

Practitioner and Parent Practice

Compassion

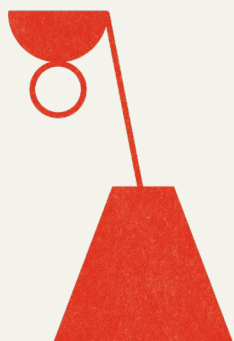


Feeling Supported: Recalling how others have comforted us can make us more compassionate.

Time Required: 15 minutes

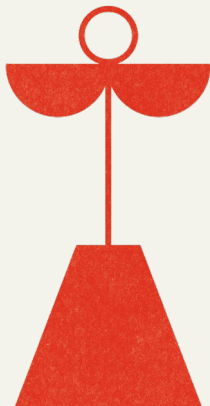
First, try this step-by-step activity for yourself and then guide the parents you support through the practice. During and after the activity, take a moment to pause and notice your thoughts, sensations, and feelings. Guide the parents you work with in doing the same.

Why you should try it



Most of us want to be kind and caring, but that can be easier said than done, especially when we feel stressed, threatened, or insecure. This exercise asks you to think about the people you turn to when you're distressed and recall times when you've felt comforted by them. Research suggests that increasing momentary feelings of comfort by thinking about supportive relationships can make us more trusting, compassionate, and helpful toward others in general.

Why it works



A great deal of research points to the importance of “attachment security,” a state that involves feelings of trust and comfort. When we feel secure, our energy can be more easily directed toward caring for others. Reflecting on the people in our life who love and support us can increase our feelings of security and also remind us of the qualities we want to embody when supporting others—thereby making us more likely to respond compassionately when we encounter someone in need.

How to do it⁴⁴

1

Make a list of the people who offer you comfort or security and consider:

- a. Who do you most like to spend time with?
- b. Who do you find it most challenging to be away from?
- c. Who do you want to talk to when you are worried about something?
- d. Who do you turn to when you are feeling down?
- e. Who will always be there for you?
- f. Who do you want to share your successes with?

It is ok if the same person keeps coming to mind some or all of the time.

2

Write down six positive qualities that these people strongly demonstrate.

3

Next, visualize a specific situation when you felt distressed or worried, and one of these people comforted and helped you.

4

Write a brief description of the situation and how you felt.