

# Self Compassion

Marian Mainland, C. Psych. Assoc., Insight Psychology on Norfolk

October 19, 2019 LDA Conference

## Scenarios

- you were upset with your son when he got a D on a test
- you gave bad advice to your daughter about how to deal with a mean girl in her class
- you promised to attend your son's soccer game, but you had to stay at work
- you totally lost it with you daughter's bad behaviour

A voice in your head keeps telling you that you are a terrible parent. There is an alternative to harsh self-talk.

**What is Self-Compassion?** A daily intention to try to shift our inner dialogue and feelings about ourselves to a more gentle, warm and loving approach.

## *How do we build a kinder relationships with ourselves?*

- remember that you "cannot pour from an empty cup"; you can't be an effective parent if you are constantly telling yourself that you don't measure up; your child learn from you and how you deal with your frustration.
- practice self-love; what would you say to a friend if you heard them saying the things you are saying?
- talk to yourself in the same tone that you would talk to a friend and say the same things to yourself: "don't be so hard on yourself", "no-one is a perfect parent", "you are doing a great job"
- develop a plan with a spouse or friend about how they can support you when "you have had enough"
- maintain friendships with others who also have young children
- don't ignore your feelings but challenge your negative statements-other parents feel the same, this does not mean that I am a bad parent
- take regular compassion breaks-make a list of things you can do to relax after the crisis is over
- put your hand on your heart or give yourself a hug as you say positive things to yourself, visualize someone you trust saying positive things to you (maybe your own mother's voice)
- forget about the "shoulds"

## ***How do we build a kinder relationship with our children?***

- try to avoid multi-tasking and stop and listen to what your child is saying
- give it a name “Wow, you must feel hurt by that”
- use soothing words and encourage them to take some breaths and put their hand on their heart
- don’t give advice right away, just listen and acknowledge their feelings
- if there are already in the red zone, just comfort and help them breath; review and give advice only *after* they calm down; remember that angry and meltdowns are usually related to fear and anxiety
- understand that they are lacking in the *skills* they need to calm themselves down -; Dr. Ross Greene (Collaborative Problem-Solving, The Explosive Child) Children learn when they *can* and children behave when they have the *skills* to do so; What are their lagging skills and what are the triggers to their meltdowns
- use consistent rewards and consequences and be clear, firm and consistent
- make sure they understand what you are asking and repeat it several times or write it down
- speak slowly and calmly and allow them time to process, keep language simple
- stand still so they know they have your attention, move to a quiet location
- apologize to them if you lost your cool and talk about how you made a mistake and you are sorry
- share stories or play games to integrate some problem-solving strategies; talk about times in your childhood when you had similar challenges
- focus on praise and what you like about them as a person