Meditation, Self-Compassion and the Parasympathetic Nervous System

Exploring the benefits

Rev. Mia Baumgartner, MDiv, MNPL, BCC
SCCA Staff Chaplain
Self-Compassion Exercise

May you / May we/ May I/ May you:

- be safe
- be peaceful
- be healthy
- live with ease
Benefits of Self-Compassion

- Increase in Self-Compassion has been linked
  - Decrease in anxiousness and depression
  - Decrease in burnout and exhaustion
  - Increase in expression of compassion to others, forgiveness

Kristin Neff, self-compassion.org
http://self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are/
Self Kindness

I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don’t like. (2)

When I’m going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need. (6)

Self Judgment

I’m disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies. (11)

I’m intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don’t like (12)
Common Humanity

When I’m going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need (6)

When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people (10)

Isolation

When I’m feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am. (4)

When I fail at something that’s important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure (8)
Mindfulness

When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation. (3)

When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance. (7)

Over-identification

When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy (1)

When I’m feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that’s wrong. (9)
# Autonomic nervous system (ANS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sympathetic (SNS)</th>
<th>Parasympathetic (PNS)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prepares the body for intense physical activity</td>
<td>relaxes the body, inhibits or slows many high energy functions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stress, Fight, flight or freeze response</td>
<td>Rest and digest</td>
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<tr>
<td>prepares the organism to act upon its environment</td>
<td>prepares the organism to act upon itself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speeds up the heartbeat, increases blood pressure, suppresses immune system</td>
<td>Slows down heartbeat, lowers blood pressure, activates immune system</td>
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Relaxation and Meditation can engage the Parasympathetic (PNS)

- Breathing – Deep, slow breaths
- Deliberately relax the body
  - Tongue, Eyes, Diaphragm
  - Visualization of a safe, relaxing, happy place
  - Grounding imagery
  - Physical
- Heart Math (heartmath.org) method and biofeedback (Breathe + positive feeling)
Questions/Discussion
Self - Compassion

- [http://www.self-compassion.org/scales-for-researchers.html](http://www.self-compassion.org/scales-for-researchers.html)
- Kristin Neff, [www.Self-Compassion.org](http://www.Self-Compassion.org)