

# Seeking Grace through Self-Compassion:

Using insight on self-compassion based on God's grace to take action to foster growth, decrease shame, and increase well-being

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# Building Resilience through Grace-Filled Self-Compassion

- Participants will be able to define self-compassion practices within a biblical worldview.
- Participants will be able to apply biblical principles to self-compassion practices for personal, student, or client situations.
- Participants will engage in an experiential activity to demonstrate the potential use of self-compassion spiritual practices..

# ACA Ethics Code

- **A.4.b. Personal Values**

Counselors are aware of—and avoid imposing—their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Counselors respect the diversity of clients, trainees, and research participants and seek training in areas in which they are at risk of imposing their values onto clients, especially when the counselor's values are inconsistent with the client's goals or are discriminatory in nature.

**C.2.a. Boundaries of Competence** Counselors practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience. Whereas multicultural counseling competency is required across all counseling specialties, counselors gain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, dispositions, and skills pertinent to being a culturally competent counselor in working with a diverse client population.



## Check In

What would you say to yourself if you dropped your favorite mug and there were broken pieces and hot liquid everywhere?



## Next

What would you say to your best friend if they dropped a favorite mug and broken pieces and hot liquid scattered everywhere?



# What does your Self-Talk sound like?

## Negative

\*Judgmental

\*Critical voice  
narrating your  
identity.

## Positive

\*Loving

\*Compassionate  
voice offering  
grace.

# God Image?

## Negative

- Critical
- Judgmental



(Wilhoit, 2019)

## Positive

- Compassionate
- Full of Grace
- Loving



(Kolber, 2020)

# Easy on Myself by Emily Cook

<https://open.spotify.com/track/25tjoZf9bQux8KyxerlOb5>

As you listen to the song,  
note what stands out to you from the lyrics...





## Philippians 2: 1-4 (NKJV)

Therefore, if there is any *consolation in Christ*, if any *comfort of love*, if any *fellowship of the Spirit*, if any *affection and mercy*, <sup>2</sup> fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. <sup>3</sup> *Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

❖ Is there an experience of God's *consolation* being *comforted* by His Love?

- **Secure Attachment to God**  
(Being Seen, Soothed, Safe and Secure)

- **God Image**  
(God is loving and compassionate-Not critical or judgmental)

❖ Is there *Fellowship*?  
(Part of God's family in a *loving* community)

# Self Compassion Framework

(Neff, 2023)



Self Kindness vs Self Judgment



Common Humanity vs Isolation



Contemplative Mindfulness vs  
Overidentification

# Self Kindness vs Self Judgement

- Believe that God is gentle, kind, loving and forgiving
- See ourselves the way God sees us: made in the image of God, fearfully and wonderfully made
- Understanding and accepting the compassion of Christ who loved us, died for us and longs to forgive us and reconcile us to God
- Believe that it is supernatural: the Holy Spirit places the Love of God within the believer (Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit)
- View God as dismissive, punitive and condemning
- Evaluate moral and spiritual worth based on alignment with religious scrupulosity
- Rigid and fear driven to achieve “holiness” through our own efforts
- Shame based motivation to drive us to prove our value and worth by listening to the accuser’s lies

Carter et al., 2023; Wilhoit 2019

# Common Humanity vs Isolation

- Understand that God recognizes that we are dust
- Suffering is part of our walk with Christ to join in His sufferings and make us more Christlike
- God is relational and we are called to unity, community, and shared relationships
- Jesus demonstrated community with his disciples
- We are to bear one another's burdens
- One of God's first "not good" was that it was not good for man to be alone.
- We are more easily tempted when alone. Satan chose to tempt Jesus when he was isolated in the desert
- When the accuser alienates us from the body, it is easier to question beliefs and feel unworthy of acceptance
- Alone we are more vulnerable to pain and sorrow



# Contemplative Mindfulness vs Over-Identification

- Using the truth of scripture to take thoughts captive and renew our mind
  - Meditating on God's word
  - Abiding in the God to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and correction
  - Does not excuse sin, but provides compassionate accountability
  - Recognizes our attachment to God and seek Him to attune and regulate the pain of presence and the pain of absence
- Allowing our sins to define us rather than taking on our New Identity in Christ
  - Recognize that suffering does not equate with punishment or determining our value to God
  - We can look to other examples of people who suffered for their faith and pleased God
  - Focusing on moral failures by striving for moral perfection, leads to scrupulosity and shame

Carter et al., 2023, Wilhoit 2019

# Experiential Activity

- Write down a memory where you felt Loved by God
- Think of an Image in your Mind that represents that memory.
- Put your hands on your heart and take a deep breath in through your nose, pause, and slowly exhale.
- Notice what you are **feeling** now:
  - Emotions
  - Physical Sensations
  - Connection





## Who needs this?

- Counselors in training
- Counselors in practice
- Educators
- Clients

# Burnout

Burnout affects counselor performance, therapy outcomes, and the health and safety of clients (Davis, 2020; Gallup, 2020). An estimated 40% of mental health professionals experience burnout (O'Connor et al., 2018)

## Symptoms

- Mental or physical exhaustion
- Mental distancing from work
- Cognitive Impairment
- Emotional Impairment

(Shaufeli et al., 2023).

## The 2014 ACA code of ethics

- C.2.g. Impairment ...counselors monitor themselves for signs of impairment...and refrain from offering or providing professional services when impaired... (prevention of Impairment)



## CACREP 3.A.11

Part of Professional Counseling Orientation includes:  
self-care, self-awareness, and self-evaluation strategies for  
ethical and effective practice

- Self-compassion can be a “buffer against self-critical attitudes” leading to increased resilience and psychological well-being.

(Voon et al., 2022, p1)



## Matthew 11: 28-30

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the *unforced rhythms of grace*. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.

(the Message Version)



# Grace as a base for Self-Compassion

As we grow in our ability to feel safe and secure in God's love for us, we can extend this love toward ourselves.

(Wilhoit, 2019)



# SMART Goals

- memorize  
scripture on love  
and kindness
- accountability  
partner
- ...other  
suggestions?

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