Caregiving with

Self Compassion

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Self-Compassion
non-judgmental noticing of one’s sufferings, recognizing it as a common human experience, and responding in a kind way toward the self (Neff, 2003)

1. Mindfulness versus over-identification (noticing)
2. Common humanity versus isolation (recognizing)
3. Self-kindness versus self-judgment (responding)

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Diagram:
- Imperfection
- Mindfulness
- Positive Regard Self and Others (Self-Esteem, Culture)
- Self-Validation
- Self-Soothing
- Self-Kindness
Why We Need Self-Compassion
How Can It Help with Caregiving?

- To Be Happier
- More Optimistic
- More Grateful
- More Resilient
- More Forgiving

Can Self-Compassion Improve Your Care Recipient’s Quality of Life?

Note that it is NOT:
- Self-Pity
- Self-Indulgence
- Justification for undesirable behaviors

Awareness of Challenges
- Social Support
- Use Skills – Relaxation, Reframing Unhelpful Self-Talks
- Take Small Breaks
- Increase Enjoyable Activities
- Use Positive Narratives

Being Self-Critical
- Isolation
- Rumination over Mistakes
- Worrying about Others’ Judgments
- Physical Inactivity
- Over-Commitment
What Research is Telling Us

• **Strongly committed intergenerational caregivers** need support from both family and formal care services

• Self-compassion can **buffer anxiety and improve psychological health**

• We need strength and courage to acknowledge pain and suffering in others and ourselves, and **transform relationship to suffering through insight and emotion regulation**

• Caregivers’ **fear of emotion** may affect how self-compassion develops - there may be **gender differences**
Caregivers are at Risk for Compassion Fatigue

Four themes were identified in a 2014 study:

1. Uncertainty
   “The fear of the unknown, what’s going to happen next, and will I pick up on it quick enough so she’s not in danger…”

2. Doubt
   “I’m more concerned I might say or do something that might upset her. And I don’t want to do that…”

3. Attachment
   “Oh yeah, this morning. We... crawled in bed together. Just because it made me feel like I was loved... and I missed not having her around like she used to be.”

4. Strain
   “I think I have reached a point where I felt resentful toward her. I used to love the weekends. I dread Fridays because that means that I don’t have any relief at all.”

What does this mean to you as a caregiver?
Caregiver Resources

www.self-compassion.org

If your compassion does not include yourself it is incomplete.
- Jack Kornfield

Dear me, I choose a new inner voice...

A moment of self-compassion can change your entire day. A string of such moments can change the course of your life.

**Christopher K. Germer
Caregiver Resources

Audio:


(free online audio practices, including online self-test:

[http://self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are/](http://self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are/)

- [www.healthjourneys.com](http://www.healthjourneys.com)

(listen to audio samples)

Books:

- Self-Compassion by Kristin Neff, PhD.
- The Gifts of Imperfection by Brene Brown, PhD., LMSW
- And many more...

Classes and Support Groups:

- Caregiver Coping Class at UCCS Aging Center
  719-255-8002
- Caregiver Support Center at Area Agency on Aging
  719-471-7080
References


(Some images from online websites)