

## Letter of Self-Compassion: Handout

We may very well be our own harshest critics. Our critical inner voice can be a strong influence on our emotions – and, while sometimes motivating us to be better individuals, can also make us feel less secure of our self-worth and strengths. One way to address such unpleasant or judgmental thoughts about ourselves is to practice self-compassion. Self-compassion involves directing compassion, care, nurturance and empathy towards the self. Self-compassion consists of an understanding that suffering is shared across humanity – we are all facing different, but no less difficult battles and challenges. Self-compassion requires us to also show kindness towards the self, and also to be mindful of when unhelpful, critical thoughts are affecting our emotions.

**Instructions: Think of a family member or friend you have a good relationship with. This individual should be someone you trust, cares for you, and is there to console you when you are feeling troubled. Write a letter to yourself from this compassionate family member/friend's perspective. What would he/she say to you to comfort, reassure or validate you? Here is a suggested outline for how your letter of self-compassion may sound:**



Dear (Your name here),

- *I just wanted you to know that I understand/feel your \_\_\_\_\_ (unpleasant emotion/nature of difficult situation).*
- *It sounds terrible/stressful/upsetting/hurtful, but I want you to know that you are not alone. I am here to \_\_\_\_\_ (how might your family member/friend help you in this situation?)*
- *You will pull through this situation. I am sure of it. You need to be kind to yourself during this time. Why not \_\_\_\_\_ (what actions or activities do you like doing? Which might your family or friend suggest?)*
- *I would like to reassure you that \_\_\_\_\_ (how might your family member/friend reassure you? Would he/she tell you something positive about yourself, or highlight one of your positive qualities?)*