



Self Compassion Mindfulness Practice

Part I: What is self-care + self-compassion?

- Self Kindness
- Recognition of Common Humanity
- Mindfulness

How Can Self Compassion Help Us as PhD Students?

- Critique vs. Kryptonite
- Increases Resilience and Help Seeking Behavior
- Willingness to Forgive Ourselves When We Say Something Wrong
- Engage More Openly, with Recognition of our Biases without Judgement
- Increases our Emotional Intelligence



CMU and Other Resources

[Self Compassion Workshop](#), 3/18, 12-1 p.m.

[Self Compassion Skills Clinic](#)

[Headspace](#) Self-Directed Content on Self Compassion

Connect with me, Angie Lusk at alusk@andrew.cmu.edu


Selfcompassion.org (Kristin Neff's work)

[Christopher Germer on Mindful Self Compassion](#)

[The Audrey Lorde Project on Self Care and Community Care](#)

A great resource module on [Self-Compassion](#)

[Ted Talk by Lucy Hone](#) Three key things resilient people understand



Mental Health

Abigail Cruz, Ph.D.
Counseling and Psychological Services

Mental Health

Mental health = physical health

Depression

Fatigue

Anxiety

Headache

Stress

Tension

Overwhelm


Sleeplessness

Doubt

Stomach ache



Common Graduate School Stressors

- Impostor syndrome
 - Imposter by whose standards?
 - “Syndrome” very medical; places blame on individual rather than systems
 - Pressure to constantly work
 - Isolation
 - Professional relationships
 - *Suicide, loss & grief
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JEDI Advocacy & Mental Health

- Racial battle fatigue
 - The physical, psychological, and behavioral strain racially marginalized and stigmatized groups experience and the amount of energy they expend coping with and fighting against racism
- Martyr syndrome
 - Belief that self-care is an indulgence, a marker of privilege, and that thereby discourages activists from seeking ways to sustain themselves



Check-In

Where is your baseline?

What does your life look like when you're doing well?

How does this change when you're struggling?

How do you get back to your baseline?



CaPS

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS)
 - 412-268-2922
 - cmu.edu/counseling
 - D-List:
<https://lists.andrew.cmu.edu/mailman/listinfo/caps-events>
 - Instagram: cmucaps
- Thriving Campus
- Ayana Therapy
- Psychology Today



Boundaries, Rights & Self-advocacy

Darla Coleman

Executive Director Diversity Equity & Inclusion for SCS

Boundaries, Rights & Self-advocacy

Core Question: What are some strategies for maintaining our mental and emotional well-being during the PD program?

Self-Advocacy

- Self-advocacy is defined as an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions
- Acts of self-advocacy lead to greater self-determination; self-determination leads to academic success

Origin of Self-Advocacy

- Self-advocacy started in the disability community with the intention to empower students to know their rights and be self-determined to accomplish their academic goals
- It is now applicable to all students...the idea of understanding your rights, developing learning goals and being able to convey them to your academic advisor is critical to your success

Boundaries

- Boundaries- guidelines, rules or limits that a person creates to identify for themselves what are reasonable, sage and permissible ways for other people to behave around them and how they will respond when someone steps outside those limits.

Boundaries: Why?

- Setting boundaries is essential for physical and emotional health
- It is important to make time for positive interactions
- Not having boundaries can lead to overload, causing depression, anxiety and stress induced physical illness
- Being too rigid with boundaries can cause isolation

Not having boundaries at all or being too rigid can both be detrimental to one's health; it is important to work towards a healthy balance.

Why is so difficult to set boundaries?

Respond verbally or in the chat

Why is setting boundaries difficult?

- Talking with an advisor/professor can be intimidating
- Competitive program; university culture
- Want to make a contribution; put your best foot forward
- Don't want to be seen in a negative light
- Fear of retribution from others; causing strained relationships
- Stereotype threat (confirming others thoughts)

Examples of Boundaries

- Not working or answering emails beyond a certain time
- Not working on weekends
- Being able to say “no” when needed
- Making time to practice daily self care (meditation, hobby, exercise)
- Taking a lunch break everyday

Tools for Identifying Boundaries

- Determining your values is an important step in establishing boundaries (make a list)
- Once your list is made, work on what boundaries can be set to uphold those values
- Anger, resentment or complaining about a person or situation is an indication to set a boundary
- RAIN (previously discussed) can also be helpful
- Counseling/Therapy (CaPS) or other community resources
- Rights are another key tool in identifying boundaries

Initially, you may feel selfish or guilty; remember the importance of self-care.

Rights Defined

- Rights- a moral or legal entitlement; to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way

What do you think are your student rights?

Your Student Rights

- You **do not** have to work hours that compromise your physical or mental health
- You have the right to be spoken to kindly and respectfully
- You have the right to say “no” to certain collaborations
- You have the right to have your ideas considered
- You have the right to communicate your needs and have them taken seriously
- You have the right to accommodations to your research schedule, resources provided, etc. that can support your unique needs

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

DEAR MAN is an interpersonal effectiveness skill. Each letter of the acronym represents its own skill. It can be used to resolve conflict, make a request or say no in certain situations.

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Describe

Express

Assert

Reinforce

Mindful

Appear confident

Negotiate

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Describe the current situation with just the facts (short, concise and objective)

Express

Assert

Reinforce

Mindful

Appear confident

Negotiate

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Describe

Express clearly how you feel (don't assume a person understands)

Assert

Reinforce

Mindful

Appear confident

Negotiate

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Describe

Express

Assert your request by clearly asking for what you want; be clear, concise and specific to avoid misunderstandings

Reinforce

Mindful

Appear confident

Negotiate

Assertive:

Is a natural style that is nothing more than being direct, honest and respectful while interacting with others

Assertive Characteristics

- Appropriate body language (good eye contact, good listening skills)
- Expressing your feelings and opinions honestly
- Not infringing on others rights
- Putting yourself on an equal level with others
- Speaking directly to a person
- Use a conversational tone and volume

Direct

Honest

Respectful

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Describe

Express

Assert

Reinforce explain what the other person can gain; also acknowledge the importance of the relationship regardless of the outcome

Mindful

Appear confident

Negotiate

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Describe

Express

Assert

Reinforce

(Be) Mindful of the goal so the person does not change the subject or get defensive (continue to make your request with a firm calm voice)

Appear confident

Negotiate

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Describe

Express

Assert

Reinforce

Mindful

Appear confident in your body language, stand tall; keep eye contact
(it shows the person you are serious)

Negotiate

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

D
E
A
R

M

A

N
Negotiate and be willing to give in order to get; you may want to ask the other person if they have a solution (win-win)

DEAR MAN: Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

- DEAR MAN is a skill which is mastered over time with practice and perseverance.
- Be sure to prepare and practice your requests before attempting to use this strategy.



Thank You!

Questions?

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Make an appointment:

<https://calendly.com/dcoleman-cmu-dei/30min>