

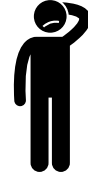
Session Recap

It's common to experience thoughts that are self-critical. **Self criticism** includes **negative self-talk**, **holding ourselves to unrealistic expectations**, and **self-punishing talk**.

Reasons Why We Might Become Self-Critical



To **hold ourselves to high standards** and push ourselves to succeed



To **punish ourselves** when we feel we've made a mistake or failed

Research clearly shows that self-criticism as a whole is **not helpful** in doing better or achieving more. In fact, self-criticism **negatively impacts** our ability to progress toward our goals.

Approaching Self-Criticism with Self-Compassion and a Growth Mindset

Self-Compassion

3 components of self-compassion:

Mindfulness:
Observing with acceptance and without judgement



Self-Kindness:
Treating ourselves as we would treat a loved one



Common Humanity:
Recognizing that suffering/failure are part of being human



Growth Mindset



Fixed Mindset

The belief that our cognitive attributes/abilities are **fixed** and **cannot be changed**



Growth Mindset

The belief that our cognitive attributes/abilities can be **developed through learning**

Self-Compassion and Mindfulness

Mindfulness

- Awareness of present moment
- On purpose
- With nonjudgmental acceptance



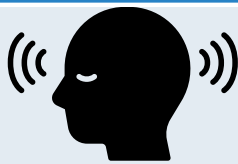
Self-Compassion

- Mindfulness helps us become **aware of and accepting/understanding towards the voice of self-criticism**
- It also helps us **accept** our **flaws, mistakes, and self-critical thoughts**



Growth Mindset and Mindfulness

Mindfulness



Growth Mindset



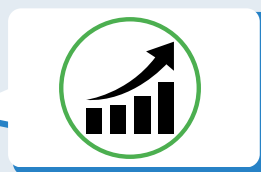
failure

=



learning experience

Mindfulness is a **necessary skill** to be able to engage with a growth mindset, allowing us to see failure as a **learning experience**



Mindfulness reminds us **not to judge ourselves** as inadequate when we've failed, but rather, to accept that we're **learning and growing**

Using Mindfulness to Be More Self-Compassionate

STEP 1

Become **aware** of the self-critical thoughts we're having



STEP 2

Observe our self-critical thoughts without judgment and with acceptance



STEP 3

Turn our attention to **kinder intentions and thoughts**



When something goes wrong, we often react in one of three ways:

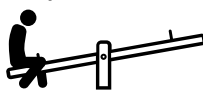
SELF-CRITICIZING

Being self-critical



SELF-ISOLATING

Isolating ourselves or avoiding the problem



SELF-ABSORPTION

Getting caught up in our thoughts/emotions and feeling stuck



MINDFULNESS

SELF-COMPASSION + GROWTH MINDSET

Showing ourselves **kindness** and being **willing to learn**

"I can learn from my mistake"

Recognize our **common humanity** and **seeking support**

"Everyone has bad days. I'm not the only one with this problem."

Reframing our thoughts to be more balanced and goal-oriented

"Maybe I didn't perform as well as I wanted to, but I can focus on what I can control for next time."

! Self-compassion is **not** about letting ourselves off the hook or holding ourselves to lower standards. In fact, self-compassion **increases our sense of self-worth**, allowing us to **face our shortcomings more effectively!**

Home Practice Instructions & Log



Informal mindfulness

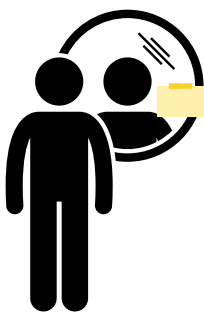
Practice mindfulness **informally** on at least **4 additional days over the next week, as much as possible each day**, to make for a total of 5 days of practice (including the in-session practice). This can be any combination of the informal practices we've learned up until this point, but we'd like you to pay specific attention to the strategies taught in Session 4 (see instructions below):

1 Daily Loving-Kindness

Instructions: Place a sticker on a mirror that you look at every day (ideally one that you look at first thing in the morning). When you look at yourself in this mirror, and whether out loud or in your head, **share a warm, caring statement directed towards yourself** (using "I" or "you" statements – whichever you prefer).

Example statements:

*You're doing okay
You can do it
Hang in there
You are enough
I forgive myself for my mistakes
I am smart, confident, and capable
I am safe, loved, and cared for*



Remember:

- Some people find this really uncomfortable – even if you do, that's not a bad thing!
- Try doing this and noticing your discomfort. Try to go as far as you can in this range of statements within your comfort levels.

2 Responding to Your Inner Critic

Instructions: This activity should be done in moments when you're feeling particularly **critical towards yourself**. Remember that **you are not your thoughts**; you are capable of observing your thoughts, and for this reason, they are separate from you! Follow these 3 steps:

1

When you're having self-critical thoughts, imagine how you would respond to a friend saying those things about themselves.



2

Try to **objectify your inner critic**; that is, respond to it as though it is a person or entity that is separate from yourself to take away some of the power it has over you.



Try giving your inner critic a name! You might tell yourself, "There goes [name of inner critic], running in circles again, making me feel badly."

3

Remind yourself that your inner critic likely developed out of **difficult circumstances** (e.g., internalized societal or familial messages).

Try to approach it with kindness, care, and understanding, but keeping it in mind that what it tells you shouldn't always be believed.



3 Random Acts of Kindness

During difficult times, we may have the tendency to isolate ourselves from others. Self-compassion reminds us of our common humanity – **that we all experience suffering, and that we're all interconnected.**



Instructions: With this in mind, this week, try doing a **random act of kindness for someone**. These acts of kindness can be big or small, and the recipient does not even have to be aware of them. The key thing is that they are done **randomly** – when no one’s expecting them, and you’re not expecting anything in return. **Notice how it feels** to do this for someone else.

Remember: These acts don’t have to cost anything!

Example random acts of kindness:

- Help a sibling or roommate with chores
- Ask about a family member’s day
- Show appreciation
- Praise a co-worker or peer on their work
- Share a study guide
- Befriend someone new





4 Loving-Kindness in Conflict

When the **words** or **actions** of our loved ones lead to us feeling upset, it is easy to become caught up in a **spiral of negative thoughts and emotions**.

When this happens, **we are no longer being present in the moment**. Instead, we might fixate on why they are wrong, ruminate on the ways that they have upset us, or begin to imagine the ways that they might continue to upset us in the future, making it extremely difficult to actually be present in the relationship.

Instructions: If this happens over the next week, try to use loving-kindness to pull yourself back to the present moment. Follow these 3 steps:

<p>1</p> <p>Remember that the other person is also human and is likely to be facing their own challenges, insecurities, and pain.</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>As you’re experiencing negative thoughts and emotions around the situation, use your mindfulness to reflect on what is actually triggering you.</p> <p><u>Try asking yourself:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it the subject of the argument? • Is it the way it makes you feel or causes hurt within you? • Is it a pattern for you to experience these thoughts/emotions in moments of conflict? 	<p>3</p> <p>Use mindfulness to project kindness and care onto the other person, to deepen your understanding of why each of you is upset, and to be more accepting of what you’re feeling.</p> 
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Disclaimer: This activity is recommended in instances of mild to moderate conflict. Any form of abuse should never be tolerated or dismissed. If you are experiencing abuse and need support, the project coordinator can share a list of relevant resources upon request.

	Date	Practiced today?	Notes
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

For any questions about the project, contact Julia Petrovic, the project coordinator at student.wellness@mcgill.ca