

UNIT 4

Have Compassion

Do you ever wish there was more you could do to help others? Are you ever harder on yourself than anyone else? During these unusual times, do you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by all the upsetting and unpredictable news?

You may find it difficult at times to navigate these realities. You may have friends or family members who have experienced financial hardship, lost their jobs, or become seriously ill. You also may be more exposed to racialized violence and microaggressions, or experience the volatility of social and political issues being polarized.



It's normal to experience moments of disconnection, numbness, depletion, discouragement, or frustration.

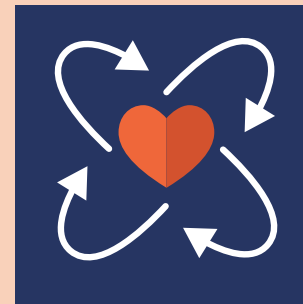
Compassion tools can help in these difficult moments, offering ways to take care of yourself and your community.

We Offer Two “Have Compassion” Tools to Help

Compassion involves a connection to others and a caring for those others. It is both the feeling of respect or concern and a motivation to help another. Practicing compassion does not mean you take on someone else's pain, but instead you are willing to bear witness and aspire to alleviate it.



Practicing compassion not only benefits others, it also can have positive benefits for the wellness of the individual practicing it.



Compassion can be directed inward towards yourself and outward toward friends, family members, strangers, and even people with whom you have conflict or negative feelings. The “Have Compassion” tools offered here are based in research and the experiences of students.



TOOL 1

Be Kind

Kindness is a foundation of compassion. You can show kindness through expressing care and sharing a genuine wish to see others be happy, joyful, or safe. While compassion is focused on responding to tough times that you or others may be experiencing, you can practice kindness anytime! Also, there are many ways to practice kindness for oneself and others.



Choose **at least one** Be Kind activity from the list below to do this week.

1. Be Kind to Oneself

Make a list of three things that you like or appreciate about yourself.



Put a quote on your wall in your room, bathroom mirror, or on your computer desktop that reminds you to be kind to yourself.

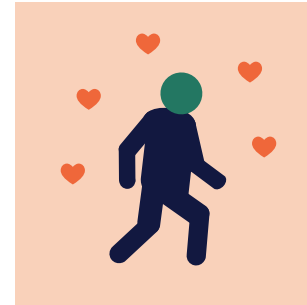
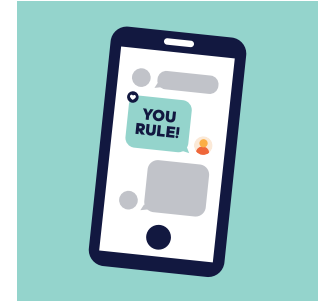
Write a wish-list for yourself. Some ideas to get started: May I be kind to myself. May I be happy. May I be patient with myself. May I know that I am enough and I am whole. May I let go of all that no longer serves me. May I care about myself, as I care for others.

Write a letter to your younger or future self with words of kindness, encouragement, and support. In your letter, share with yourself the same kindness that you would show a friend.

2. Be Kind to Others

Text a friend or family member a few things that you like or appreciate about them.

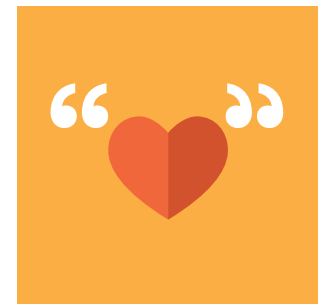
Text a wish of kindness to a friend or family member: May you have a good day. May you experience joy. May you be healthy.



Send a silent wish of kindness to someone you don't know very well or at all when in a Zoom class or walking across campus, even when others seem to have their headphones in and are looking down at their phones. Silently say: "May you have a good day. May you be kind to yourself. May you be healthy. May you experience joy."

Share a quote or little note with a friend: a quote from your favorite author, from a movie, a book, or even an inside joke that you share together.

Practice one random act of kindness for someone on your map from Tool 3 "Get Connected" and someone in your social world who wasn't included on your map (pay it forward).





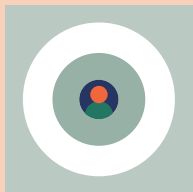
TOOL 2

Extend Compassion

When you or someone else is having a hard time, practicing compassion involves noticing, feeling care or concern, expressing a wish for wellness, and showing a readiness to help. Having compassion for yourself and others can just happen naturally without effort, and it is something that you practice, just as you might with any skill you want to cultivate or strengthen.



Choose **at least one** Extend Compassion activity from the list below to do this week.



1. Extend Compassion to Yourself

Notice when you are having a hard time, remind yourself that everyone has hard times, you are not alone. Pause and ask yourself: “What would I say to a friend in a similar situation?” Share the same kindness with yourself. Pull out Tool 3, Get Connected, and identify one person on your map you can reach out to for support.

Set an intention for yourself each morning or before you go to bed. This intention can be simple, “Today I intend to be patient with myself during my test.”



2. Extend Compassion to Others

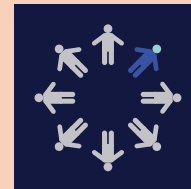
Pick one person from the Connection Map from Unit 3 who has experienced pain or struggled recently. Picture that person in your mind and imagine you are sending that person kindness and care while silently saying the following phrases:

May you be happy.

May you be free from suffering.

May you experience joy.

When you are first doing this, it may feel a little strange to say these phrases so try out different ones and see which ones feel natural to you.



Pick someone in your circle of family and friends who may be ill or struggling with a life challenge.

With that person in mind, listen and practice with the recording from Professor Gayley in the Lecture section of Canvas.

This is a guided compassion practice that allows you to extend your care and concern to them.

HAPPY

FREE

JOY

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



Did you practice kindness with yourself, friends, or family, or even people you don't know well this week? How did it go?



How might one of these practices support you this semester?



Did you practice extending compassion during tough times to yourself or others this week? How did it go?



Are you interested in building one of them into your daily routine? If so, which one and why?

