

**Week 7**

**Self-Care and Self-Compassion**

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| * **To consider how to look after your own needs whilst balancing others needs and responsibility of being a parent**
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| * **To understand why we need to think consider self care and compassion**
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|  | **Content** |
| **1**  | Self care and self compassion– what it is and why  |
| **2**  | Kindness  |
| **3**  | How to ‘self care’ with a baby/toddler  |
| **4** | How to show yourself self compassion  |

**What is self compassion?**

**“the recognition and clear seeing of suffering…feelings of kindness for people who are suffering, so that the desire to help – to ameliorate suffering – emerges… recognizing our shared human condition, flawed and fragile as it is”** Kristen Neff

**“a basic kindness, with a deep awareness of the suffering of oneself and of other living things, coupled with the wish and effort to relieve it”** Paul Gilbert

For example, the Dalai Lama, who is the head of Tibetan Buddhism,

defines it as ‘**a sensitivity to the suffering of self and others with a deep wish and commitment to relieve the suffering’.**

**Self compassions versus Self care**

**WHY?**

Humans have a strong need to receive care and nurturing

It’s vital to our survival

When it works, people work together and support each other

It helps us flourish and grow

It’s good for your health

You need it just as much as your baby/toddler!

**What is self compassion?**

* Considering **your** needs
* Vital to our self esteem
* Can help with range of mental health difficulties
* Opposite to being self-critical
* Improves mental health and wellbeing
* Essential for survival

What does a seed need to grow?

Humans are just the same...**we too need fed, watered, nutured and cared for**

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| Exercise Consider what your needs are and what your need to nourish or encourage to help you grow. |

**Perfectly Imperfect**

As humans we all have flaws and make mistakes and that is perfectly ok!

It is impossible to strive for perfection and often those who do are the most unhappy or discontent.

***“One of the basic rules of the universe is that nothing is perfect. Perfection simply doesn’t exist....without imperfection, neither you not I would exist”***

Stephen Hawking

Compassion for others is shown through caring and feeling deeply or having concern for friends, family, animals, environment.

Self-compassion involves treating yourself with the same

**kindness, concern and support** you’d show a friend or loved one.

You’d never say to your friend some of the things you say to yourself!

**Why self compassion?**

When faced with difficult life struggles, making mistakes, failures or feeling inadequate humans are more likely to be harsh and self critical

Remember those negative automatic thoughts!

Self-compassion is an alternative response – to respond with kindness

**Self compassion is much more difficult!**

Becoming a parent is life-changing.

It can be hard although enjoyable.

Therefore it’s important to consider

* how you look after yourself
* and how others can help look after you

This will also help you to look after your baby.

You may wonder where you will find time for this!

We will look at how to show yourself self-compassion

 and use self-care both with and without your baby.

**The *skills of compassion involve:***

* learning to **direct our attention in a compassionate and helpful way**
* learning to **think and reason in a compassionate and helpful way**
* **And** learning to **behave in a rational and compassionate way**

***We do each of these with the feelings of warmth, support and kindness.***

 The kind of genes we inherit and the backgrounds we come from shape our brains, our beliefs and values.

**Self care with a baby or toddler**

• Get as much rest as possible

• Take naps (if baby is very young) or have rest time (‘me’ time) when baby or toddler napping

• Give yourself breaks– if practical ask someone to watch your baby/toddler so you can rest

• Do something nice for yourself such take a long bubble bath or walk with a friend

• Share both your joys and difficulties with another parent

• Tell yourself you are doing a good job learning from your baby/toddler

• Keep a log of the fun moments

• Don’t worry about a messy house or making fancy meals

• Accept a meal or help from a friend or family

• Use take-aways for a special treat

• Keep life simple

• If you are breast feeding, think about expressing a bottle of milk from time to time so that a partner or babysitter can take over the feeding when you need a break

Therefore in the same way criticism from others can make you feel distressed, unhappy or depressed

***Your own thoughts and images can do the same***

How do you feel if people criticise you?

How does it feel in your body?

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| Exercise:How do you feel if people criticise you?How does it feel in your body?  |

**Self esteem**

* associated with doing well and achieving
* linked to our drive-achievement system
* focuses on how well we are doing in comparison to others
* often linked to feeling inferior, and judging ourselves in comparison to others

**Self compassion**

* important when things are difficult, going wrong and you are having a hard time
* is about focusing on our similarities and shared humanity with others, who also struggle as we do

**Self Care**

We need to remember that our brains have been designed to need and to respond positively to kindness!

You may think it is self-indulgent or hear others say this...*.*

However

* it’s no different to training your body to be fit and healthy
* It is simply a question of treating our brain wisely
* There is no difference to understanding that our body needs certain

vitamins and a balanced diet!

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| ExerciseConsider and write down what you enjoy doing with your baby/child that makes you feel goode.g bathtime, taking them for a walk in the pram |

**Self Care with your baby/toddler**

Find times you enjoy most with your baby or toddler such as just after a feed or bath time

Short times of pleasure and quality time with your baby will also help when you are feeling stressed down or anxious

Remember Babies and toddlers are hard work but because

they are dependent on you for everything, not because they want to annoy you!

Remember those negative thoughts we talked about!

Remember to challenge any unhelpful thoughts as we discussed previously.

E.G **Is it fact? Is it opinion?**

Remember the SMART goal setting

It might not be a spa weekend or a night away but even small periods of time doing something can have great benefit.

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| ExerciseConsider and write down what you enjoyed doing before you had a baby.Now consider what you do for self care since you have had a baby.Also consider what the barriers are to doing anything for you.  |

Possible barriers to self care and compassion:

Thoughts

Mood

Lack of energy

Tiredness

Relationships

**RAIN of Self Compassion**

The acronym RAIN is an easy-to-remember tool for practicing mindfulness and compassion using the following four steps:

**Recognize what is going on**

**Allow the experience to be there, just as it is**

**Investigate with interest and care**

**Nurture with self-compassion**

You can take your time and explore RAIN as a stand-alone meditation or move through the steps whenever challenging feelings arise.

R

**Recognize what is going on**

Recognise how you are feeling

Acknowledge how you feel

Notice your thoughts, emotions, behaviours and sensations and the

links between them all

A

**Allow the experience to be there, just as it is**

Simply let them be there

Don’t try to fix them

Avoid piling on judgement or blame

I

**Investigate with interest and care / kindness**

Pause and be curious

Ask yourself what is happening to your body

 or what is going on

Focus on your experience

Wonder how you are experiencing this in your body

Be kind and non-judgemental

N

**Natural loving awareness or**

**Nurture with self-compassion**

Sense of who we are is not merged with our emotions

Rest in natural awareness

Mentally whisper to yourself ‘it’s okay’ or in the way you would say to a friend – make a kind statement or gesture of love towards yourself

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| ExerciseNow consider how self-compassionate you are.Also consider what the barriers are to you being self compassionate. |

**Compassionate mind summary**

**Be Gentle with Myself**Notice self-criticism (unhelpful thoughts) and respond to yourself with gentleness and supportive understanding.

**Compassionate Self Talk**We’ve already discussed the internal dialogue in our heads, which is very often self critical and we judge ourselves much more than the way we judge others. Practice noticing when we do that, and start to use Compassionate Mind.

Ask yourself :

* **If I wasn't feeling so emotional, how else would I see this situation?**
* Use THINK:  **Is this thought True, Helpful, Important, Necessary, Kind?**

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| Exercise – self compassionConsider and write down how you can be more self-compassionate |

**Self care Activities**

Self-care activities are to help yourself feel better and look after your mental health and wellbeing.

Some things are more easy than others.

It’s individual as what works for one person might not work for another.

e.g. Football, gaming, sewing, gardening.... Are all very different range of activities!

**Social**

* Talking to friends or close family member
* Online support
* Online gaming
* Take part in activities – e.g quiz, challenge
* Music
* Local groups

**Physical**

* Eating a healthy diet
* Time off technology
* Relaxation techniques
* Exercise – walk / run / dance ...
* Do something relaxing like having a long bath

**Practical**

* Organise your day and week - routine and structure can help feel more in control and schedule time
* Set goals having things to work towards help with motivation
* Learn something new such as a new skill

**Emotional**

* Develop friendships – call or

meet up with a close friend

* Chat to a friend about how you are feeling
* Be kind to yourself
* Write down some positive things that you have achieved each day

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| Exercise – self careConsider and write down what you would like to plan to do over this coming week from the ideas we’ve discussed or any other ideas you may have. |

Well done for completing week 7.

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Next week is our final week.

Please remember to complete the Core-10 AND try some self-compassion and self-care ☺