








Letter of Self-Compassion

	Objective: To cultivate a sense of self-compassion and kindness to self.
	Time Requirements: a. Preparation: 0-5 minutes. b. Activity: 10-15 minutes.
	Items: a. Letter of Self-Compassion Handout b. Blank A4 sheets of paper/ruled writing paper
	Learning Outcomes: a. To develop an enhanced ability to be self-compassionate (EI Subskill 2: Managing Own Emotions)
	Key Learning Point: Being self-compassionate helps reduce unpleasant emotions felt towards oneself.
Self-Disclosure: ****	
Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced	

Instructions

1. Begin the activity by asking participants to imagine a family member or close friend going through a difficult time. Ask participants how they would try to comfort, reassure or assist this family member or close friend. Tell participants to then put themselves in their family member/close friend's shoes – where they are experiencing the same set of difficulties or challenges. Ask participants how they would like their friend to respond to them to reassure them during their difficult experiences. At this point, introduce the concept of self-compassion, telling participants that they can very well be their best friends during difficult and demanding periods in our lives.
2. Distribute the Letter of Self Compassion Handout to all participants. Explain to participants that they are to write a letter to themselves from the perspective of a caring family member or friend. In other words, they are to assume the role of a caring, compassionate family member or friend, and direct the letter from themselves. It helps to ask participants to think about what this compassionate family member or friend will say to them. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for this exercise.
3. After the exercise, tell participants to keep their letters – they don't have to share what they wrote, but remind them that they can refer to the letter if they feel self-critical or judgmental towards themselves during difficult, challenging times in their lives. You can use the reflection question below, though self-disclosure of the letter's contents should be optional.

	Reflection Questions: a. Did you find writing this letter difficult? If so, why?
	Further Reading and References: a. Neff, K. D., & Germer, C. K. (2013). A pilot study and randomized controlled trial of the mindful self-compassion program. <i>Journal of Clinical Psychology, 69</i> (1), 28-44. doi: 10.1002/jclp.21923