

What Are We Talking About?

Section 2



In the first section we underscored that compassionate action requires intent and skill. This section of the toolkit provides further definitions that are foundational to all else found throughout the toolkit. We will be introduced to the wellness model we will use in the toolkit and the concept of compassion fatigue. Activities will help us explore our beliefs about self-care and self-compassion.



Distribute this document to all participants to explore prior to the following application activities.



Key Activity

Fatigue and Resilience in the Wellness Compass – Reflection

Wellness Practice

STRENGTH and MIND: Want More Energy? Consider Gratitude!

Practicing being grateful, among many other benefits, increases your energy. It turns out that our minds are wired to focus on the negative as a survival strategy. The three good things practice helps is to rewire your brain to notice the good in your life. You can start now by thinking of three things for which you are grateful and what role you had in them. Research shows writing them down has a longer positive effect on your well-being.

Then choose a time of day, every day, to set your mind on gratitude. Give it time, enjoy exploring gratefulness. Hopefully you too will find added positive energy for the important work you do.

If you want to take this concept further, see what the [Greater Good Science Center](#) suggests.

Circle Agenda

Staff Circle Agenda, Section Two

Core Content Visual

Self-Compassion – Use this Visual and Display in Staff Break Areas

Posting this visual in common staff areas will serve as a reminder of content covered to staff and perhaps serve as a future conversation started for deeper reflection among staff members.

Supplementary Activities/Handouts

What Were Your Childhood Messages About Self-Care?

This is an activity you could facilitate with your teams in addition to, or in place of, the circle agenda to explore personal messages about self-care.

Self-Compassion Scale

This activity supports content covered in the Core Content Visual and document, listed in the Information Section of the toolkit. The Self-Compassion Scale is also referenced in Section 11.



For links specifically for leadership and additional resources, please visit the Toolkit online.

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Wellness, Self-Compassion, Compassion Fatigue, and Compassion Resilience



In the first section we underscored that compassionate action requires intent and skill. This section of the toolkit provides further definitions that are foundational to all else found throughout the toolkit. We will be introduced to the wellness model we will use in the toolkit and the concept of compassion fatigue. Activities will help us explore our beliefs about self-care and self-compassion.



WELLNESS: The authors of the toolkit have chosen to use the Compass Model of Wellness based on the work of Dr. Scott and Holly Stoner of Samaritan Family Wellness Center in Wisconsin. With their permission and guidance, we have adapted it from its original form for use in the public school setting.



In the Compass Model of Wellness there are four sectors of our life that contribute to our wellness and two areas under each sector. All of these areas are interconnected to support our overall well-being.

Developed in partnership with:



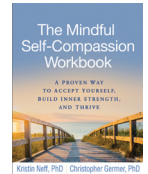
compassionresiliencetoolkit.org

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Heart <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationships – the ability to create and maintain healthy connections with others• Emotions – the ability to express your emotions and receive others' emotions in a healthy way	Spirit <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core Values – the development of a personal value system that supports your sense of meaning and purpose• Rest & Play – the ability to balance work and play to renew oneself
Strength <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stress Resilience – the ability to deal positively with the challenges of life• Care for Body – the ability to build healthy habits around your physical well-being and to end unhealthy habits	Mind <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work – the ability to get the most out of educational, volunteer, and employment opportunities• Organization – the ability to manage time, priorities, money, and belongings

Self-Compassion: Compassion is a two-way street! Just as we have come to understand that we cannot fully love others without loving ourselves, we cannot maintain a compassionate approach towards others if we do not practice self-compassion. *Self-compassion is extending kindness to ourselves in instances of perceived inadequacy, failure, or our own general suffering.* One of our nation's leading experts in self-compassion, Dr. Kristin Neff, offers further explanation in [this brief article](#).



[Click to read article.](#)

When we consistently approach people with compassion, the outcome can be satisfaction, burnout, or secondary (vicarious) trauma. The goal of this toolkit is for us to grow the experience of that satisfaction and lessen burnout and secondary trauma.

Burnout refers to *the exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress related to very high workload, non-supportive work environment, and/or feeling that our efforts make no difference.*

Secondary Trauma (also known as secondary traumatic stress and vicarious trauma) *can happen to us when we come to know the traumatically stressful events that the students we serve have experienced. Some helpers experience some of the same symptoms of trauma as if the experience had happened to them. Those who are in a position to hear about trauma on a regular basis are particularly susceptible*

We will be using compassion fatigue as an umbrella term for both burnout and secondary trauma.

Compassion Fatigue can be summed up as *the feelings of depression, sadness, exhaustion, anxiety, and irritation that may be experienced by people who are helpers in their work and/or personal life.* It is important to note that compassion fatigue is a normal response to the complex and overwhelming situations we might find in the workplace and hear about from those we serve. Rather than thinking of compassion fatigue as something to be avoided or fixed, it may be more powerful to figure out how to feed and grow our "compassion resilience."

Compassion Resilience *is the ability to maintain our physical, emotional, and mental well-being while responding compassionately to people who are suffering.* Think of this resilience as a reservoir of well-being that we can draw upon on difficult days and in difficult situations. It allows us to be present and effective in challenging situations, as well as on those days when everything goes right.

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The very fact that you are working to help children learn and grow into citizens of our world proves that you have some level of compassion resilience already. Without compassion resilience you likely would not be in this field – still caring.

We all have our own ways of filling this reservoir of compassion resilience and this toolkit will offer information and strategies that expand our options. We will learn about thoughts and behaviors that undercut our resilience. Being aware lets us make the most helpful choices for our well-being.

Building compassion resilience is an active process. We can choose our point of view as we move through this toolkit. One perspective to consider is to think of building compassion resilience as a freedom, not a burden. We can also take on the perspective of a scientist as we track and manage our resilience. We can ask ourselves what fills our tank. What drains it? Consider the strategies integrated throughout the toolkit; take them for a spin and explore what works best for each of us.

SELF-CARE



STRATEGIES

STRENGTH and MIND: Want More Energy? Consider Gratitude!

Practicing being grateful, among many other benefits, increases your energy. It turns out that our minds are wired to focus on the negative as a survival strategy. The three good things practice helps rewire your brain to notice the good in your life. You can start now by thinking of three things for which you are grateful and what role you had in them. Research shows writing them down has a longer positive effect on your well-being.

Then choose a time of day, every day, to set your mind on gratitude. Give it time, enjoy exploring gratefulness. Hopefully you too will find added positive energy for the important work you do.

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WHAT'S NEXT

Compassion Fatigue Awareness

The next section of the toolkit goes further into the concept of compassion fatigue and then offers a way to assess our personal compassion satisfaction and fatigue.

Fatigue and Resilience in the Wellness Compass – Reflection

When it comes to our wellness, we can experience fatigue and resilience in the four sectors/eight areas of the Wellness Compass. It turns out that as we support our overall wellness, our ability to maintain a compassionate approach grows too.

Instructions:

1. Review what fatigue and resilience might look like in each area of the Wellness Compass.
2. Use the top section of the reflection sheet (last page) to rate your wellness in each area. One represents fatigue and five represents resilience.



HEART

Relationships: the ability to create and maintain healthy connections with others in your life

Emotions: the ability to express your emotions and receive others' emotions in a healthy way



SPIRIT

Core Values: the development of a personal value system that supports your sense of meaning and purpose

Rest & Play: the ability to balance work and play to renew yourself



STRENGTH

Stress Resilience: the ability to deal positively with the challenges of life

Care for My Body: the ability to build healthy habits around your physical well-being, and to end unhealthy habits



MIND

School/Work: the ability to get the most out of educational, volunteer, and employment opportunities

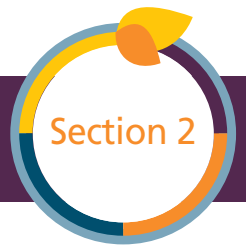
Organization: the ability to manage time, priorities, money, and belongings





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		What fatigue looks like in this area	What resilience looks like in this area
 HEART	Relationships	Increased conflict in one or more of our important relationships, pulling away from others, and failing to nurture important relationships.	Having a variety of relationships, both personal and work-related, that are mutually satisfying and characterized by trust, integrity, honesty, commitment, and kindness.
	Emotions	Chronically stuck in feelings of anxiety, sadness, or irritability.	Able to feel and express the full range of emotions in a healthy way.
 SPIRIT	Core Values	Acting, living, or working in a way that are contrary to your core values.	Living and working in alignment with our core values.
	Rest & Play	Being chronically tired and irritable from working too many hours and never being able to turn work off, even when not at work.	Engaging in activities that are truly recreative of our bodies and our spirits, those activities that rejuvenate us.
 STRENGTH	Stress Resilience	Facing stress alone, isolating from others. Reacting to stress rather than responding.	Able to ask for help from others and to create emotional space and perspective where we can respond to our stress in ways that are productive.
	Care for Body	Literal physical fatigue. Our bodies will always tell the truth about how we are treating them.	Increased vitality and energy. Having a basic and consistent practice of caring for our physical wellness.
 MIND	School/Work	Doing work that we do not feel makes good use of our gifts and talents, or because work has taken over our personal lives and we find ourselves feeling resentful towards our work.	Doing work that is meaningful and that fully uses our gifts and talents. It also comes from being able to find a balance between our work and our personal life.
	Organization	Any of the following ways: being chronically late for appointments, forgetting to pay bills, forgetting or being late for assignments, and having an excessively messy work or home environment.	Being well organized in regard to our time, money, environment, and priorities. Not overcommitting or overscheduling, following through on plans and assignments.

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<p>How is my self-care?</p> <p>Rank: <i>(circle one in each category)</i></p>	 <p>HEART</p> <p>Relationships: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)</p> <hr/> <p>Emotions: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)</p>	 <p>SPIRIT</p> <p>Core Values: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)</p> <hr/> <p>Rest & Play: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)</p>	 <p>STRENGTH</p> <p>Care for Body: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)</p> <hr/> <p>Strong Resilience: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)</p>	 <p>MIND</p> <p>School/Work: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)</p> <hr/> <p>Organization: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)</p>
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Reflections:

 <p>HEART</p>	<p>Relationships:</p>
 <p>SPIRIT</p>	<p>Core Values:</p>
 <p>STRENGTH</p>	<p>Care for Body:</p>
 <p>MIND</p>	<p>School/Work:</p>
<p>Notes:</p>	

Notes:

What Are We Talking About?

Section 2

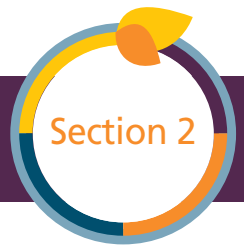
Staff Support



Circle Agenda

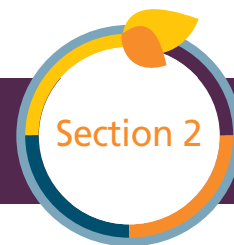
Circle Topic	CR Section 2: Resilience and Fatigue
<p>Planning</p>	<p>Send the introduction document from Section 2 in the online toolkit at least 4 days prior to the circle to all participants.</p> <p>Hold a meeting with leadership to prepare for this section and invite the leader(s) to consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you (the leader) are participating in the group meetings, practice not being the first to answer questions and avoid giving advice or correcting staff perceptions. 2. Enlarge and print the Wellness Compass and display it in your office area to visually represent your commitment to this work. 3. Take the Self-Compassion Scale (easy, self-scoring version online) and consider how you will communicate to staff what insights you gained. <p>For the full leadership preparation document, please visit this page.</p>
<p>Purpose of Circle/ Learning Objectives</p>	<p>Introduce compassion resilience, self-compassion, and the Wellness Compass. Use the Wellness Compass for reflection on our patterns of fatigue and resilience.</p>
<p>Materials/ Preparation/Time</p>	<p>Time: 45-50 minutes</p> <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Circle kit <input type="checkbox"/> Values and shared agreements created in first session <input type="checkbox"/> Definitions of compassion resilience and compassion fatigue written on flipchart <input type="checkbox"/> A few copies of Compassionate Action Steps visual in the center of the circle <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of the following for all participants: Fatigue and Resilience in the Wellness Compass and the Self-Compassion Survey <p>Set-up: Up to 15 chairs arranged in a circle without furniture in the middle.</p> <p>To consider: Understanding Your Social Location as a Facilitator – Active Bystander Intervention: Training and Facilitation Guide.</p>

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Circle Topic	CR Section 2: Resilience and Fatigue
Welcome/Check-In (5 minutes)	<p>Welcome group.</p> <p>(Go-around) Share your name, your personal pronouns if you'd like, and one word that describes your head and one word that describes your heart right here, right now.</p> <p>Facilitator tip: You can learn more about pronouns here.</p>
Grounding/Wellness Practice (5 minutes)	<p><i>"Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."</i> – Leonard Cohen</p> <p>Self-Compassion Break</p> <p>Share: In this opening activity we are going to be reflecting on the idea of self-compassion. You will learn the components of self-compassion as you reflect from a personal perspective. We are grateful for the work of Dr. Kristin Neff in this field of study.</p> <p>Think of a recent situation when you've let someone down, or didn't live up to your own expectations, that has left you feeling some level of stress. Bring that example to mind.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. If you were speaking to a friend who was in a similar situation, what kind words would you say? Can you turn those words towards yourself and your situation? That's one aspect of self-compassion. (Self-kindness vs. self-judgement)2. When you think about that situation, one reaction may be to isolate yourself, withdraw, or run away. Self-compassion is when you recognize this is part of life and common humanity. (Common humanity vs. isolation)3. Some of us find ourselves ruminating over our shortcomings versus being mindful of the emotion that comes with it and being able to let that go. (Mindful of emotions vs. over identifying with our emotions) We can name the feeling, such as this is embarrassing, this hurts, this is a moment of suffering, and instead of being stuck in that feeling, we can practice being kind to ourselves and remind ourselves that like others we make mistakes. <p>We will return to the idea of self-compassion at the end of our time together.</p> <p>If you would like to consider a different grounding practice, please review the mindfulness appendix for additional suggestions.</p>
Review (5 minutes)	<p>(Open mic) Give an example of when you used the Compassionate Action Steps since our last circle.</p>

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Circle Topic	CR Section 2: Resilience and Fatigue
Guiding Questions (25 minutes)	<p>Review the definitions included in the information document sent to participants from Section 2 of the toolkit.</p> <p>Share: We'll explore these two concepts throughout the toolkit. Today we will connect them to our model for wellness that we use in the toolkit.</p> <p>Review handout, Fatigue and Resilience in the Wellness Compass, before answering the following questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. (Pair share) Which section of the wellness compass do you feel most fatigued in at home, work, or in the community? What resources do you utilize when you are in a state of fatigue?2. (Go-around) Which section of the wellness compass do you feel most resilient at home, work, or in the community? How do you maintain your resiliency in this area?3. (Pair share) Think about an adult role model who influenced your sense of resiliency and self-care. Who was your role-model and how did they influence you?
Putting it into Practice (9 minutes)	<p>Give participants time to complete the Self-Compassion Scale using phones, laptops, or paper version.</p> <p>(Pair share) What role could self-compassion play in growing your resilience in a specific area of the compass?</p>
Closing (1 minute)	<p>The self-care strategy in the pre-read highlighted the science behind gratitude and well-being. To close today, let's go around the circle and share one word of something for which you are grateful.</p>

What Is Self-Compassion?

Section 2



Self-Kindness

Be loving towards ourselves instead of self-critical.



Common Humanity

Everyone suffers. You are not perfect.
No one is. You are not alone.



Mindfulness

Notice our struggle. Feel it, instead of being reactive. Be with it, avoiding self-judgment or overreaction.

When you feel like you have fallen short, how do you practice self-compassion?

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What Were Your Childhood Messages About Self-Care?



Throughout the toolkit we will share examples of self-care strategies while we are looking at the important organizational support for compassion. As we think about our self-care practices, it is helpful to reflect on how our childhood upbringing may be playing a role in our adult self-care behaviors and thought patterns. Here are some questions to help us reflect:

What messages, direct and indirect, did you receive from your parents or other adults growing up regarding self-care?

Did their words and behavior signal that it's OK to relax and recharge, or that you're failing to meet expectations if you do so? Did you ever get to see your parents take a vacation? How did they behave?

How has your cultural upbringing influenced your philosophy around self-care? Some of us come from cultures that tell us "Work hard, play hard," while some of us grew up hearing "Work hard, then work harder." There are also cultures that have different messages for different genders; for example, telling men that they should relax, while expecting women to clean and tidy or prepare food during down-time. What are the norms for self-care from your cultural heritage?

What responsibilities did you have during childhood, and how have they shaped you now? Did you have the standard chores like washing dishes or taking out the trash? Were you expected to take care of younger siblings or run family errands such as grocery shopping? Did you also have obligations to help with the family business or otherwise support your family financially? How did these responsibilities shape your thoughts and behaviors as an adult?

Did you experience any trauma in your childhood that may be preventing effective self-care now? This is a deeply personal question, so be thoughtful if you are reflecting in a group setting. Some of you may have gone through childhood abuse, neglect, witnessed domestic violence, or forced to take on emotional responsibilities, such as playing counselor to your parents, among other things, that kids shouldn't have to endure. These traumas, if unresolved, may significantly block your self-care and may require counseling to work through.

How do your childhood experiences affect the way you perceive other people's self-care?

What messages are you passing on to the people around you? Besides thinking about how our childhood and cultural upbringing affect our self-care practices, we can also think about how our self-care practices and philosophies may be affecting the people around us, including our kids.

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Activity: Self-Compassion Scale

Used in this toolkit with permission from Dr. Kristin Neff

Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner. You can also [take this self-scale online](#) with automatic scoring.

Almost never

Almost always

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
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Calculating Your Level of Self-Compassion

Please record the score you gave for each item in the scale, and then calculate your Grand Compassion Average as given below:

Self-Kindness (SK) Items:	
#5	_____
#12	_____
#19	_____
#23	_____
#26	_____
SK Subtotal of items: _____	
SK Average (divide subtotal by 5): _____	

Self-Judgment (SJ) Items:	
#1	_____
#8	_____
#11	_____
#16	_____
#21	_____
SJ Subtotal of items: _____	
SJ Average (divide subtotal by 5): _____	

Common Humanity (CH) Items:	
#3	_____
#7	_____
#10	_____
#15	_____
CH Subtotal of items: _____	
CH Average (divide subtotal by 4): _____	

Isolation (I) Items:	
#4	_____
#13	_____
#18	_____
#25	_____
I Subtotal of items: _____	
I Average (divide subtotal by 4): _____	

Mindfulness (M) Items:	
#9	_____
#14	_____
#17	_____
#22	_____
M Subtotal of items: _____	
M Average (divide subtotal by 4): _____	

Over-identification (OI) Items:	
#2	_____
#6	_____
#20	_____
#24	_____
OI Subtotal of items: _____	
OI Average (divide subtotal by 4): _____	

Total Self-Compassion Score:

- Reverse-code (rc) the negatively worded subscales (SJ, I, and OI) by subtracting each average from 6.
 $6 - \text{SJ average} = \underline{\quad}$ $6 - \text{I average} = \underline{\quad}$ $6 - \text{OI average} = \underline{\quad}$
- Add the six averages: $\text{SK} \underline{\quad} + \text{SJ (rc)} \underline{\quad} + \text{CH} \underline{\quad} + \text{I (rc)} \underline{\quad} + \text{M} \underline{\quad} + \text{OI (rc)} \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$
- Calculate Grand Self-Compassion Average (total average divided by 6) = $\underline{\quad}$

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What Your Score Means:

Average scores tend to be around 3.0 on the 1–5 scale, so you can interpret your total self-compassion score accordingly. As a rough guide, a score of 1–2.5 indicates you are low in self-compassion, 2.5–3.5 indicates you are moderate, and 3.5–5.0 means you are high. Remember that higher averages for the SJ, I, and OI subscales indicate less self-compassion before reverse-coding and more after reverse-coding.

References

Neff, K. D. (2003). Development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity, 2*, 223-250.

Neff, K. D. (2003). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and Identity, 2*, 85-102.

For more excellent resources on self-compassion go to [Dr. Kristin Neff's website](#).

