

Mindfulness and Compassion



Mindfulness

Present-moment awareness

- not getting sucked into thoughts about the past or future
- Paying attention to the world around you right now

Being attuned to yourself

- noticing what you are feeling and thinking





Breathing

Breathing seems simple, but when we become stressed our breathing often becomes shallow, fast and contributes to our feelings of anxiety and stress - this is caused by the 'flight/flight/freeze' sympathetic nervous system response.

You can counteract this process by changing your breathing pattern - which helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system.

Become aware of your breathing and slow it down - take slow, deep breathes from the belly to the count of;

4 - 2 - 6

Short breathing meditation

- Feel your shoulders relax and drop as you exhale
- Stay with this practice for a while until you notice some change - don't give up after 2 breaths!
- Practice when things are going ok so, you can use this technique in more challenging times.



Noticing

Notice a few things you can;

- See
- Hear
- Feel
- Smell
- Taste

Pay attention to your environment and sensations in order to ground you into the present moment.

Dropping Anchor



Micro-breaks

<p>Pour yourself a warm cup of tea – allow your hands to hold the cup and notice the warmth in your hands</p>	<p>Have a long sip of a cold glass of water – notice the sensation of the water moving down your throat</p>	<p>Step outside – notice the clouds – are they moving fast or slow, can you see any at all?</p>	<p>Slow your breathing down – take a deep intentional breath into your belly and let it out with a sigh – notice the breath moving in and out</p>	<p>Close your eyes and imagine your happy place – what does it look like? Where were you last there? What was happening? What were all your senses noticing in that place? How did you feel?</p>
<p>Stand up and stretch – up tall, then down to your knees. Roll your shoulders, shake your arms and roll your wrists. Notice the loose sensation after relaxing these areas</p>	<p>Take a short walk – around the room, to another room. Notice your footsteps on the ground</p>	<p>Sit upright in your chair and tense your leg muscles – like you're about to stand hold that position for 30s then relax for 20s – notice the loosed muscles in your legs – repeat</p>	<p>Have a snack of something fruity. Take small slow bites – savouring the flavour of the food.</p>	<p>Jot down one thing you are truly grateful for, nothing is too small 😊</p>

Compassion as a therapeutic practice

Learning to be kind to ourselves, others, and
receiving kindness from others





Compassion focussed therapy

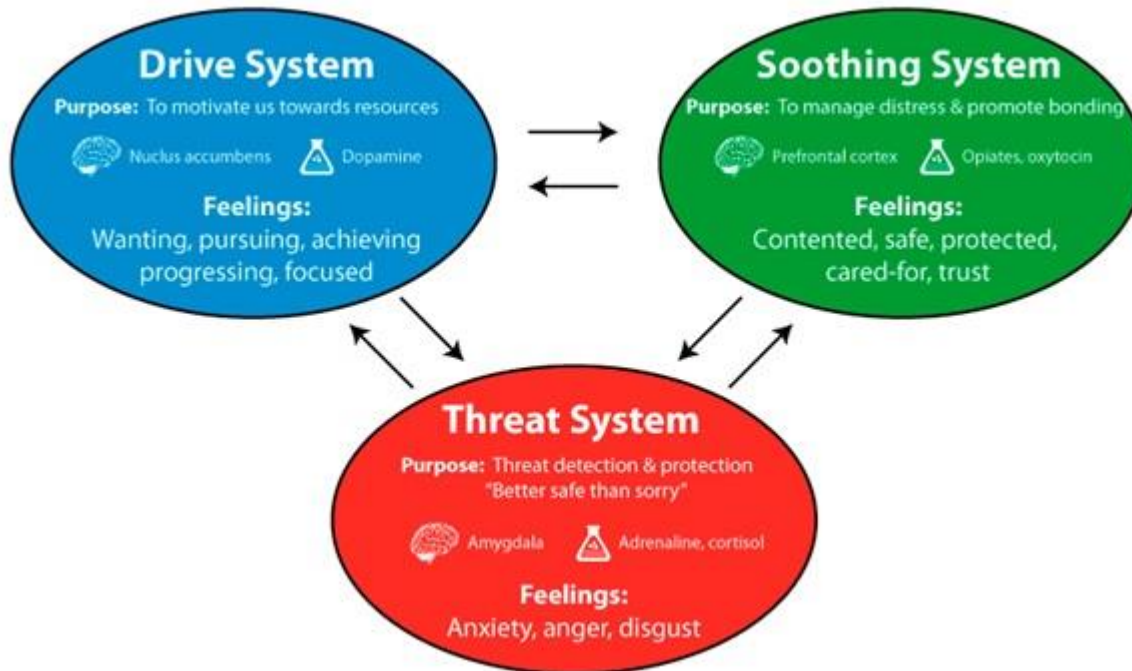
Evolutionary psychology combined with Buddhist view on the power and benefits of compassion – developed into a therapeutic practice by Paul Gilbert (2010).

- Helps us understand how anxiety functions in our body and how it has gotten out of control in our modern lives.

Tricky Brain: [Developing a Compassionate Mind - YouTube](#)

Gilbert, P. (2010). *Compassion Focussed Therapy: Distinctive Features*. Routledge, Sussex.

Three regulatory systems





Flow of compassion

- Toward self
- Toward others
- Receiving compassion from others

Self compassion

Responding to ourselves during difficult times in the same way we would respond to a good friend.





Three characteristics self-compassion

Self compassion has been developed into a therapeutic practice by Kristin Neff (2018).

1. Mindfulness vs. Over-identification
2. Common humanity vs. isolation
3. Self-kindness vs. Self-judgement

Neff, K. D., & Germer, C.K. (2018). *The mindful self-compassion workbook*.
The Guildford Press, New York.



Soothing touch

Start by returning to your **slow, calm breathing**

Now, place a hand on your heart, or belly

or give yourself a hug

or touch your own hand or leg - whatever feels comfortable

- Touch activates the parasympathetic nervous system and helps to reduce physical symptoms of stress and anxiety



Compassionate self talk

1. Acknowledge this is a moment of suffering - That's **mindfulness**

- This hurts.
- Ouch.
- This is stress showing up
- I notice I'm feeling anxious at the moment

2. Remember that suffering is a normal part of life - That's **common humanity**.

- Other people feel this way.
- I'm not alone.
- We all struggle in our lives.

3. Speak compassionately to yourself - that's **self kindness**

- May I be kind to myself now
- May I learn to accept myself as I am
- May I forgive myself
- I can get through this
- Whatever you feel comfortable saying



Strengthening your compassionate self

Connecting to your compassionate self- Think of a time when you were kind/compassionate to someone;

What was your:

- Motivation
- Thoughts
- Sensations in your body
- Actions/behaviour

Allow this image/feeling to grow inside your body and mind

Throughout your day, see if you can show up as your compassionate self.

Asking, 'What would my compassionate self do in this situation?'

A LITTLE ABOUT US



Anxiety NZ is a non-profit, registered charity established in 1983. Many changes since.



Treatment, support and education for anxiety and depression.



Our clinic is located in St Lukes, Auckland.



24 Hour National Helpline.



Multi-disciplinary team, helpline, support groups.



Full funding may apply through WINZ / Studylink.