KINDNESS CURRICULUM

Practicing self-kindness — Compassion

EXPLANATION:

When our friends are having a hard time, feeling bad about themselves and sad, we reassure them. We work very hard at making our friends feel good and positive – we are kind and compassionate to them! But how many of us are good at being compassionate to ourselves? This activity is an opportunity for students to practice self-compassion, self-care and positive talk.



YEAR LEVELS: Years 4–6

STUDENT GROUPING: Group discussion and small group activity

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 40–60 mins

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

Health and Physical Education: Sequence of content F-10

Strand: Personal, social and community health

Making healthy and safe choices

- Identify and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing

Learning Continuum of Personal and Social Capability

Social awareness

- Appreciate diverse perspectives: discuss the value of diverse perspectives and describe a point of view that is different from their own
- Understand relationships: Identify the differences between positive and negative relationships and ways of managing these

Social management element

- Work collaboratively: Contribute to groups and teams, suggesting improvements in methods used for group investigations and projects

SCOPE OF TASK:

It is universally agreed that people want to lead a happy life. Compassion is one of the main tools for achieving happiness especially for the self. Self-compassion is defined as the practice of engaging with an inner voice of support, understanding, and care for oneself and treating yourself like you would a good friend.
Respected and well-known self-compassion researcher Kristin Neff describes self-compassion as involving:

- **Self-kindness**: we are gentle and understanding with ourselves rather than harshly critical and judgmental.
- **Recognition of our common humanity**: we feel connected with others in the experience of life rather than isolated and alienated by our suffering.
- **Mindfulness:** we hold our experience in balanced awareness, rather than ignoring our pain or exaggerating it. (https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/)

1. Inform the students' that the activity is about self-compassion. Open the conversation with brainstorming and establishing what is self-compassion and write students ideas on a whiteboard. Questions to lead a conversation about self-compassion could include:
    - What is self-compassion?
    - What is self-kindness?
    - Why should we be kind and compassionate to ourselves?
    - How do we practice self-compassion?

2. Discuss with students about times when they did not have self-confidence and felt negative about themselves, doubting their worth. Ask students to identify times when they lack self-confidence. In many instances these times will be connected to social occasions and will involve peer responses to the individual.

3. Ask students what they typically do in their mind when they feel negative about themselves? How do they speak to themselves? Write some of these examples on the whiteboard.
4. Discuss with students other (more positive) ways that they can respond internally when they are feeling negative thoughts? How can they turn around the negative self-talk to show themselves more self-kindness and compassion?
5. Once students have considered how to talk to themselves compassionately introduce the activity:
    - Break the students into small groups of 4 – 6 people
    - Put a pack of cards in the middle of the group writing side down

- Inform the students that each student will pick up a card and read the scenario to the group
- It is their job to suggest a way of practicing self-kindness by proposing positive self-talk that can be used to turn around the scenario
- Everyone in the group has a turn to be kind to themselves

6. After each student has had taken a turn in their small groups bring the group back together to reflect:

   - Is it hard to be kind to yourself – did it come naturally? Why/Why not?
   - What do you have to do to think differently?
   - Why is self-kindness so hard?
   - Why is self-compassion so important?
   - How can we all help each other to practice compassion to ourselves?

RESOURCES:

- Scenario cards below or these can be made to match specific contexts
- Whiteboard

I walked by a group of girls at school and they laughed at me.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

My teacher says that the principal wants to see me in her office.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

I suck at basketball and have to play today.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

I have not been invited to the movies with everyone else.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

I have no friends!

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

I can't read as well as everyone else.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

CREATED BY KAPLAN

Nothing I do is good.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

My family is NOT normal.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

I am not the best at anything.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

I am too tall!

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

CREATED BY KAPLAN

I am just not as clever as everyone else.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

I look so average compared to my friends.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

The boys were whispering when I walked past.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

Compared to everyone else I am dumb.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?

CREATED BY KAPLAN

I am not as funny as my friends.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?



I am so NOT popular!

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?



I don't have a smart phone.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?



I have horrible teeth and don't want anyone to see them.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?



I struggle with talking to a group of people.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?



I am afraid of everything.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?



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I have no confidence.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?



I can't play video games like everyone else.

KIND RESPONSE TO SELF?



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