

SELF-CARE FOR PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS



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OBJECTIVES

Discuss self-care in the context of:

- the universal human value of aspiration to happiness
- a scientific approach to healthcare

Summarize the principles of Cognitively Based Compassion Training, an empirically validated compassion training, and its benefits for self and others

SELF-CARE

"...Place the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping small children or others who may need your assistance."



Is there a training on SELF-CARE?

On what to do?

On how to do it?

That is secular and empirically validated, i.e., potentially universal, and that is also personal and can be applied to my own specific circumstances?

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek,
but a means by which we arrive at that goal

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Well-being (being well) is a skill, rather than a
state. A behavior, a process, more similar to
riding a bike or playing an instrument than to
the distant goal that we seek

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom”

Viktor E. Frankl

“Where could I possibly find the leather to cover the whole surface of the earth? But with leather just on the soles of my shoes, it’s the same as having covered the entire earth’s surface”

Shantideva (8th century AD)

Progressive Components of CBCT

1. Attentional Stability
2. Present Moment Awareness
3. Self-Compassion
4. Cultivating Impartiality
5. Gratitude & Affection
6. Empathy & Engaged Compassion

Progressive Components of CBCT

- 1. Attentional Stability**
- 2. Present Moment Awareness**
3. Self-Compassion / Self-Care
4. Cultivating Impartiality
5. Gratitude & Affection
6. Empathy & Engaged Compassion

Meditation refers to a group of self-regulation practices, derived from Buddhism but secular, *“that focus on training attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control (...)”*

Walsh & Shapiro, 2006, p. 228

Progressive Components of CBCT

1. Attentional Stability
2. Present Moment Awareness
- 3. Self-Compassion**
4. Cultivating Impartiality
5. Gratitude & Affection
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Key Self-Compassion Insights

- Universal aspiration to well-being
- Universal suffering

Coming, in part, from our own limitations, which we see with kindness and acceptance: our focus on external sources of well-being and our belief in permanent conditions

- Conviction about our capacity to overcome those limitations and realize our aspiration for long-lasting well being.

Three Levels of Understanding

Understanding via words / intellect

Understanding via realization / “aha” moment

Understanding via absorption / transformation

Meaning of “Meditation”

Familiarization

Cultivation

Progressive Components of CBCT

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Compassion: sympathetic consciousness of (one's and) others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it

Merriam Webster dictionary

Training in relational competence, i.e., social skills when interacting with oneself and others?

Compassion from others, or social support, protects us from disease and even death.

Remarkably, recent psychophysiological evidence suggests that social support is most beneficial in turn for individuals high in compassion, who are best able to take advantage of it.

Cosley et al. J of Ex Social Psychol, 2010

Benefits of compassion (for self):

‘diversion’ - worrying less about ourselves

‘comparison’ - the fact that there are always worse problems than ours

‘positive thinking’ - wishing for positive outcomes instead of entertaining negative emotions

‘connectedness’ - feeling closer to others

The Dalai Lama, Beyond Religion

“If, therefore, we seek happiness for others, we should practice compassion; and if we seek happiness for ourselves, we should also practice compassion!”

The Dalai Lama, Beyond Religion

Progressive Components of CBCT

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6. **Empathy & Engaged Compassion**

Empathy & Engaged Compassion

There is a skill that needs to be cultivated in order actively **ENGAGE** in compassionate actions.

E.g., we may feel compassionate for a child who is crying, but would it be a compassionate action to give him candy to make her/him happy?

The word for this skill is **DISCERNMENT**

Recent on the impact of six to eight weeks of CBCT practice on people without prior experience in meditation shows reduced immune inflammatory and emotional distress responses to psychosocial stressors (Pace et al., 2009), as well as enhancement of empathic accuracy when assigning emotions to other people's faces with changes in the neurobiology supporting it (Mascaro et al., 2013).

In addition, CBCT has shown benefits with at-risk adolescents in foster care (Reddy et al., 2013), breast cancer survivors (Dodds et al., 2015), medical students (Mascaro et al., 2016) and families and therapists of children with autism (Fernandez-Carriba et al., 2017).

I think we are looking at meditation as the next public health revolution

Dan Harris, ABC News 2015

CONCLUSIONS

Well-being is my own personal responsibility. It's however connected to others' well-being and theirs to mine

It's in the best interest of others that I take care of myself

It's in my best interest that I take care of others

My desire to do well and for others to do well is not sufficient. I need a "training"

Well-being for myself and others is a feasible goal

WHERE TO GO?

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<https://t Tibet.emory.edu/cognitively-based-compassion-training/index.html>

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