SOOTHE Group

Supporting Ourselves and Others Through Healing and Empowerment



Weekly Content and Objectives of the Online Compassion-Focused Therapy Intervention

Week	Content	Objectives
1 - GROUP	Introduction, goals, checklist, guidelines, and group norms	• Welcome and introduce facilitators and members; explain the expected structure of live group sessions and self-guided materials generally (e.g., learning through videos, readings, interactive exercises, handouts/worksheets, mindfulness practices, real-world practice); introduce groups rules, norms, guidelines; discuss members' right to choose their level of participation; facilitate goal discussion (e.g., asking "What brings you here?"); show members how to navigate the SOOTHE website and how to access resources.
	Define compassion	• What compassion means to you; what compassion is/is not; definition of compassion; some examples of compassion.
	Personal practice	• Highlight the importance of personal practice throughout the entire 10-weeks and how it can help us develop a more compassionate mind and self.
	Self-guided learning	• Explain the self-guided learning and how individuals can work at their own pace. • Outline what the self-guided material will cover this week (e.g., videos, handouts) and emphasise the email feature if members are stuck and need to ask a question.
	Closing practice	• Gentle closing practice to introduce mindfulness.
2 – Self-Guided	Tricky brain	• The six core principles of Compassion-Focused Therapy. • Psychoeducation on the tricky brain and how "it's not our fault." Introduce evolution and how we have evolved to fit in with certain societal standards.
	Fears, blocks and resistances	• Define FBRs, providing examples. Emphasise how we all experience them and that they are important to address and focus on, rather than ignore.
	Three types of emotion	• Introduce the three circles (threat, drive and soothe). • The imbalance between each circle and the importance of building our soothing system.



3 – GROUP	Recap	• Recap of self-guided materials and provide a summary to the group of any reflection/questions emailed. • Sharing of any other experiences.
	Mindfulness	• Mindfulness definition and basic mindfulness practice (with an example to allow for demonstration, guidance, and asking questions). • Discuss how mindfulness is a skill that is developed with practice. Mindfulness can be achieved with breathing, grounding and body awareness, body posture, facial expressions and vocal tone. Share the importance of remaining non-judgemental. • Discuss how mindfulness can be challenging for some. Draw upon previously discussed guidelines for ways to manage distress (e.g., take a break, observe/listen).
	Fears of mindfulness	• Discuss as a group, ways to manage any negative thoughts during mindfulness and notice emotional states without judgement (e.g., “This is just me experiencing anxiety because of my eating disorder”).
	Self-guided learning	• Outline what the self-guided material will cover this week (e.g., videos, handouts, mindfulness practices).
4 – Self-Guided	Safety and Safeness	• Distinguish between safety and safeness and how both are important. • Explore a calm or welcoming place.
	Three flows of compassion	• Introduce that compassion flows from self to others, others to self, and self to self. • Introduce the power of imagery and the compassionate colour exercise. • Highlight the challenges of receiving compassion often due to an underactive green circle (i.e., they don’t trust receiving compassion or think they’re deserving of it). Provide worksheet (or guided practice) where members can think of a challenge they have faced and how their ideal compassionate other would respond to them.



5 - GROUP	Recap	• Recap of self-guided materials and provide a summary to the group of any reflections/questions posted. • Sharing of any other experiences.
	Five social mentalities practice	• Introduce the five social mentalities. • Guide members through a practice that uses imagery to elicit the five social mentalities.
	Compassionate self	• Highlight how we did not choose some of the identities that we "inhabit". However, we can learn to consciously switch into new self-identities and brain patterns. One of these includes being our compassionate self. • Explore the qualities members would like to have if they were at their compassionate best (create a list). • Compassionate self as a "role" – explore the power of acting and ask members to imagine a small difficulty and how their compassionate self would respond.
	Self-guided learning	• Outline what the self-guided material will cover this week (e.g., videos, handouts).
6 – Self-Guided	Multiple emotions	• Psychoeducation on multiple emotions (e.g., anger, anxiety, sadness, joy, disgust, etc). Explore different emotions which emerge during a reflection practice which asks individuals to bring to mind a small argument with someone they care about. Highlight how each of our emotions serves a purpose, which is why we turn to them. • Guided practice which asks members to picture an argument (real or imagined; same or different to the one already used) and invite them to explore how each of their selves would respond and interact (i.e., angry self, sad self, anxious self, compassionate self; what would your angry self tell your sad self in this situation).
	Self-criticism and the Self-Critic	• Introduce self-criticism and the Self-Critic and understanding the disappointment gap. • Understand our different 'voices' or thought patterns.



		• The origins of self-criticism.
7 - GROUP	Recap	• Recap of self-guided materials and provide a summary to the group of any reflections/questions posted.
	Meeting the Self-Critic from the Compassionate Self	• Sharing of any other experiences. • Firstly, guide members through understanding how our Self-Critic and Compassionate Self function. Then, invite members through a guided practice where their Compassionate Self meets their Self-Critic (i.e., they imagine a time when they experienced self-criticism; what was their Self-Critic saying and how would their Compassionate-Self respond?). • Develop a repertoire of self-compassionate statements and behaviours to use in response to self-criticism.
	Self-guided learning	• Outline what the self-guided material will cover this week (e.g., videos, handouts, mindfulness practices) and emphasise the comment feature.
8 – Self-Guided	Shame and guilt	• Introduce shame and distinguish between shame and guilt. Then, distinguish between internal shame, external shame and humiliation. Highlight how shame causes us to disconnect from others because we tend to avoid or isolate ourselves. • Explore how compassion can help heal the wounds of shame.
9 - GROUP	Recap	• Recap of self-guided materials and provide a summary to the group of any reflections/questions posted. • Sharing of any other experiences.
	Guided practice	• Guide members through an imagery exercise where they bring to memory a challenging time they experienced shame and explore how they might experience compassionate support.
	Deepen compassion for self	• Collaboratively establish ways members can enhance their compassion for themselves. This can be done through creating flashcards together (e.g., facilitator choosing a common struggle



		or problem and members establish ways they can respond compassionately to themselves – for instance, thinking "I am ugly" and then members thinking of a self-compassionate response). Another way could be for members to come up with a list of random acts of compassion to self or others. Lastly, introduce compassionate letter writing as another form of deepening self-compassion (i.e., writing a letter from your compassionate self and leaving it on your bedside table to read each morning).
	Compassionate assertiveness	• Facilitate a discussion on ways we can ask for what we need and respond to criticism. Encourage members to engage in an exercise where they imagine a time they've struggled to say "No" to someone. Explore any FBRs and how shame impacted their ability to connect with their feelings and emotions during this time. Highlight how our communication style is not our fault, and maybe this response worked best for us in the past, but now, through a compassionate lens, we can consider how we might respond this time, keeping our feelings and emotions in mind.
10 - GROUP	Forgiveness	• What forgiveness is/is not. Define forgiveness from a compassion-focused therapy perspective. • Introduce the hurt ladder exercise where members think of what might be at the bottom of their hurt ladder (i.e., the least hurt, often unintentional – e.g., child accidentally spilling their juice on you) and work their way up, engaging in reflections around forgiveness. • Engaging in self-forgiveness and deepening self-empathy – guided practice.
	Envisioning a compassionate future and looking back	• Reflect on the CFT journey, asking members to share key points that they remember or that changed their perspective in some way. • Reflect and share feelings about the end of the journey.