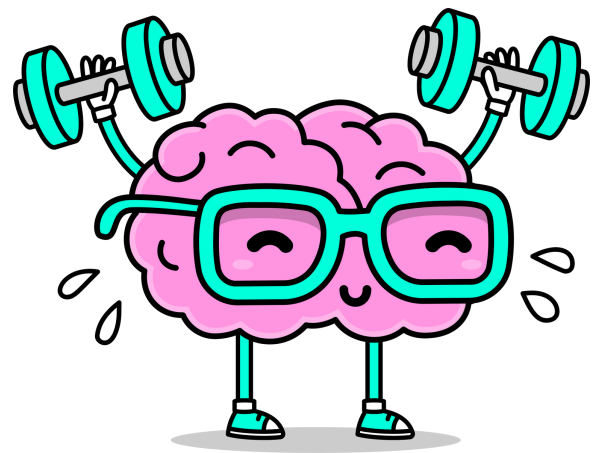
🧠 **Neuroplasticity: The brain's ability to change and adapt.**

### Self-compassion changes the brain.

- 💪 Strengthens Existing Connections: Practicing self-compassion is like a workout for your brain. The more you do it, the easier it becomes.
- 🌱 Forms New Connections: Being kind to yourself helps your brain grow new pathways.
- ⚡ Makes Connections Faster: These pathways work quicker and smoother over time.

🔄 It might be challenging at first, but self-compassion becomes more automatic with practice.

✨ **The bonus? These changes can last a lifetime!**



# Self Compassion II



## Back Draft

### **Understanding Backdraft in Mindfulness and Self-Compassion**

In cultivating mindfulness and self-compassion, you may face 'backdraft,' a phenomenon where acknowledging your pain and suffering with kindness triggers difficult emotions, vulnerability, discomfort, and sometimes overwhelming sensations. Understanding and managing backdraft is vital in your self-compassion practice.

### **Recognizing Self-Compassion Backdraft**

**Backdraft** can manifest in several ways:

1. **Emotional Surge:** Strong emotions like guilt, shame, grief, or anger may arise during self-compassion practice.
2. **Physical Sensations:** You might experience physical sensations like chest tightness or throat constriction.
3. **Intrusive Thoughts or Images:** Negative thoughts, images, or memories might surface unexpectedly.
4. **Personal Patterns:** Monitor your unique emotional and physical responses to recognize backdraft better.

# Self Compassion II

## Back Draft

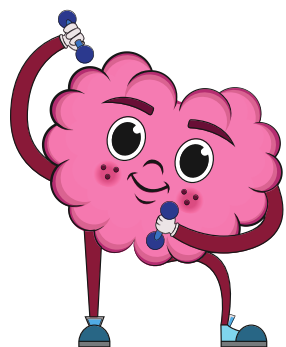
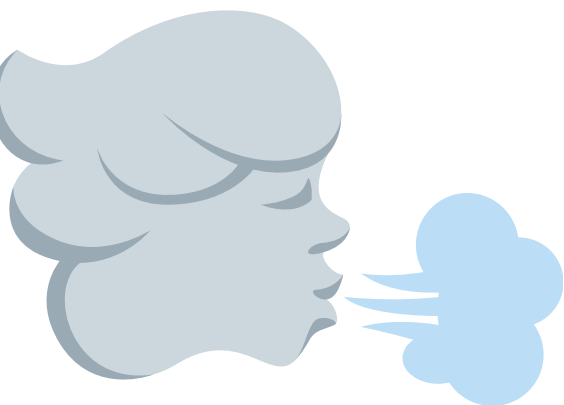
### Managing Backdraft

Each person's backdraft experience varies, necessitating ongoing self-understanding and awareness throughout your self-compassion journey.

Backdraft can arise when parts of us perceive self-compassion as unfamiliar or threatening, possibly leading to a recoil from these practices. But, with self-awareness skills, effective backdraft management is achievable:

Acknowledge backdraft:

- Detect its occurrence and label it. Pause your practice if necessary. Validate the emotion: Identify and name the dominant emotion during the backdraft.
- Locate physical sensations: Observe where in your body these emotions are present.
- Provide a soothing touch: Comfort these areas with gentle touch or pressure.
- Redirect attention: Move your focus towards something neutral or soothing.



# 5 New Ways you can Practice Building Mindful Self Compassion Skills

**Here and Now  
Stone**



**Soothing Touch**



**Self Compassion  
Break**



**Time Machine  
Meditation**



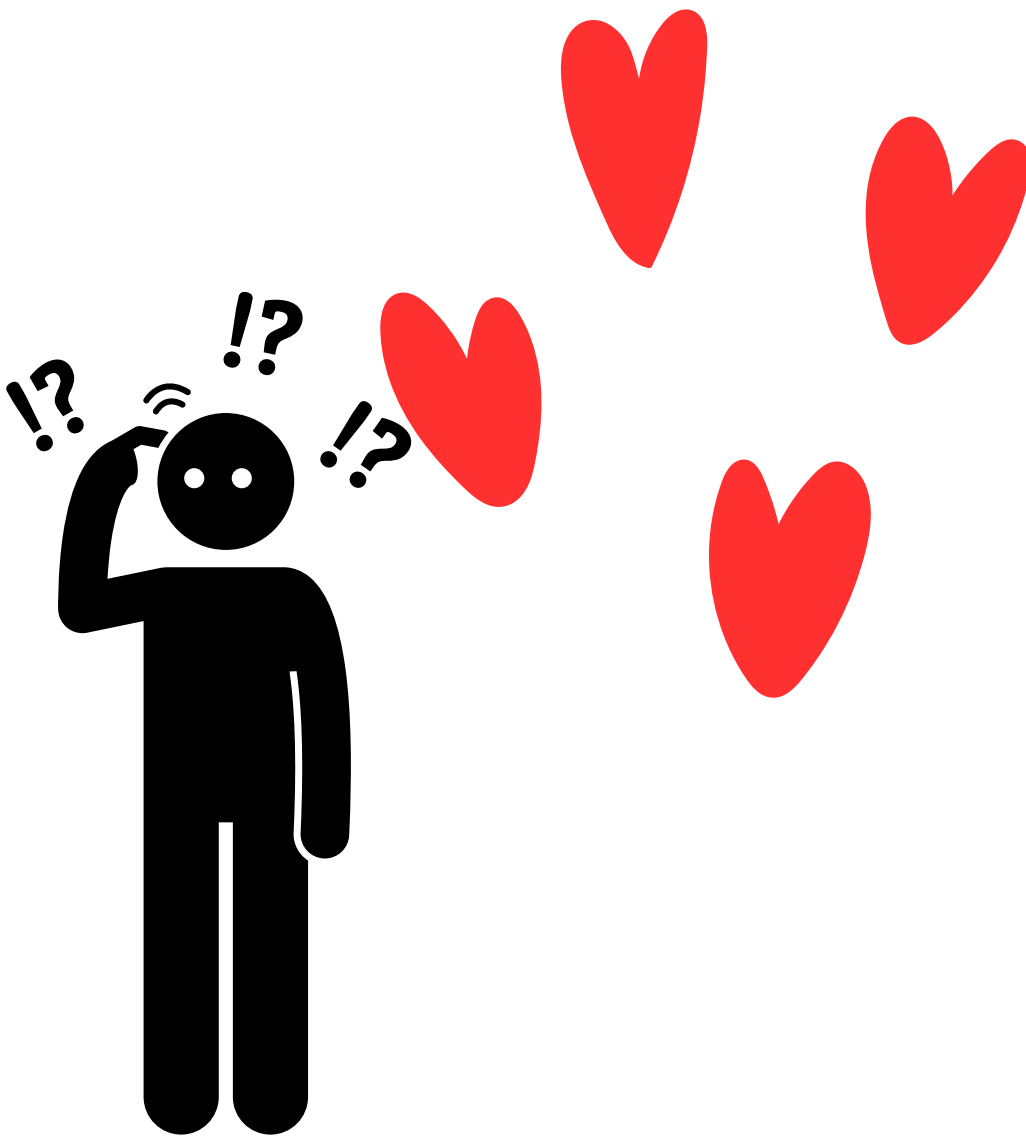
**Compassionate  
Friend**



# Self Compassion II

## Practices

Engaging with these practices might feel strange initially. Like any new habit, it takes time to become comfortable. Be patient with yourself, and remember the core intention: to extend kindness to yourself, just as you would to a friend.



# Self Compassion II



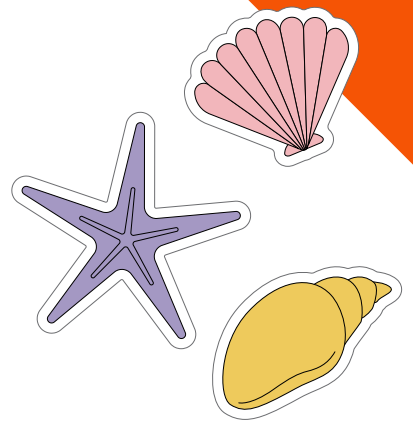
## 1. Here and Now Stone Mindfulness Practice

Exercise: Cultivating Mindful Awareness and Grounding with a 'Mindfulness Object'

Known as the "here and now" stone, this exercise introduces individuals to the practice of mindfulness, a fundamental component of self-compassion. It promotes being present and conscious of your emotions, thereby facilitating self-compassion learning. You could choose an item that you already frequently handle, like a fidget toy, or something you wear regularly, such as an earring or necklace.



# Self Compassion II



How to do this:

Step 1: **Choose Your Mindfulness Object.** Pick an object that resonates with you - it can be anything from a pebble, shell, river rock, or a small trinket.

Step 2: **Get to Know the Object.** Engage with your chosen object. Study its colors, touch its texture, and notice its temperature changes. Reflect on its uniqueness and your connection to it.

Step 3: **Use the Object for Grounding.** The object helps shift your focus from daily stressors, anchoring you in the present moment. It offers a respite from any ongoing chaos.

Step 4: **Carry the Mindfulness Object Daily.** Please keep this object within reach so that you can focus on the present moment throughout the day. Carry your 'mindfulness object' daily for a month and notice how it helps you find grounding amid chaos. Use the object for self-check-ins, asking yourself: How do I feel? What do I need? What can I do?



# Self Compassion II

## 2. Soothing Touch Self-Compassion Practice

This section explores the role of soothing touch in grounding ourselves and promoting self-compassion.

### Using Touch to Be Kind to Yourself

For women with ADHD, this approach of self-compassion through self-soothing touch could be incredibly beneficial. As someone with ADHD, you might have experienced heightened energy levels and an innate need for physical movement. Attempting to self-regulate through movement or other physical behaviors would have been your natural response.

Unfortunately, societal norms may have led to these behaviors being suppressed or even met with shame. Such experiences could have significantly impacted your relationship with your own body and disrupted your inclination to seek comfort through self-soothing techniques. Reconnecting with your body through self-soothing touch could serve as a healing and affirming practice, reminding you of the importance of self-compassion and acceptance.



# Self Compassion II

## 2. Soothing Touch Self-Compassion Practice

Could you consider trying this approach? It may feel unfamiliar at first, but this practice could significantly improve your overall well-being and your relationship with your body over time.

Our bodies are incredibly responsive to physical warmth and care. Studies have shown that physical touch can release oxytocin, provide a sense of security, ease troubling emotions, and reduce cardiovascular stress.



# Self Compassion II

## 2. Soothing Touch Self-Compassion Practice

You could practice this 'soothing touch' exercise during difficult moments several times a day for a week or more.

As you become aware of stress or discomfort, take 2-3 deep, relieving breaths.

Gently place your hand over your heart, savoring the gentle pressure and warmth of your hand. If you prefer, place both hands on your chest, noticing the difference between one and two hands.

Pay attention to your chest's natural rise and fall as you breathe in and out.

Remain with this feeling for as long as you wish.

For some, placing a hand over the heart might feel uncomfortable. Feel free to explore other parts of your body where a gentle touch could be soothing.

Some other options include:

- Placing one hand on your cheek
- Cradling your face in your hands
- Gently stroking your arms
- Crossing your arms and giving a gentle squeeze
- Gently rubbing your chest or using circular movements
- Placing your hand on your abdomen
- Resting one hand on your abdomen and one over your heart
- Cupping one hand in the other on your lap

# Self Compassion II

## 3. Self-Compassion Break

### Noticing Your Suffering

The cornerstone of the self-compassion exercise is the ability to recognize and acknowledge distress. Distress can be anything: sadness from a tough day, regret over a misstep, physical exhaustion, or even minor pain from stubbing your toe. Distress occurs anytime something does not go as planned.

One significant challenge in teaching these exercises, particularly to women, is that many of us are conditioned to dismiss our own suffering. We've become so accustomed to brushing off our feelings that we might not even acknowledge them as suffering. I've had women tell me that they didn't have an opportunity to be kind to themselves because they didn't believe they experienced any distress that week. This is where recognizing our own internal self-critical voice is crucial.



# Self Compassion II

## 3. Self-Compassion Break

Each of us has an inner critic; for some, this voice is highly active, possibly rearing its head twenty times an hour. Each time we hear this self-critical voice, it's a sign of distress and, thus, an opportunity to practice self-compassion. It's tough to hear ourselves being mean to ourselves, but acknowledging this is a part of the process. Remember, every step you take in this self-compassion exercise counts as practice, no matter how small. It is about creating a compassionate space for ourselves that invites comfort, kindness, and understanding.

**The suffering experienced is OFTEN connected to masking behaviors, and practicing self-compassion will begin to alleviate or help you to identify or call attention to when you might want to work on letting go of these behaviors.**



# Self Compassion II

## 3. Self Compassion Break

### Taking a Self-Compassion Break

The aim of this exercise is to repeat self-compassion many times in your day to build the habit of practicing self-compassion. This can aid in managing stress, anxiety, or other challenging emotions, allowing you to offer yourself kindness and understanding.

To make this ADHD-friendly, I'd like you to please post this exercise on a visually noticeable spot to remind you to practice.



# Self Compassion II

## **How to Take a Self-Compassion Break**

This exercise is about developing a routine of self-compassion to assist in managing stress and challenging emotions. Here are the steps:

1. Notice the Distress: Acknowledge when you're experiencing discomfort or distress. Tell yourself, "I'm having a hard time right now," or "The critical voice is berating me."
2. Offer Compassion: Convey kindness to yourself with phrases like "I hope I can be nicer to myself," "I hope it gets easier for me," or "I hope I feel better soon." You can feel free to create a phrase that resonates with you.
3. Stay with the Feeling: If possible, pause and stay present with the feeling for a moment.
4. Consistent practice of these steps during moments of stress can help cultivate the habit of self-compassion.



## Self-Compassion Break Phrases

### Easier Phrases

I hope it gets easier for me soon

I hope I can be happy soon

I hope this stops for me soon

I'm doing the best I can

I want you to be happy

I want you to be without stress

I want you to be without pain

I want you to be cared for

This is hard, and I want it to get easier

May I accept myself

May I find peace

May I be safe

May I be free from anxiety

May I be pain-free

May I accept things

May I have contentment

May I remember that we are all human

May I believe in myself

May I know that others struggle along with me

May I be free from shame and guilt

May I be kind to myself unconditionally

May I give myself the compassion I need

May I be free from harm

May I have a calm mind

May I be happy

May I practice self-care

May I be free from suffering

May I cherish myself

May I have courage

May I accept myself completely, just as I am.

May I stop comparing myself

May I stop doubting myself

May I let go of perfectionism

May I be gentle with myself when I make mistakes

May I initiate tasks more easily

# Self Compassion II

## 4. Compassionate Friend Meditation

### Instructions

Please find a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down. Could you close your eyes? Take a few deep breaths to settle into your body. Put one or two hands over your heart or another soothing place to remind yourself to give loving attention.

### Safe Place

Now imagine yourself in a safe and comfortable place—as comfortable as possible. It might be a cozy room with a fireplace, a peaceful beach with a warm sun and a cool breeze, or a forest glade. It could also be imaginary, like floating on clouds...anywhere you feel reasonably peaceful and safe. Letting yourself enjoy being in this place. (pause).

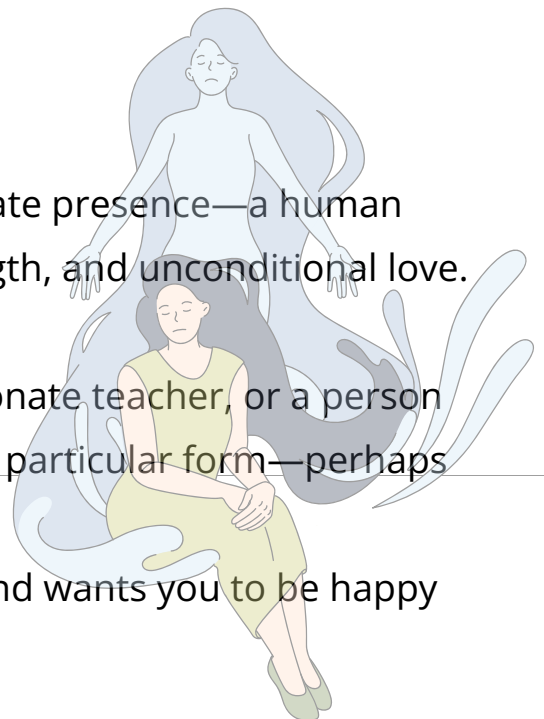
### Compassionate Friend

Soon, you'll receive a visitor, a warm and compassionate presence—a human friend—who embodies the qualities of wisdom, strength, and unconditional love.

This being may be a spiritual figure, a wise, compassionate teacher, or a person from your past, like a grandparent. They may have no particular form—perhaps this being is more like a light or a warm presence.

·Your compassionate friend cares deeply about you and wants you to be happy and free from unnecessary struggle.

Please allow a being to come to mind.





# Self Compassion II

## 4. Compassionate Friend Meditation

### Arrival

You can go out from your safe place and meet your compassionate friend or invite him or her in. (pause) Please take that opportunity now if you like.

Placing yourself in just the right way in relation to your compassionate friend—whatever feels right. Imagine your compassionate friend in as much detail as possible, especially allowing yourself to feel what it's like to be in his or her presence. There is nothing you need to do except to experience the moment. (pause).

### Meeting

Your compassionate friend is wise and all-knowing and knows precisely where you are in your life journey. Your friend might want to tell you something, something that is just what you need to hear right now. Please take a moment and listen carefully to what your compassionate friend might have to say. (pause) If no words come, that's okay, too—continue to experience the excellent company. That's a blessing in itself.

·And perhaps you would like to say something to your compassionate friend. Your friend listens deeply and completely understands you. Is there anything you'd like to share? (pause)

Your friend may also like to leave you with a gift—a material object. The object might appear in your hands or you may put out your hands and receive one—something that has special meaning to you. (pause) If something appears, what is it? (pause)

Now take a few more moments to enjoy your friend's presence. (pause) As you continue to enjoy his or her excellent company, allow yourself to realize that your friend is actually a part of yourself. (pause) All the compassionate feelings, images, and words that you are experiencing flow from your own inner wisdom and compassion.

## 5. Time Machine

We're about to do a meditation. This is called the Time Machine Meditation. Take a few slow, deep breaths and notice them, if you can, with openness.

It's okay if you can't. This is an exercise in your imagination. Some people like to imagine with them. Some might imagine with vivid, colorful pictures. Much like those on a TV screen. While others might imagine with vague, fuzzy, unclear pictures. While others imagine, without using pictures at all. Really using words and ideas. But however you imagine, it's just fine. There's no wrong way to do this. I want for you to stop if you feel scared or uncomfortable.

Take care of yourself. Don't force yourself to do anything. Anything that feels really bad or wrong, you can trust yourself. You are trustworthy. Now, I want you to imagine yourself walking up to what's a time machine. You can't believe it, but that's what it is.



## **5. Time Machine**

**You see this time machine and you're excited. You know what you want to do. You really want to go back to your younger self and you want to tell her everything that you've learned. You get into the time machine, you press the buttons, you know how to use it. You travel back in time to visit yourself as a young girl.**

**You're going to visit yourself at some point in your life when you're in pain. After a distressing event, not so distressing, not traumatic, but an event that was distressing for you, made you feel bad about yourself. About yourself as an ADHD girl. Maybe someone had shamed you, told you you were bad, told you you weren't measuring up in some way, you weren't feeling good about yourself.**

**Now you've arrived at your destination. You see the young girl. The young girl that's you. You take a good look at her and you get a sense for what she's going through. Well, you see her. Is she crying? Is she angry? Maybe she's scared? Is she lonely? She feels bad about herself. Maybe she has a sense of shame, inadequacy, not feeling good enough. What do you think she needs? Does she need love, safety, kindness? To feel understanding, forgiveness, acceptance, to know she's worthy or safe. Special, to be seen, to be heard, whatever it is that she needs.**

**Try to tap into that. In a kind, calm, and gentle voice, I want you to tell her that you know what she's experiencing. Do you understand her? That there's nothing wrong with her. She isn't alone. She is going to be okay. Sometimes the world can be unfriendly and can make her feel like she's different. Something wrong with her. She doesn't measure up. But that's not true. She's fine. The way she is. She doesn't need to be perfect.**



## **5. Time Machine**

**It's okay for her. Thank you. She doesn't need to be different. She doesn't need to hide who she is. She doesn't need to silence or quiet her thoughts and her feelings. She won't need to stop herself from being happy and living a joyful life. She doesn't deserve to feel shame. She doesn't have to be like everybody else. She doesn't have to hide who she really is. She's worthy and she's lovable. She's more than good enough.**

**You're telling this young girl. You understand how she feels and you are there for her. You see her. It's okay. You'll keep her safe. Ask her if there's anything she needs or she wants from you, this young girl with ADHD, stress. Is there anything that you can give to her? Is there anywhere she wants to go? Does she want a hug? Does she want words of kindness? Does she want a gift? She wants to do something fun? You can give her anything that she wants.**

**It's just your imagination. If she doesn't trust you or believe you, that's fine. Just tell her that you're here for support. You'll always be here for support. And you'll always do anything she needs for you to do. It's okay for her to feel however she feels. It's absolutely okay for her to not trust you. You care. You're gonna help her. Just continue to try to radiate care and kindness towards her.**

**Take some deep breaths. Continue to listen and see if there's anything that she needs from you. Just notice anything that's happening. Anything at all. Try and be kind. Compassionate. Receiving whatever it is that she wants to tell you. Anything that she tells you is okay.**

**Keep remembering to breathe. Keep trying to be kind to that young child. We're gonna return to the room soon. So be ready to come back. She's with you. Keep breathing some deep breaths in and out and when you're ready, you can open your eyes and we'll be back in the room.**



## Self Compassion Meditations

### Disclaimer:

Please remember that this exercise is designed for personal reflection and healing. It may bring up emotional responses or memories that could be uncomfortable, triggering, or overwhelming. It is essential to prioritize your well-being and mental health throughout this process. If at any point you feel uncomfortable, anxious, or overwhelmed, please stop the exercise immediately. Take the necessary steps to care for yourself, such as grounding techniques, reaching out to a trusted person for support, or engaging in self-soothing activities. Ensure that you are in a safe and conducive environment for processing any emotions that may arise. Your well-being is paramount, and it's essential to honor your boundaries and engage in self-care whenever needed.

