



 **Compassion** Exercise 10-20 min. Client No

Taking Care of Myself

Self-compassion means we treat ourselves with the same care and kindness that we would for someone we love and care for. Self-compassion is not only manifested in thoughts but also in behaviour. Treating ourselves with care can mean many things, ranging from taking a bath to engaging in meaningful social interactions. It involves listening to our needs, rather than primarily focusing on what others want us to do or what the outside world dictates.



Goal

One of the most effective avenues for greater self-compassion is to realize or understand how much a client cares for him/herself already. This exercise can make your client aware of the various ways he/she already is involved in self-compassionate actions. These actions can be a valuable starting point for introducing more self-compassion.



Advice

The practitioner may offer suggestions for alternative self-caring actions. This exercise can also be done in small groups. A benefit of doing this exercise in small groups is that the other group members can offer suggestions for new ways of caring for oneself. This creative aspect can make the exercise very dynamic and productive in terms of concrete suggestions.



Suggested Readings

Neff, K. D. (2004). *Self-compassion and psychological well-being. Constructivism in the Human Sciences*, 9, 27–37.



Taking Care of Myself

Instructions

Inform your client that one of the most effective avenues for greater self-compassion is to realize or understand how much we care for ourselves already. Invite your client to participate in the exercise below. This exercise addresses different components of your client’s life in which self-caring, self-compassionate actions are valuable.

The physical component

Allowing your muscles to soften, release the tension from your body.

How do you care for your body?

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What are some ways in which you could release tension and stress in the physical sense, or what are some techniques that already work?

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The mental component

Not trying to regulate your thoughts, allowing them to come and go.

How do you care for yourself mentally?

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How could you allow thoughts to come and go with greater ease: less regulation, less fighting your thoughts?

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The emotional component

Trying to understand your emotions rather than suppressing them.

How do you care for your emotional wellbeing?

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What else could you do to care for your feelings?

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The relational component

Finding a connection with others, avoiding isolation.

How do your relationships breed happiness?

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How could you enhance the relationships and connections you already have?

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