



California Social Emotional
Learning Modules

Professional Learning Toolkit

7.2 SELF-COMPASSION
for Educators
8.2 SELF-COMPASSION
for Students

Greater Good in Education



Topics 7 and 8: Mindfulness and Well-Being

Topic and Module Overview

Caring for Ourselves: The Science of Emotional Resilience	MOD 1.1	Understanding Your Emotions
	MOD 1.2	Navigating Your Emotions
	MOD 1.3	How to Be Kind to Yourself
	MOD 1.4	How to Be Compassionate Without Suffering So Much
	MOD 1.5	Self-Awareness, Emotional Resilience, and Equity
Safety & Belonging in Classrooms and Schools	MOD 2.1	Why Belonging Matters
	MOD 2.2	Knowing Ourselves First: Surfacing Our Beliefs About Social and Emotional Well-Being and Belonging in Schools
	MOD 2.3	The Questions of Belonging: Interventions to Help Students Feel Like They Belong
	MOD 2.4	Meeting Students' Psychological Needs to Help Them Feel Like They Belong
	MOD 2.5	Cultivating Belonging Through Teacher-Student and Peer Relationships
	MOD 2.6	Building a Belonging School Through Trust and Psychological Safety
Teaching for Social, Emotional, and Academic Development	MOD 3.1	Preparing to Support SEL in Classrooms
	MOD 3.2	Explicit SEL Instruction
	MOD 3.3	Planning for Social-Emotional-Academic Development
	MOD 3.4	Integrating SEL into Learning
Committing to Racial Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	MOD 4.1	Unpacking Our Identities: Addressing Identity, Power, and Privilege
	MOD 4.2	Engaging in Meaningful Conversations about Race and Equity
	MOD 4.3	SEL Instruction Through a Culturally Responsive Lens
	MOD 4.4	Elevating Student Voices
	MOD 4.5	Evaluating Our Systems, Policies, and Procedures
Addressing Trauma and Adversity: Supporting Student Mental Health	MOD 5.1	Defining and Understanding Trauma and Adversity
	MOD 5.2	Recognizing the Signs of Childhood Trauma and Adversity
	MOD 5.3	Creating Healing-Centered Environments
	MOD 5.4	Developmental and Other Strategies for Healing
	MOD 5.5	Mental Health Crisis Intervention: Steps and Strategies
Supporting SEL through Family and Community Engagement	MOD 6.1	Exploring Family and Community Engagement with an SEL Lens
	MOD 6.2	Building Partnerships with and Honoring the Contributions of Diverse Families
	MOD 6.3	Listening and Communicating Effectively with Families
	MOD 6.4	Expanded Learning and SEL: Collaborating Across In-School and OST Contexts
	MOD 6.5	Aligning around SEL Through Community Partnerships




Topic and Module Overview

Mindfulness and Well-Being for Educators	MOD 7.1	Purpose for Educators
	MOD 7.2	Self-Compassion for Educators
	MOD 7.3	Kindness and Compassion for Educators
	MOD 7.4	Gratitude for Educators
	MOD 7.5	Awe for Educators
	MOD 7.6	Courage for Educators
	MOD 7.7	Empathy for Educators
	MOD 7.8	Mindfulness for Educators
	MOD 7.9	Humility for Educators
	MOD 7.10	Forgiveness for Educators
	MOD 7.11	Hope for Educators
Mindfulness and Well-Being for Students	MOD 8.1	Purpose for Students
	MOD 8.2	Self-Compassion for Students
	MOD 8.3	Kindness and Compassion for Students
	MOD 8.4	Gratitude for Students
	MOD 8.5	Awe for Students
	MOD 8.6	Courage for Students
	MOD 8.7	Empathy for Students
	MOD 8.8	Mindfulness for Students
	MOD 8.9	Humility for Students
	MOD 8.10	Forgiveness for Students
	MOD 8.11	Hope for Students



Learning Objectives

TOPICS 7.2 and 8.2 SELF-COMPASSION for Educators and Students

Module	7.2 Self-Compassion for Educators	8.2 Self-Compassion for Students
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the elements of self-compassion and the research behind it ● Distinguish between self-compassion and self-esteem ● Discover the fierceness of self-compassion— how it is not weak ● Consider how self-compassion can support our teaching ● Explore how to build our self-compassion muscles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the elements of self-compassion and the research behind it ● Explore the benefits of self-compassion for students' well-being, academics, and social lives ● Discover how self-compassion is not a soft skill, but rather a strong choice ● Explore how educators can support students in building their self-compassion skills
California Standards for Teaching Profession (CSTPs) 2024 CSTPs (full.pdf) 	<p>CSTP 1: Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning 1A: Focus on Students (1A-1); 1B: Knowledge of Students (1B-5); Diversity and Equity (1D-2)</p> <p>CSTP 2: Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning 2A: Learning Environment (2A-1); 2B: Student Behavior (2B-5); 2D: Inclusive Environment (2D-3)</p> <p>CSTP 3: Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Students 3A: Knowledge of Subject Matter and Pedagogy (3A-3); 3D: Content and Skills across Subjects (3D-4)</p> <p>CSTP 4: Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students 4C: Facilitating Instruction for Student Learning (4C-3)</p> <p>CSTP 5: Assessing Students for Learning 5A: Understanding and Using Assessments (5A-3)</p> <p>CSTP 6: Developing as a Professional Educator 6A: Reflection on Practice (6A-1); 6B: Focused Professional Learning (6B-3); 6C: Collaboration with Colleagues (6C-3); 6D: Collaboration with Families, Guardians, and the Community (6D-2); 6E: Ethical Conduct and Professional (6E-2); 6F: Activating Access and Equity (6F-1); 6G: Personal Growth and Well-Being (6G-1)</p>	
CA TSEL Guidelines	Link Objectives to Developmental Indicators in California Transformative SEL Competencies . The California Department of Education (CDE) aims to support and advance the efforts of educators across California who are working to fully integrate systemic SEL and equity by building on the promise of T-SEL as a concept. Sourced from CDE (July 2023)	



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.2 and 8.2 **SELF-COMPASSION** for Educators and Students

Articles (Adult-Oriented)

[The Power of Self-Compassion](#) Kristin Neff discusses how self-compassion differs from self-esteem, why self-compassion can be hard for Americans, and the transformative effect it had on her own life.

[The Five Myths of Self-Compassion](#) Kristin Neff tackles the misconceptions that stop us from being kinder to ourselves.

[How Self-Compassion Can Help Prevent Teacher Burnout](#) Tips for keeping cool and being kind to yourself, even in the midst of a stressful situation.

[Make Self-Compassion One of Your New Year's Resolutions](#) Many of us instinctively beat ourselves up for failing to meet our goals, but there is an alternative.

[How to Bring Self-Compassion to Work with You](#) We need to move past self-criticism and negative self-talk to be happier, more resilient, and more successful at work.

[Want to Change Your Life? Try Self-Compassion](#) Change can be hard. But if we practice self-compassion, it's much more likely we'll succeed.

[Can Self-Compassion Overcome Procrastination?](#) Putting something off can trigger a downward spiral. But a recent study suggests that being kind to yourself can help you achieve your goals.

[How Self-Compassion Beats Rumination](#) A new study suggests that self-compassion improves mood, largely by helping us avoid negative rumination.

[Why Women Need Fierce Self-Compassion](#) Compassion isn't always soft and gentle; sometimes it means being forceful and fierce.

[Can Self-Compassion Make You Better at Public Speaking?](#) Don't imagine your audience in their underwear. Instead, try being kind to yourself.

[Four Ways Self-Compassion Can Help You Fight for Social Justice](#) Fierce self-compassion can help us cultivate the clarity and courage to stand up to oppression.

[What Self-Compassion Feels Like in Your Body](#) At a recent GGSC workshop with Kristin Neff and Shauna Shapiro, our managing editor discovered the visceral power of compassion.

[Why Is Self-Compassion So Hard for Some People?](#) There's a different way to practice self-compassion if the typical reflective exercises don't work so well for you.

[Can Self-Compassion Increase Resilience in the Face of Discrimination](#) A new study suggests that there are limits to what self-compassion can do for targets of racism.

[Can Being Kind to Yourself Help Alleviate Boredom?](#) A new study finds that people who are more self-compassionate feel less bored and have a greater sense of meaning in life.

[How to Become a Friend to Yourself](#) Kristin Neff and Chris Germer explain how self-compassion can transform the way you handle suffering.



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.2 and 8.2 **SELF-COMPASSION** for Educators and Students

Articles (Student-oriented)

[Three Simple Ways for Kids to Grow Their Self-Compassion](#) Caregivers can help children be kinder to themselves and replace a self-critical voice with a friendly one.

[Can Self-Compassion Help Trans Teens Thrive?](#) Transgender teens face heightened risks of depression and suicide— but practicing self-compassion can improve their mental health and resilience.

[How to Help Teens Put Less Pressure on Themselves](#) Self-compassion can help teens who are struggling with toxic perfectionism.

[How to Help Teens Become More Self-Compassionate](#) Self-compassion may be key to supporting teen mental health. Dr. Karen Bluth shares lessons from her mindful self-compassion program.

[Five Ways to Help Teens Feel Good about Themselves](#) As teens struggle with anxiety and perfectionism, how can we help them like who they are?

[Can Self-Compassion Improve Well-Being in Teens?](#) Two new studies investigate self-compassion in adolescents.

Customizable Slides for Students

[What is Self-Compassion?](#)

Download and customize these slides to teach students about self-compassion.

Videos

Self-Compassion for Educators [Part 1](#) [1:21:48] and [Part 2](#) [1:01:33] Workshop given by pioneering self-compassion researcher Kristin Neff at the first annual Greater Good Science Center Summer Institute for Educators.

[The Three Components of Self-Compassion](#) [6:18] Kristin Neff, the world's leading researcher of self-compassion and founder of the Mindful Self-Compassion program, explains the core features of self-compassion.

[Being Kinder to Yourself](#) [3:10] When you're caring so much for other people, how do you deal with your own stress? Psychiatrist Elizabeth Guinto tries a practice to be kinder to herself.



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.2 and 8.2 **SELF-COMPASSION** for Educators and Students

Podcasts and Happiness Breaks

[Quieting Your Inner Critic](#) [14:48] Are you too hard on yourself? Our Happiness Guinea Pig spent most of his life behind bars. Discover the research-tested practice that helped him quiet his inner critic.

[Being Kinder to Yourself](#) [20:44] When you're helping others cope with stress and anxiety, how do you deal with your own? Psychiatrist Elizabeth Guinto tries a practice to be kinder to herself.

[How to Feel Better About Yourself](#) [19:29] Self-compassion reduces our feelings of shame and self-doubt. We explore a practice to help quiet our inner critic with kindness.

[When It's Time to Face Your Fears](#) [20:23] What happens when we feel compassion for the things that scare us? Shabazz Larkin shares what it's like to face some of his deepest fears.

[Give Yourself a Break](#) [24:53] Want to calm your inner critic? Our guest tries a practice to find more self-compassion during uncertain times.

[How Holding Yourself Can Reduce Stress](#) [16:47] Simple actions like consciously placing a hand on your heart or hugging yourself can lower your cortisol levels, heart rate, and help you feel less stressed. Our guest tries a practice in self-soothing touch.

[If You Want to Be More Productive, Cut Yourself Some Slack](#) [13:31] Feeling hard on yourself? Pinterest co-founder Evan Sharp learns to quiet his inner critic and tap into his highest potential.

[Happiness Break: What To Do When You're Struggling, With Spring Washam](#) [8:47] Treating yourself with kindness reduces anxiety and improves coping skills. Spring Washam encourages us to be more self-compassionate through a short guided meditation.

[Happiness Break: How to Be Your Own Best Friend, with Kristin Neff](#) [9:16] Show yourself real self-kindness in less than 10 minutes with this self-compassion break guided by psychologist Kristin Neff.

[Happiness Break: Making Space for You, with Alex Elle](#) [6:02] Consider what you want to make space for in your life in this 6-minute contemplation guide by Alex Elle.



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.2 and 8.2 **SELF-COMPASSION** for Educators and Students

PRACTICES for Students

Lower Elementary/Upper Elementary/Middle School

[Loving-Kindness Buddy Wishes](#) (PreK—Upper Elementary) Students send kind wishes to themselves, a peer, and to people in their community. (less than 15 minutes)

[Wishes for the World: A Loving-Kindness Activity](#) (PreK—Upper Elementary) Students “fill” an imaginary ball with friendly wishes and “send it off” to the world. (less than 15 minutes)

[Pleasant Events Calendar for Students](#) (Upper Elementary—College) Students learn to care for themselves by planning enjoyable activities to combat stress and anxiety. [Parent/Caregiver practice version](#) (less than 15 minutes)

[Seeds of Self-Compassion](#) (PreK—Lower Elementary) Students build their self-compassion vocabulary by writing or drawing positive affirmations about themselves. (less than 1 hour)

[Flipping Complaints Into Gratitude](#) (Middle School) Students practice turning complaints into gratitude statements, and learn they have a choice to replace negative thoughts with more positive and optimistic ones. (less than 30 minutes)

Middle School/High school

[My Mind is a Cast of Characters: Exploring the Nature of Our Thoughts](#) (Middle-High School) Students do a brief role play that demonstrates how the “voices in our head” impact our ability to concentrate. (less than 30 minutes)

[How Would You Treat a Friend](#) (High School) A brief writing exercise that will make you aware of the difference between the way you speak to your friends and yourself during difficult times, while encouraging you to be kind to yourself. (less than 30 minutes)

[A Moment for Me: A Self-Compassion Break for Teens](#) (Middle-High School) A quick self-compassion practice that can be applied throughout the day whenever difficult emotions arise. (less than 15 minutes)

[Put Down the Put Downs](#) (Upper Elementary—High School) Students reflect on and listen to the feelings generated by put-downs (hurtful names and behavior), and brainstorm approaches to ending this problem in the classroom. (less than 1 hour)

[Self-Care Circle](#) (Middle-High School) Students sit in a circle, center themselves with a Mindfulness Moment, and reflect on and share ways they can practice self-care. (less than 30 minutes)



MODULE 7.2

SELF-COMPASSION for Educators



TAKE IT DEEPER:

Self-Compassion Letter

Writing is a powerful way to process our thoughts and even retrain our brains to think differently. Research has shown that the act of writing self-compassionate letters to ourselves can significantly improve our mental well-being.

Take a moment to think of a challenging moment you had today. Describe in detail the emotions and thoughts towards yourself that arose during that moment.

Now, write yourself a letter. Write as though a friend told you about their hard day and you are now responding to them. Think about how you might first acknowledge their feelings and even show them acceptance and forgiveness for mistakes or missteps they had. Write freely, this letter is just for you.

You can store the letter away. It can be nice to read it at a later date, perhaps when you have another challenging day— for a moment of compassion, from yourself.



MODULE 8.2

SELF-COMPASSION for Students



TAKE IT DEEPER:

Practicing Self-Compassionate Responses

Changing how we talk to ourselves takes practice. By becoming aware of how we might naturally feel or talk to ourselves in challenging situations, we can then practice shifting to more positive, self-compassionate self-talk.

Use this template to spark a group discussion or as an activity for older students to fill out individually. Invite them to think of 3 to 5 challenges they have been having lately, and how each one makes them feel.

Next, have them think of positive, or self-compassionate, things they could say to themselves to shift how they feel and/or respond to the challenge.

Challenge	How I feel	Self-Compassionate Response

Discussion questions:

Are there some areas of your life in which you are harder on yourself than others?

What do you think would help you be kinder to yourself?



MODULE 8.2

SELF-COMPASSION for Students



TAKE IT DEEPER:

How to support students who are overly self-critical

We are all critical of ourselves sometimes, but some students may struggle with self-criticism more than others. How can we support these students to be kinder to themselves?

Start by sharing with students that we all differ in our ability to be kind to ourselves. Some may find it harder than others. But, with practice, all of our brains have the ability to build self-compassion muscles.

For those times when practicing kindness towards ourselves is really hard, a reframing exercise may help by shifting negative self-talk to positive self talk.

Using the template below, explain to students that in the left-hand column, they can write something they're struggling with and how they currently talk to themselves about it. Then, in the right-hand column, write a few phrases that are kinder and gentler, perhaps how they would talk to a friend who had this challenge.

For example, if a student writes "I am just so bad at math, I can't get it," they can respond with, "Math is hard. A lot of people find math hard. I am proud of myself for continuing to practice and to try even when it doesn't come easy to me. My brain is capable of learning with practice."

Negative Self-Talk

Positive Self-Talk

Encourage students to post the positive self-talk/affirmations somewhere they can easily see them on a daily basis.

You may ask them to consider the question, "What do you think would help you use positive self-talk more"?

