



Treat yourself like a good friend

Self-kindness is a helpful habit to practice daily. Being kind rather than critical towards ourselves when we are suffering helps us manage overwhelming emotions.

Kindness from supportive people such as friends, family, or workers gives us strength to get through difficult situations and manage strong emotions. Sometimes our support people are not available, so we have to be kind towards ourselves. If we are feeling overwhelmed, or have let ourselves down, it can help to show understanding and kindness, instead of judging ourselves harshly.

Comforting ourselves with kindness turns the volume down on our inner "judge" or "critic" and helps us settle our negative thoughts and feelings. It isn't always natural to be kind to ourselves – it might take a lot of practice! Most of us have had a lot more practice showing kindness towards others. Self-kindness is also known as self-compassion. Scientists have done lots of research that shows practicing self-compassion creates important changes in our brain. These changes occur in the parts of the brain that regulate emotions.

COMFORT YOURSELF WITH KINDNESS

It takes practice to get into the habit of treating yourself with kindness. Try using these four strategies next time you are experiencing strong emotions.

1



Pretend you are comforting someone that you love or care about

What would you say?

2



Change the tone of your self-talk

Choose a tone that is soft, gentle, warm, soothing, or encouraging.

3



Comfort yourself

Kind physical gestures have an immediate soothing effect on our body. Place your hand over your heart. Wrap yourself in a warm blanket.

4



Memorise some self-compassionate phrases to repeat to yourself when you need them

- Today I will treat myself with kindness
- Today I comfort myself with kindness
- May I live happily
- May I live healthily
- May I live in peace



Everyone goes through suffering at times. We are all doing the best we can to get through the ups and downs of life. Remember, we all struggle at times.



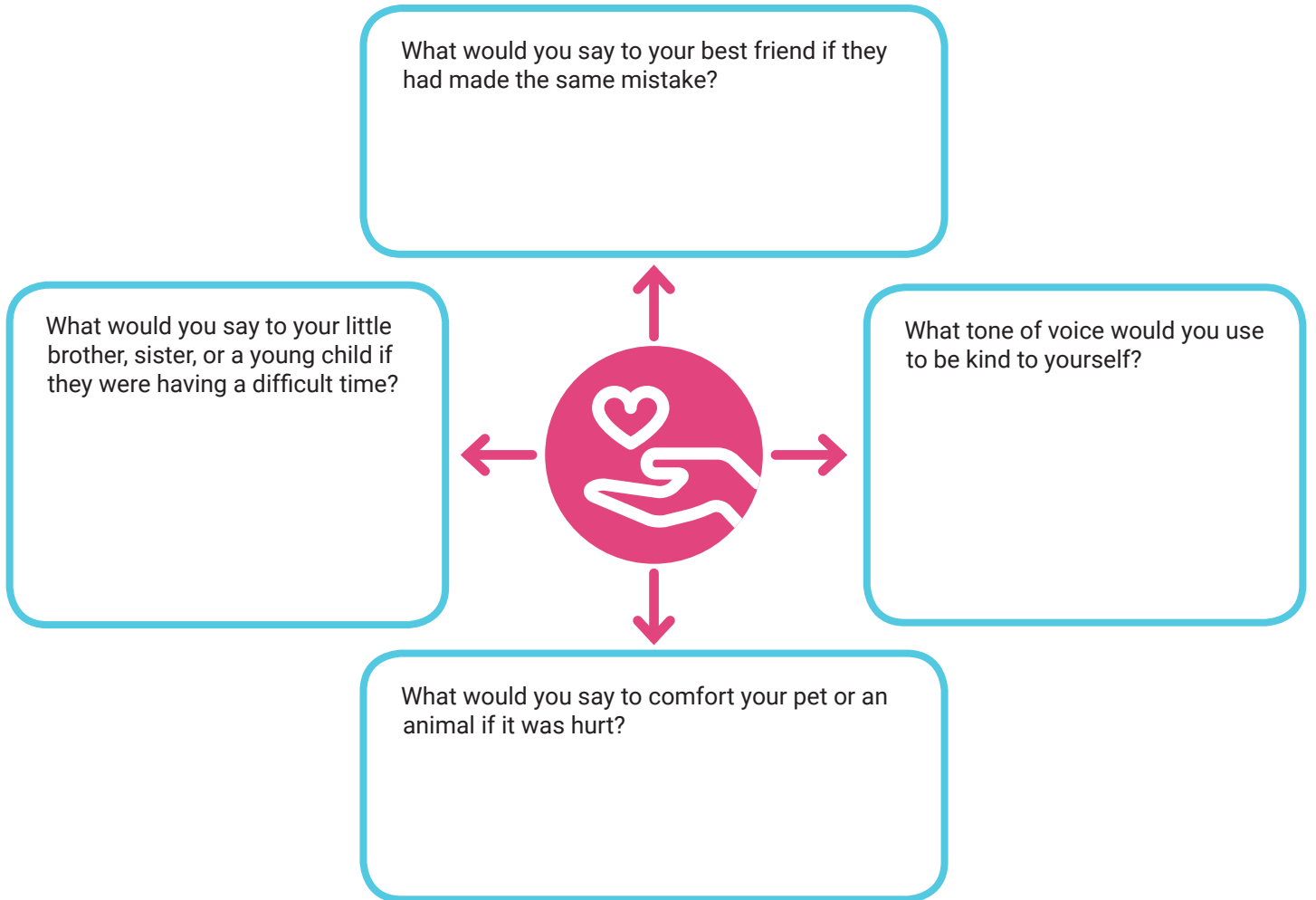
MY SELF-KINDNESS PLAN

When you notice your self-talk sounds harsh, sarcastic, critical or mean - stop and pause for a moment.

Count backwards from 10 to reset your mind.



Now observe how you are talking to yourself. Think about how you would feel if someone else spoke to you in this way. You would probably feel terrible! Brainstorm different ways to talk to yourself kindly using the Self-Kindness Plan.



Try to imagine what it would look like if you were treating yourself with kindness. Notice what emotions show up when you treat yourself with compassion.



PRACTICE AND REFLECT

Practice sharing a self-compassionate sentence or word with yourself every day this week. Every time you are kind to yourself, tick it off in the calendar. If you notice that difficult emotions appear, remember to use one of your ERIC skills such as mindful breathing, a mindful lean, or 5-4-3-2-1.

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