

OBJECTIVE

To know that it is normal to experience a wide range of feelings and emotions.

To understand that we can treat ourselves with the same kindness we treat others.

To have a strategy we can use to calm and soothe ourselves when we feel a difficult emotion.

RESOURCES NEEDED

Teacher's notes, self-compassion wheel printed out onto two pieces of card – one per child, split pins, scissors, coloured pens/pencils.

INTRODUCTION

(all of this content is on the powerpoint slides)

This is suggested script which you can use alongside the power-point slides:

I want you to imagine a good friend of yours is feeling a bit upset. Perhaps they've smudged a drawing they'd spent ages working on or forgotten their line during rehearsals for the school play. What might you say to them? *(You might ask this question to the whole class or you could ask children to briefly role-play the scenario with a talking partner. Example responses might include, 'It's ok', 'don't worry', 'you can try again', 'I understand', 'it's ok to feel upset', 'I'm here for you', 'it wasn't your fault', 'we all feel like this sometimes', 'this happens to everybody', 'I'll help you'.)*

Imagine a younger child is upset at playtime because they don't have anyone to play with. You go over to help them; what tone of voice do you use? *(Kind, gentle, reassuring, comforting.)*

What about if a pet is ill or afraid, how do you treat them? *(Be gentle with them, use kind hands and a soft voice.)*

When people or animals that you care about are sad or worried you are kind to them. It's not just others you can be kind to, it is important to be kind to yourself too.

People who are kind to themselves:

- Feel happier more of the time
- Bounce back quicker when they have a bit of a wobble (as everyone does sometimes)
- Feel confident in themselves

Today, we are going to think about how you can be kind to yourself when you are feeling a difficult feeling. This can really help you to feel calmer. The good news is that you know how to be kind to others when they are having a difficult time, so you know how to be kind to yourself too!

CONTINUED...

First of all, it's important to know that every single human being on this planet (and possibly all beings on all planets!) experiences lots of different feelings. Sometimes we feel happy, sometimes we feel sad, sometimes we feel worried, sometimes we feel joy, sometimes we feel peaceful, sometimes we feel excited... and a whole lot of other emotions too. This is completely normal. It is a part of being human (and maybe a part of being non-human too, who knows!) Often, we can feel a whole rainbow of different emotions all in one day.

So all of us experience emotions that can feel difficult... like sadness, frustration, worry, anger and disappointment. *(You could give a light personal e.g. Just this morning, I was in a rush and I couldn't find my keys and I felt a bit cross and frustrated. Or yesterday, I made a cake and it sank and I felt disappointed!)*

We're going to look at one strategy you can use to be kind to yourself when you are feeling a difficult feeling. This strategy can help you to feel calmer again. Let's imagine a very common difficult feeling: frustration. Imagine that you are stuck with something you are working on – it might be building a lego castle, solving a maths problem or drawing a picture – you keep trying but you just don't seem to be able to get it quite 'right' and you are starting to feel a bit frustrated. Has anyone ever felt frustrated? You feel that tightness in your muscles, maybe your body feels a bit warmer and your heart rate goes up.

Sometimes when we get frustrated over something small, that feeling can get bigger and bigger. In our minds, things can spiral and seem to get worse and worse. We can start to have thoughts like: 'I can't do it!', 'I'm rubbish', 'I'll never get it right'. None of this is true, it just feels like it is in the moment. We can start to feel more and more cross, angry or sad. (Sometimes we can forget what caused it in the first place!)

BUT, there is another way. Instead of letting it spiral, you can stop at the very first step and be a good friend to yourself. You can just notice the feeling of frustration and recognise 'oh this is a difficult feeling'. You can remind yourself, 'it's normal to feel like this sometimes'. Then you can use kind words and be gentle with yourself. When you feel a bit calmer, you can see things more clearly and decide what to do next.

So, we're going to learn a strategy that can help you avoid getting into that negative spiral. There are 3 steps. We're going to try it now. So, I want you to imagine you are feeling frustrated... close your eyes if it helps.

CONTINUED...

The first step is Chill

This step is all about relaxing your body. You can imagine you are chilling out on a lovely sunny day. As the sun shines down on you can feel its warmth on your skin. You feel your body relax. Feel all of your muscles soften. Let go of any tightness or tension in your body. Feel soft like a marshmallow.

The next step is Chat

Speak kindly to yourself as you would speak to a good friend. Be gentle and understanding. (You can do this in your head or quietly to yourself). You could say, 'It's ok', 'you're doing great', 'I'm here for you', 'don't worry'. Let your face relax and feel how these kind words soothe you. You might even find that you are softly smiling! You could also give yourself a gentle hug if that feels comforting.

And the final step is Choose

You can choose what to do next. You might choose to try again, ask for help, take a break or try something different. It's up to you! Take some calm breaths as you choose. (You can always go back and do the first two steps again.)

When you are ready, give yourself a smile, tell yourself well done for taking time to show yourself kindness.

When you feel wound up and cross or frustrated, pausing to be kind to yourself can really help. **Remember:** when things feel challenging: **chill, chat, choose!**

ACTIVITY

Children to cut out, colour and put together their own self-compassion wheel. They can add colours, drawings and words that they think might help at each stage. You could re-read the 3 stages above whilst they are working to give them ideas.

PLENARY

Explain: You can use this strategy whenever you feel a difficult feeling, even if it's something quite small.

When do you think you might use this strategy?

Remember, at any point, you can choose to talk to somebody about how you feel and ask for help if you need it.

EXTENSION

Children can keep their wheels in their drawers to use when they need them or you might like to put them on display.

Display the **3 steps** and prompts on the wall.

Use our **guided kindness meditations** regularly.

Model using the strategy yourself.

When you read books in which a character is feeling frustrated, cross or upset, ask the children what advice they would give the character about how to be kind to themselves. You could hot-seat one child as the character and ask the rest of the class to give them advice, role-play conversations or ask the children to write a letter to the character.