Self-Compassion for Stress Resilience, May 2025

3 mindfulness and self-compassion tools:

1. Grounding
What are we doing? Creating a mindful pause, stepping out of autopilot, shutting off the motor for a second, moving from reacting to responding.
How? Bringing our awareness into the present moment (rather than thoughts of the future or past) by noticing some part of our physical experience. E.g., "where are my feet?" noticing sensations where our feet are touching the ground. Or letting the breath be a support by noticing sensations of several cycles of breathing.

2. What would I tell a friend or co-worker?
What are we doing? Shifting out of 100% self-blame by connecting with our care and compassion system, something we naturally do with friends or supporting a co-worker. Getting a broader, more balanced view of the situation.
How? Imagine a good friend or co-worker came to you with the same situation that you experienced, saying they felt bad about how it went down, and about their part in the situation. How would you respond to this person? Can you respond to yourself in a similar way? See the sample phrases, below.

3. Name It to Tame It
What are we doing? Connecting with practices to feel less overwhelmed by the intensity of an emotional experience.
How? In the midst of challenging emotions, we can feel confused or overwhelmed by what's happening inside ourselves. Grounding can be a great way to stabilize (see above). Then, if it feels okay, bring in the question, "what am I feeling right now?" You can try out some different possibilities: is it frustration, sadness, fear, grief? When one of those feels right, you can just stay there, validate that this is what you're feeling like you would for a friend, keeping connected to the ground and/or breath. No need to go further. Often, simply naming and validating what is going on will shift our experience. If you'd like to explore further and it feels okay, you can locate where you notice these sensations in your body. We call that **feel it to heal it**. Staying with these body sensations with our compassionate awareness, staying connected to ground and/or breath.

Free, downloadable mindfulness and self-compassion recordings:
www.CenterForMSC.org/pages/meditations-and-practices
www.Self-Compassion.org/self-compassion-practices
www.ChrisGermer.com/meditations

Classes, books, websites:
www.BHCore.org – Behavioral Health Crisis Outreach Response and Education
www.CenterForMSC.org – Center for MSC worldwide
ccfwb.uw.edu – U of WA department with self-compassion classes
The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook, by Neff and Germer
www.JoelGrow.com

Sample Reflective Phrases for "What would I tell a friend or co-worker?"
These reflections help build a more supportive internal relationship, enabling you to maintain both professional excellence and personal wellbeing in this challenging and vital work.

Instead of Self-Criticism:

- "I should have known better"
- "Anyone else would have handled this better"
- "I'm not cut out for this"
- "I failed them"

Try Collegial Support

- "This was a complex situation with no clear answers"
- "We all face moments that challenge us"
- "You brought your full presence and skill to this moment"
- "You're learning and growing from each experience"

Specific Applications

After Difficult Calls

- "Just like I'd tell a colleague, sometimes we can do everything right and still have challenging outcomes"
- "This work affects all of us - it's okay to be moved by it"
- "You showed up with presence and care, that matters"

When Feeling Overwhelmed

- "Everyone in this field has moments of feeling overwhelmed"
- "Taking care of yourself helps you serve others"
- "It's wise to acknowledge when you need support"

After Tough Decisions

- "You made the best decision you could with the information you had"
- "These situations are complex - there's rarely a perfect solution"
- "Your intention to help was clear, even when the path wasn't"

Daily Integration

- Practice this reflection after difficult calls
- Use it during shift debriefs
- Apply it while documenting challenging cases
- Incorporate it into your end-of-shift routine

Remember

- Self-compassion strengthens resilience
- Supporting yourself enhances your capacity to serve
- We're all human, doing challenging work
- The wisdom you offer others applies to you, too
- Treating yourself with understanding benefits everyone

Signs of Integration and self-compassion

- Noticing self-criticism more quickly
- Responding to yourself with more understanding
- Feeling more connected to colleagues
- Increased emotional resilience
- More sustainable energy for the work
- Better ability to process difficult calls