

Picking yourself up group outline

Introduction	Boundaries and safety chat.	5 mins
	SOBER Breathing space	
	What is/isn't mindfulness? Why do it for addiction? <i>Inc importance of kindness to self in reducing relapse – but needs practising, like building muscle.</i>	
Suggested Practice	Breath and body → bring to mind someone who you feel warm towards: “may you be safe; may you find peace; may you know kindness”, then same to self briefly, then breath.	15 mins
Inquiry	Inquire about today's practice; then include home practice too	10 mins
<i>Halfway point – gauge energy in room and move/ground as required</i>		
Exercise	Exploring self-compassion: Ask, “what comes to mind when I say the phrase ‘self-compassion’?” Discuss issues that arise and, if it doesn't come up, ask if anyone thinks: a) they need to be hard on themselves or they won't ever change. b) it sounds hippyish. Discuss. (Can mention the example of training a dog to show need for kindness to encourage change). Give out worksheets, folded so they can see the top two boxes only. Invite them to imagine they are struggling (read out the top of the worksheet); write in boxes what they typically say to themselves and what kind of tone – and what they do (could do in pairs if group is engaged). Now invite them to imagine someone they care about is really struggling with something (bottom half of sheet) and do the same. Discuss what they notice. <i>Ask how might things change if you said and did the friend things to yourself?</i> Discuss. They may want to write this down too. Introduce the self-compassion break: think of a recent time when struggling (0-5 on scale of 0-10 difficulty) and guide them through: 1 acknowledge → 2 shared humanity → kindness to self (can mention things like hug/hand on heart/holding hands). Allow time to write their phrases on handout. Could read Kindness poem if time.	20 mins
	Closing	

Picking Yourself Up (Not Putting Yourself Down!) worksheet

You are beating yourself up – you've done something wrong, or something like that and you're feeling really bad about yourself. What do you typically say to yourself?

“

”

How do you say it? (tone, attitude)

What do you do?

A friend or someone you care about is beating themselves up – they are feeling really bad about themselves. What might you say to them?

“

”

How might you say it? (tone, attitude)

What might you do?

How might things change if you spoke to yourself like you do to your friend/loved one?

Picking Yourself Up (Not Putting Yourself Down!) handout

When we put ourselves down we create a negative feedback loop that makes us feel worse, and increases the risk of picking up a substance to escape the criticism. So it's really important to practise being kind to yourself, even when it feels odd, to help avoid relapse.

In today's meditation we practised bringing to mind another being that we care about, and said something like, "*May you be safe; may you be well; may you live with ease and kindness.*" Then we turned this on ourselves briefly and wished ourselves well. Practising well-wishing (not worrying whether we feel it or not!), can help us find it easier to access this inner support at difficult times.

Self-compassion is something strong people practise: it is one of the most powerful sources of coping and resilience available to us. When we go through major life crises, self-compassion can make all the difference in our ability to survive - and even thrive (look up Post-Traumatic Growth!).

But will it make me complacent? It's true that we need to see our mistakes in order to put them right, but there are different ways of doing this. Think of how you'd feel if you made a mistake and someone you respected said, "Stupid idiot! Why do you always mess up?!" and compare it to, "Hey it's no big deal - it happens to all of us. What can I do to help?" Think of how you'd train a puppy - if you beat it every time it does the smallest thing wrong, it will want to run away. In order to change our own behaviour and stay healthy, we NEED to treat ourselves with kindness.

Self-compassion break in three stages - find your own wording that works for you, and say it to yourself when you're struggling - see what happens.

1. **Acknowledge the difficulty**

Instead of trying to escape the feelings (we know that doesn't work!), saying something like, "this is hard"; "this is really tough"; "I'm really struggling"

2. **Remind yourself everyone suffers**

It's a human thing to suffer - but part of it is feeling very alone, so it helps to remind ourselves it's a human thing, saying something like, "everyone feels lost/stuck sometimes"; "we all feel awful sometimes" "I'm not alone".

3. **Kindness**

Acting out the motions of being kind to yourself, whether you feel it or not. Maybe holding hands together/hugging yourself/something reassuring - and saying something to yourself like, "you'll be ok"; "I'm here for you"; "I care about you".

Your three phrases:

1. (acknowledge)_____

2. (common humanity)_____

3. (kindness)_____

From Mindful Self-Compassion (Neff & Germer)