

Guideline for Parents to Help Children and Teens Build Self-Compassion

Self-compassion consists of 3 main ingredients: 1) Self-Kindness 2) Mindfulness 3) A sense of common humanity. The following guideline is appropriate for children aged 3 and up. When age-appropriate language is used, this also holds true for teens as well as adults. Here are messages for everyone:

How to foster self-kindness:

1. Develop relaxing evening routines for better sleep.
2. Have a balanced diet and get in the habit of drinking water regularly.
3. Exercise Regularly.
4. Adopt and practice positive self-talk: "I am amazing." "I can do it." "My family loves me." "I am fun to be around."
5. Accept and become a friend of boredom. Maybe create a hush/quiet area at home to rest, play, or be alone.
6. Know when to ask for help. Being vulnerable can be surprisingly positive.
7. Learn to laugh at my own mistakes instead of judging, criticizing, evaluating, comparing myself with others.
8. Practice saying, "no" especially when I am feeling uncomfortable, scared, nervous, etc.
9. Practice gratitude and learn to appreciate everything in life—little and large things.
10. Create opportunities to practice patience like waiting in line quietly, being on hold on the phone, waiting for a friend to come over, etc.
11. When I am tired, I will take a break, sit quietly, and just be.

How to foster mindfulness:

1. Practice doing one task at a time. Learn to be in the present moment, not thinking about what happened earlier or what is going to happen in the future.
2. Practice watching my breathing- inhaling and exhaling.
3. Learn and practice yoga.
4. Slow down and pause. Imagine a traffic light: red-stop, green-go, and yellow-pause.
5. Embrace that "big feelings" are ok. I am not wrong or bad to have negative thoughts and big feelings.
6. Start collecting images, objects, words/phrases, or anything that make me feel safe, grounded or relaxed. For stance, what sight, scent, sound, taste, and touch soothes me?

How to foster a sense of common humanity:

Here are some truths that are healthy for parents to consider or check in with themselves when it comes to expectations.

1. Life consists of ups and downs.
2. Everyone experiences discomfort or suffers; I am not alone.
3. It is normal to make mistakes. No one is perfect.
4. We have control of some of the thing in our lives, but not everything.
5. Failure is expected and it doesn't mean that I am not good enough.

6. Everyone is different in his/her own way.