

COUNSELING CORNER

Monthly School Newsletter from Lutheran Counseling Services

Resilience Building

The 2020-2021 Counseling Corners will focus on **RESILIENCE!**

WEBINAR: What self-compassion is and isn't.
February 22 @ 12 pm
[Register Here](#)

Car Conversations

In the car, classroom or dinner table, try some of these ideas to promote resilience in yourself, your family or your class.



◆ Help kids build each of the 3 components of self-compassion by pausing a movie, TV show or book to have kids check in with their emotions. Spend a few moments noticing and naming emotions, without trying to rush through them. Help kids see how others have felt those feelings (adults can share their experiences) to see their experience as similar to others'. Share an affirming statement of acceptance for their age, like "I'm OK", "It's OK to feel this way", or "I can be kind to myself".



Caring with Self-Compassion

Resilience expert Linda Graham shares the connection between resilience and self-compassion.

The direct, measurable outcome of self-compassion practice is resilience. So we engage the power of self-compassion not just to feel better, but to function better.
- Linda Graham

<https://www.mindful.org/self-compassion-practices-to-deepen-your-resilience/>

As we continue to focus on resilience this school year, we check in on a practice that greatly influences our ability to build resilience, or bound back from challenges, respond flexibly to life events and persevere through difficulty. In a month that has often focused on love toward others, we take this month to focus it toward ourselves with self-compassion.

Pioneer of the research on self-compassion, Dr. Kristin Neff shares that self-compassion is made up of 3 components:

1. **Mindfulness** versus Over-identification

In this part we are mindful, or present in the moment, tuning into feelings we are experiencing. We observe each emotion without trying to suppress or intensify them.

2. **Common Humanity** versus Isolation

This part helps us to recognize that suffering and challenges are part of being human, and happen to everyone, in a sense connecting us to everyone.

3. **Self-kindness** versus Self-Judgement

This part focuses on being kind to ourselves when we do not measure up to who we wish to be, or fail or make a mistake. We approach ourselves with the warmth and understanding of this experience without harsh self-criticism or even fighting against feeling what we are feeling.

A hallmark self-compassion practice is the Hand on the Heart Exercise from Dr. Neff & the Greater Good Science Center.

◆ Consider the Bible verse:
"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." 2 Cor 1:3,4

Talk as a class or family about how we are made in God's image, how we are made to show compassion to others, and how we are deserving of it from ourselves as well.

◆ Build self-compassion by helping kids think about comforting a friend going through a difficult time. For young children, use puppets or toys to model compassion for others and themselves. For older children, help them identify how they would comfort and be kind to a friend or family member going through the same challenge they are going through, and encourage them to be as kind toward themselves.



Have an idea for a future newsletter or webinar topic related to mental health in children, families or schools? Send us an e-mail at schools@lcsfl.com

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Practice this as a class or family:

- Reflect on a difficult situation and feel the emotions of it to tune into the **mindfulness** part. State that "this is a moment of suffering", "this hurts" or "this is stress" to tune into the present moment.
- To move to the **common humanity** part, state that "Suffering is a part of life", "I'm not alone" or "Others also feel this way".
- To implement the **self-kindness** part, find a type of touch that feels loving and supportive to you: place your hand on your heart or stomach area, place hands on your cheeks, give a self hug, or pet an animal while saying "May I be kind to myself" or "May I accept myself as I am."
- Challenge yourselves to practice this regularly, especially in front of your children & students. Dr. Neff shares that self-compassion is best taught to kids by observing their caregivers practicing self-compassion toward themselves.

Of further interest to caregivers of children, Dr. Neff shares about empathy (when you resonate with the emotions of others), noting that parents and teachers with empathy feel distress when their children or students are distressed. She shares that empathy without compassion leads to burn-out and fatigue. As caregivers for others, we want to avoid this for our sake and that of our children.

She shares that compassion holds painful emotions with kindness, care and connectedness and that the pleasure centers of the brain are activated through self-compassion. She shares that empathy along with compassion triggers an important source of coping and resilience that makes for more effective parents and teachers (and humans of any kind). Take this month to build self-compassion to avoid burn-out! And not just for your kids/students; practice this for yourself!

Want to learn more? Join a webinar addressing what self-compassion is and isn't. 2/22/21 @ 12 pm [Register Here](#)

Neff, K. (2011) Self-Compassion: The proven power of being kind to yourself. New York: William Morrow.

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