



### School Nurses in the Age of Coronavirus:

Prevention and Well-Being for Self, Students, and Staff — Now More Than Ever!

### Welcoming Self-Compassion, Finding Support and Protecting Your Well-being



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Donna is a nurse, psychotherapist, author and educator, and has long addressed a wide range of life-altering experiences in the lives of children and families—loss, trauma, and stress. She has counseled professionals, young people and schools in the aftermath of individual and national tragedies — 9/11, Sandy Hook, and Hurricane Katrina. In addition to academic papers, Donna is the author of *The Seasons of Grief, Helping Children Grow Through Loss*. She taught at Columbia University School of Nursing, and holds master's degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University; Rutgers University, and a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. Her post-doctoral work includes the Prudential Fellowship for Children and the News at Columbia Journalism School. Donna consults for the New York Life Foundation and the Resilient Parenting for Bereaved Families Program at Arizona State University.

#### GOALS . . .

- Assess your ability to provide Self-compassion.
- Identify supports in your work setting & personal life.
- Describe the presence (or absence) of toxicity in relationships and environments.
- Assess potential effectiveness of practicing mind-body & well-being strategies





### The Chocolate Meditation

"...Place the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping small children or others who may need your assistance."



"As soon as you notice you're suffering you automatically embrace yourself with compassion."

Kristin Neff, *Self Compassion*

This frequently cited analogy is often used to describe "self-care"—if you don't put on your own oxygen mask first you won't be able to help others. But it doesn't go far enough. Not only do we need oxygen before and during the emergency, but afterwards well. Self-care is essential and the need for it doesn't end when the stressful situation is over.

### What is missing?



IF YOUR COMPASSION DOES NOT INCLUDE **YOURSELF**, IT IS INCOMPLETE.  
— JACK KORNFIELD

### What is self-compassion?



## The Three Pillars of Self-Compassion



Warm and Understanding to ourselves

Being imperfect is inevitable

When we deny this reality, stress, frustration and self-criticism increase



All humans suffer

We are all mortal, imperfect, vulnerable

Irrational sense of isolationism

Suffering is a part of the shared human experience



Observe negative thoughts & emotions with openness and clarity

A non-judgmental, receptive mind state

Do not "over-identify" with thoughts and feelings, but observe them as they are

Avoid getting caught up and swept away by negative reactivity.

## Self-Compassion, A Strategy for Well-being

(Neff, 2003)

**Positively** correlated with:

- Initiative
- Life satisfaction
- Emotional intelligence
- Social connection
- Optimism
- Positive affect
- Happiness
- Resilience



**Negatively** correlated with:

- Self-criticism
- Thought suppression
- Perfectionism
- Anxiety
- Rumination
- Stress
- Burnout
- Coping



Gaffney, 2018

Identify your ability to provide Self-Compassion.

## SELF-COMPASSION

Dr. Kristin Neff

### The 12 Question Self-Compassion Scale

<https://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ShortSCS.pdf>

**POLL DIRECTIONS**

☐ Respond at [PollEv.com/donnagaffney480](https://poll-ev.com/donnagaffney480)

☎ Text **DONNAGAFFNEY480** to **37607** once to join, then **A, B, C, D, or E**

**When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation . . .**

Almost Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Usually

Almost Always

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at [poll-ev.com/app](https://poll-ev.com/app)

**When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong. . .**

Almost Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Usually

Almost Always

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at [poll-ev.com/app](https://poll-ev.com/app)

**When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.**

Almost Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Usually

Almost Always

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at [poll-ev.com/app](https://poll-ev.com/app)

**I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.**

Almost Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Usually

Almost Always

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at [polllev.com/app](https://polllev.com/app)

*Why is self-compassion important for school nurses?*



Photo: LOC, 1919

## REROUTING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

**1 Notice & Name**

**2. Just Stop**

**3. Observe your thoughts**

**4. Replace the thought with one you can believe in.**



## For a Friend . . . And for YOU!

Please take out a sheet of paper & answer . . .

- First, think about times when a close friend feels really badly about themselves or is really struggling in some way.

situation (especially when you're at your best)?

~Write down what you typically do, what you say, and note the tone in which you typically talk to your friends.

- Now think about times when **you** feel bad about yourself or are struggling.

~ How do you typically respond to yourself in these situations? Please write down what you typically do, what you say, and note the tone in which you talk to yourself.

- Did you notice a difference?

~ If so, ask yourself why. What factors or fears come into play that lead you to treat yourself and others so differently?

- Write down how you think things might change if you responded to yourself in the same way you typically respond to a close friend when you're suffering.



McKessy, 2020



**Locate support in your work and  
... your personal lives**



With thanks to Mary Headley, NV

## RESILIENCE

Three elements to build resilience in individuals and communities:

- (1) Promote wellbeing;
- (2) Build social capital & networks;
- (3) Learn more about mood and mind. Holloway (2013)

### (1) Promote Wellbeing:

- through nutrition, sleep, exercise, take time to relax.
- Have a purpose, set your goals, and work steadily toward success.



22

## RESILIENCE

### (2) Build Social Capital & Networks:

- relationships and networks so you have a range of trusted people you can ask for support and feedback;
- Be a trusted friend!

### (3) Learn about Mood and Mind:

- **gratitude** to enhance positive feelings and calm emotions;
- **Mindfulness** and meditation to enhance wellbeing; resilience;
- Trust your intuition;
- Know when to let go and walk away;
- Reach out when you feel negative emotions;
- Develop your emotional intelligence;
- Build your self-reflection and insight – be honest with yourself;
- Practice self-compassion rather than self-criticism (Neff, 2003).

23



## LISTENING

To hear a family member, friend, colleague with respect and empathy, without judgement.

Strategies for effective listening to give and get support:

- 
- 
- speaker is saying.
- Don't interrupt and impose your "solutions"
- Ask questions to obtain understanding.
- Pay attention to what isn't said – non verbal clues.

24



*"When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares."* Henri Nouwen

### Recognizing Toxicity in Work Relationships and Environments



- Constant lack of clarity around projects
  - Complaining by and about people
  - Different staff receiving different messages
  - Passive-aggressive communication
  - Work-Life Imbalance
  - Lack of respect
- Inconsistent Rules
  - Constant feeling of exclusion from a group of people
  - Large parts of the workday spent chatting on messaging platforms about work issues
  - General outward disinterest from the group in anyone else—unless it involves gossip or "drama"

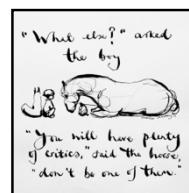
- Understand that you are not the problem
- Set boundaries for yourself:
  - Always take a lunch break,
  - Do not bring work home,
  - Set clear expectations,
  - Have friendships outside of work, and
  - Don't share too many personal details at work.
- Find/build a solid support system among coworkers:
  - One or two good friends you can trust in your workplace and offer each other support and a place to vent.
- Avoid the gossip, and be nonjudgmental.
- Find a healthy outlet (run, walk, exercise)
- Assess potential for change in the system.

### A HEALTHY RESPONSE



- setting.
- Present the solution along with the problem.
- Prioritize YOUR needs
- Take back your power over the small things.
- Build Your Power Posse
  - courage is contagious.
- Consider the severity of current workplace toxicity & the negative impact it's having on you and your life.
- Use the 6 week [Pause] strategy

### A HEALTHY RESPONSE



### FINDING YOUR SELF-COMPASSION STRATEGIES



Photo: Jyotirmay Gupta

### Time to Breathe and Stretch.....



### Questions?



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## LINKS



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<https://healingcirclesglobal.org/nursing/>

<https://engage.healthnursehealthnation.org/blogs/9/38>

Let us know how you are doing!

