

Compassion and HIV

Resource List

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Websites

Compassionate Mind Foundation (www.compassionatemind.co.uk)

On this website, you'll find various essays and details of other sites that look at different aspects of compassion. You'll also find a lot of material that you can use for meditation on compassion.

Mind & Life Institute (www.mindandlife.org)

The Dalai Lama has formed relationships with Western scientists to develop a more compassionate way of living. More information on this can be found on this website.

Centre for Compassion and Altruism Research (<http://ccare.stanford.edu/>)

Set up by Prof James Doty for International compassion work and advancement.

Self-Compassion (www.self-compassion.org)

Dr Kristin Neff is one of the leading researchers into self-compassion. There are also many websites you can explore if you go to the website section on the Compassionate Mind Foundation site.

Books

Mindful Compassion: How the Science of Compassion Can Help You Understand Your Emotions, Live in the Present, and Connect Deeply with Others. (Gilbert & Choden)

www.amazon.co.uk/Mindful-Compassion-Science-Understand-Emotions/dp/1626250618

The Power of Self-Compassion: Using Compassion-Focused Therapy to End Self-Criticism and Build Self-Confidence (Welford & Gilbert)

www.amazon.co.uk/Power-Self-Compassion-Compassion-Focused-Self-Criticism-Self-Confidence/dp/1572249838

An Open-Hearted Life: Transformative Methods for Compassionate Living

www.amazon.co.uk/Open-Hearted-Life-Transformative-Compassionate-Psychologist-ebook/dp/B00VTUFFYQ

Full Catastrophe Living (John Kabat Zinn)

www.amazon.co.uk/Full-Catastrophe-Living-Revised-mindfulness/dp/0749958413

The Self-Compassion App

With over 70 exercises and practices, and 28 guided sessions, research has found that using the app leads to significant reductions in stress, anxiety, and self-criticism, as well as increases in self-compassion and well-being.

Download here:

<https://balancedminds.com/the-self-compassion-app/>

Alternatively search for the app on your phone: App Store or Google Play

Free Mindfulness Apps

Here is a link to 5 free Mindfulness Apps

<https://www.mindful.org/free-mindfulness-apps-worthy-of-your-attention/>

Audio Guided Practices

Affectionate Breathing: http://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/affectionatebreathing_cleaned.mp3

Soothing Rhythm Breathing: <https://soundcloud.com/compassionatemind/soothing-rhythm-breathing-practices/s-IA0g8?in=compassionatemind/sets/compassionate-minds>

Soothing Rhythm Breathing: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS4pA17JMUw

Kindness to Self: www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9JGYstewCE

Self-Compassion Break: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ot-WJStYFAM

Please see the following websites for a list of audio recordings:

<https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#guided-meditations>

<https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/resource/audio>

<https://balancedminds.com/compassion-focused-therapy-audio/>

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Exercise: Soothing Breathing

Sit comfortably, place both feet flat on the floor about shoulder's width apart and rest your hands on your legs. Close your eyes, or look down at the floor if you prefer. Allow yourself to have a gentle facial expression, maybe a slight smile.

Now gently focus on your breathing. As you breathe try to allow the air to come down into your diaphragm (that's just at the bottom of your ribcage in the upside down 'V'). Feel your diaphragm, the area underneath your ribs, move as you breathe in and out.

Just notice your breathing and play and experiment with your breathing. Breathe a little faster or a little slower until you find a breathing pattern that, for you, seems to be your own soothing, comforting rhythm. It's like you're checking in or linking up, with the rhythm within your body that is soothing and calming to you.

What you'll usually find is that your breathing is slightly slower and deeper than normal. The in-breath is about 3 seconds ... hold ... and then take 3 seconds for the out-breath.

Ensure that the breaths in and out are smooth and even. So, for example, notice if you're breathing in a bit too quickly or collapsing the out breath.

Now you can spend a little while – for as long as you wish - just focusing on your breathing, just noticing the breath coming down into the diaphragm, your diaphragm lifting and then the air moving out, through your nose.

Sometimes it's useful to focus on the point just inside the nose where the air enters. So, in through your nose and out from your mouth, in through your nose and out through your mouth

Just focus on that for a while.....

Now you can just 'ground yourself for a moment'. So turn your attention to your body. Sensing the weight of your body resting on the chair and the floor underneath you.... Allowing yourself to feel held and supported.....coming to rest...in the present moment....

Remember that it's perfectly ok for your mind to wander. Simply notice it happening with curiosity about where your mind has gone and then gently guide your attention back to an awareness of your body as best as you can.

Now just sense the flow of air coming in and out of your nostrils....just gently observing....no need to change anything.....just allowing things to be as they are.

When you feel ready, slowly open your eyes and bring yourself back to the present moment. Sometimes it helps if you just have a gentle stretch and a deep breath to prepare you to carry on with your day.

Objects

If you're find focusing on your breathing a bit difficult (and some people do) then allow your attention to rest on an object. Find something you might like to hold such as a smooth stone or a soft ball – something that gives you the feeling of gentleness and calmness.

Now as you just focus on your breathing also focus on your object that you're holding, noticing how it feels in your hand, resting your gaze on your object as best as you can....What does it feel like – is it smooth, rough, soft, hard?

What does it look like – what colours does it have, is it big or small? Does it have a smell? Does it make a noise? Does it have a taste? Stay with the sensations of holding it in your hand.

When you feel ready, slowly open your eyes and bring yourself back to the present moment.

Sometimes it helps if you just have a gentle stretch and a deep breath to prepare you to carry on with your day.

Exercise: Body Scan

Focus on your breathing until you click into, find, sense, or feel that rhythm that is most comfortable and soothing for you. If that seems hard, don't worry, just breathe as comfortably as you are able to.

When you've done that, focus on your legs. Notice how they feel for a moment.

Now imagine that all the tension in your legs is flowing down through your legs and down into the floor and away. Let it go on its way. So, as you breathe in, just note any tension and then, as you breathe out, imagine the tension flowing down through your legs and out through the floor.

Imagine your legs feeling grateful that they can let go. Sometimes people find that if they slightly tense their muscles as they breathe in, and then relax as they breathe out, this can be helpful. Just spend as much time as you find is helpful to you exploring the idea of letting that tension go with kindness.....

Now focus on your body and imagine the tension in your body from your shoulders down to your stomach and again, as you breathe out, just imagine the tension leaving this part of your body, going down through your legs, down through the floor and away.

Again, if it helps, just gently tense your stomach and back muscles as you breathe in and then relax them as you breathe out. In a way it can be like imagining emptying a vessel of the tension that's now running through your legs and down through the floor..... Your body is grateful and you feel kind to it.

Now focus on the tips of your fingers, through your wrists, your arms and elbows and shoulders.

Imagine that the tension that was there can be released - can be let go of. So, gently let the tension go so that it can run off down through your body, down through your legs and out through the floor and away.....

Now imagine the tension that sits in your head, neck and forehead.

The tension has been your alert system in action and it would like to be released now - to take a rest. So again, as you breathe out, just imagine it running down through your body, down through your legs and out down through the floor.....

Now you can focus on your whole body. Each time you breathe out. Just imagine your body becoming less tense..... Okay, Just spend a minute or so doing this.

When you are ready, finish this exercise by taking a deeper breath, moving the body around a little and noting how it feels and how grateful it is to you for spending time to try to let go of the tension.

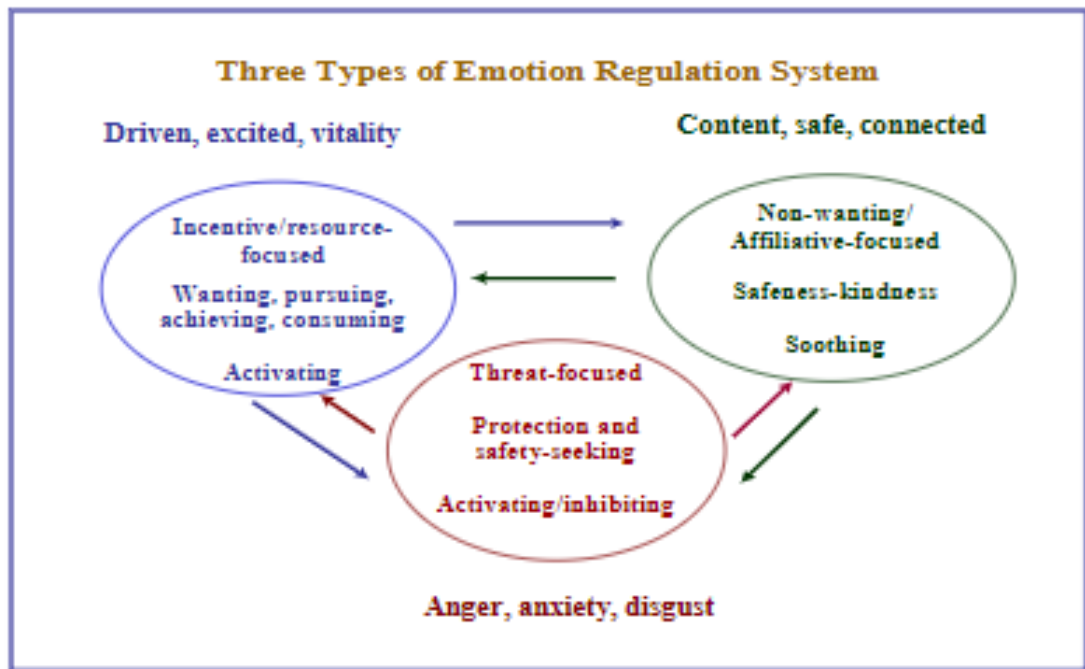
When you are ready, get up and carry on with your day.

Exercise: Creating a Safe Place Imagery

Engage in your soothing rhythm breathing and when you're ready try to create a place in your mind – a place that could give you the feeling of safeness and calmness.

- Imagine looking around you, what can you see? It might be a beautiful wood where the leaves of the trees dance gently in the breeze. Powerful shafts of light caress the ground with brightness. Or it may be a beautiful beach with a crystal blue sea stretching out to the horizon where it meets the ice blue sky. Or relaxing next to a log fire.
- Now focus on what you can feel, like the sensation of the sun on your face or a breeze caressing your hair. Or can you feel soft, white fine sand underfoot, which is silky to the touch.
- Next think about what you can hear. Can you hear the rustle of the leaves on the trees, or birds, or crackling fire or the gentle hushing of the waves on the sand.
- Now think about whether you can smell anything such as the salty smell of the sea or the smell of wood smoke or a sweetness of the air.
- When you bring your safe place to mind allow your body to relax. Think about your facial expression; allow it to have a soft smile of pleasure at being there.
- Imagine that, *the place itself takes joy in you being here*. Allow yourself *to feel* how your safe place has pleasure in you being here. Explore your feelings when you imagine this place is happy with you being there. Even if it is just a fleeting sense of where the image might be, try to create an emotional connection to this place.

Exercise: Your Emotion Regulation System



What things make you experience threat, drive, and safety? Complete yours below:

