



TOGETHER IN WELLNESS: A GUIDE FOR LEADERS AND WELLNESS CHAMPIONS

CULTIVATING SELF-COMPASSION

When we're going through a difficult time, we can find ourselves engaging in negative self-talk and juggling feelings of inadequacy. However, when a friend is experiencing a difficult time, we're more likely to support them, build them up, and treat them with compassion.

Self-compassion is treating yourself the same way you would a friend when faced with a stressful situation or event. You're often your toughest critic and deserve to treat yourself with the same kindness you extend to others. When you master the art of self-compassion, it can make all the difference in how you view life and your self.

According to [Dr. Kristin Neff](#), there are three key elements to remember:

Be kind to yourself

Treat yourself with warmth, kindness, and understanding when you are stressed. Being aware of the discomfort you are experiencing can help you grow. But be careful not to over-judge yourself: too much self-scrutiny can limit your ability to flourish.

Nobody's perfect

Recognize that mistakes are part of the shared human experience and that you are not alone. In fact, these flaws and imperfections can unify us. The one thing we all have in common is that none of us are perfect!

Remember the bigger picture

Be aware of your discomfort or awkwardness in the moment. What are your emotions and reactions? Remember to include all of them, even if they are uncomfortable. How are others responding to this situation? What is the bigger picture and how do you fit in? Don't get bogged down in a negative spiral but be mindful of how you fit into the bigger picture.

A culture of self-compassion that acknowledges feelings can improve mental well-being. Providing time and space in the workplace for people to reflect and practise self-compassion can boost the team's overall mood, increase motivation, and have an overall positive effect on workplace morale. When we are supported, we tend to show this same compassion to ourselves and others.

TEAM ACTIVITY

How to prepare:

Review [Cultivating Self-Compassion](#) in our Together in Wellness Planner. Pay special attention to the following tips for [Nourishing Growth](#):

Practising self-compassion is a skill that takes time to develop. Here are some ideas on how to start today:



You don't need
to be perfect
to make a
difference!

Embrace the moment

Allow the now to happen: be consciously present in the moment, without judgement. Be aware of what is happening to your mind, body, and emotions, and truly embrace the moment. Then, when the moment has passed, reflect upon it, learn, and move on.

Be great-full

Be grateful for your greatness! When you focus on who you are and what you have, you will discover great things. It doesn't matter if it's something big or small, what matters is to recognize what's special about yourself and appreciate your strengths. You are full of greatness, so take time to celebrate it.

Let go and grow

We all make mistakes—it's what makes us human. Reframe challenges as opportunities for growth. What did you learn and what will you do differently? Give yourself permission to make mistakes so you can learn from them and do better next time.

How to include your team:

1. Distribute copies of [Cultivating Self-Compassion](#) and the [Let It Go, Let it Grow activity](#) prior to or during the meeting.
2. Provide the team time to review the materials.
3. Next, identify a stressful situation in the workplace. Consider a small but persistent stressor, a short-term, big stressor, or anything in between. Part of identifying a situation is to acknowledge that it's stressful and uncomfortable.
4. Now that you have identified and acknowledged a stressful situation, recognize that no one is alone and that some of your colleagues are experiencing the same struggles. This is part of the acceptance stage.

How to continue:

Encourage your team to take time to practise self-compassion, both as individuals and as a team. Remember to role model these skills and actively practise your own self-compassion. Revisit this activity whenever there is a stressful situation affecting the workplace.

Self-compassion may not happen overnight but is a skill that can be learned overtime.

How to debrief:

After the team has a chance to complete the Let it Go, Let it Grow activity, facilitate a conversation around what they noticed. Consider the following questions and remind everyone that there are no wrong answers:

- How did you feel after completing the activity?
- Did it surprise you what other people thought?
- Were there any similarities in your challenges?
- Finally, remind everyone to be kind, both to themselves, and to others. A nurturing environment enables us all to grow and thrive.



Visit TheWellnessSandbox.ca to discover more great ideas and connect with wellness champions from across Alberta.