

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND GROUP

How to be a good friend to yourself and so
get life working better for you.

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Compassionate Friend Group

This group hopes to give people the chance to build up their self-confidence and discuss their experiences with others in a similar position.

The idea is:

- People in crisis can often be very hard on themselves.
- What you need to get through a crisis is support and encouragement.
- YOU are the best person to give yourself support and encouragement.
- Often people are excellent at looking after others; but not so good at looking after themselves!
- This group is designed to do something about this situation by looking at practical ways in which you can make friends with yourself.
- The idea is that this will help you feel better about yourself, and so be better able to meet the challenges that life offers.

We will look at some things that we do or don't do

- Things you say to yourself- are they encouraging or discouraging?
- Noticing the good things that happen.
- Seeing that they happen more.
- How do you treat yourself compared to how a friend would treat you?
- What gets in the way of good things? How you think about yourself? Do you tend to be more critical or more positive?

“The Bully”

Consider what it's like to live with someone who is critical, discouraging

1. What might that sort of person say or do?
2. What might it feel like to experience that sort of behaviour?
3. What would it do to your self-esteem/confidence?

“The Good Friend”

Consider what it's like to live with someone who is supportive and encouraging

1. What might that sort of person say or do?
2. What might it feel like to experience that sort of behaviour?
3. What would it do to your self-esteem/confidence?

They are Laugh
with
them

Trustworthy

Have fun
with them

Listen to
what we say

Supportive

Loyal

Caring and
kind

Understanding

They are
truthful and
honest

Although we might not always be aware of it consciously, we talk to ourselves all the time
This is called 'internal dialogue'

- It is quite ok and normal - everyone does it!
- An example ... I fancy a cuppa ... better finish this first
- BUT ... sometimes the dialogue can become very critical and we can give ourselves a hard time about virtually everything
- Where does the critical voice come from? Possibly an important relationship e.g. parents, partner etc. But it is important to put the past in the past and be able to move on from this learned way of thinking.

Treating ourselves as a "Good Friend"

What would a good friend say to you when things are difficult?

How might the good friend encourage you?

Try friendly voice on yourself.

Examples of friendly voice



What's best for you is best for you

Even small things are good, and can be built upon

Practice!!!

Practice in pairs - One person gives an example of recent critical voice and the other helps to suggest a friendly alternative.

Change is Difficult!

Needs lots of practice so don't expect this to work straight away. It took lots of practice for the critical voice to get so good!!

Stages of change:

1. Notice the familiar put downs (e.g. "should", "ought", "must", "must not", "never", "always",

"stupid", "clumsy" +++)

2. Ask yourself "What would I say to my best friend ..."

3. Try the Friendly Voice on yourself

Homework

• Notice critical voice experiences (use the monitoring chart)

• Work out Friendly Voice responses and use these

• Could help each other out - often easier to come up with a friendly voice for someone else.

Compassionate Friend Record

Record 'good friend' encouragement and what it helps you to do

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
AM							
PM							
Evening							

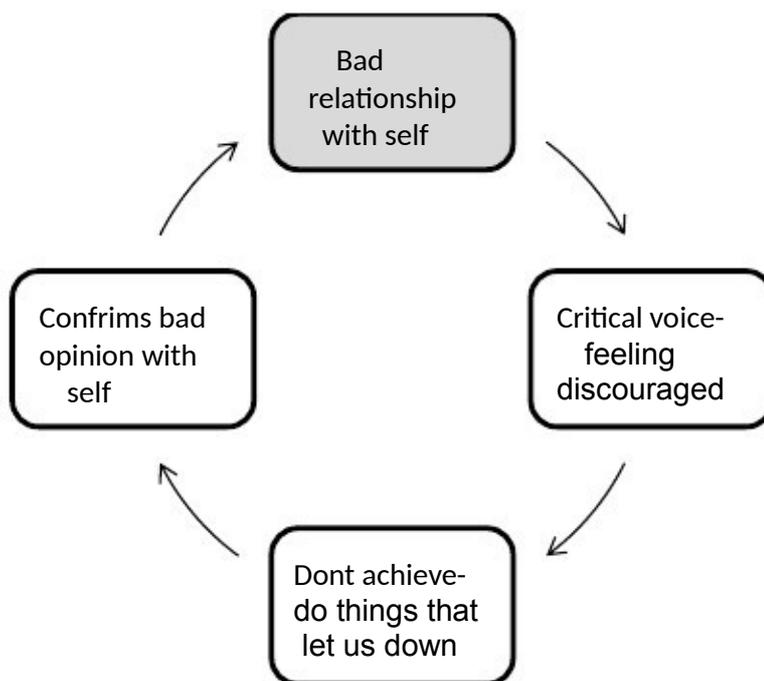
Compassionate Friend Group: SESSION 2

'Friends and Honesty' – Although a good friend is supportive, they also have your best interests at heart

- Being honest with yourself is important, as honesty also leads to trust, and this will help you to do what is best for yourself.
- So your friendly voice would NOT encourage you to do something that is bad for you (e.g. drink / self-harm)
- Instead of acting on impulse, he/she would encourage you to stop, think, and do something less harmful to you
- How easy would people find this?

Breaking the Vicious circle

- We can often get stuck in a vicious cycle of using our critical voice, and consequently reinforcing a bad relationship with ourselves.



- In order to move past this and develop a better relationship with ourselves, we need to break the vicious cycle.
- We can do this at any point during the cycle, by noticing our critical voice, challenging it, and replacing it with a friendly alternative

Pair work

Practice in pairs - One person gives an example of recent critical voice and the other helps to suggest a friendly alternative. Perhaps choose a situation where you need the friendly voice to stop you doing something that is harmful to you, or to encourage you to do something you are avoiding.

Homework

Practice using the friendly voice in new situations. Use the monitoring chart to record when you notice the critical voice and practice replacing this with a friendly alternative (that encourages you where necessary, but also has your best interests at heart).

Compassionate Friend Group: SESSION 3

What gets in the Way of using the Friendly voice?

- Thinking you are not worth it
- Critical voice is too powerful
- Anxiety making behaviour change difficult
- Long habit - difficult to notice in time.

Ways of dealing with these:

- 'Not worth it' is just a thought. Do you weigh up other people and think whether they are worth it? A bad thinking habit - be aware of the thought and let it go.
- When it feels too difficult to follow 'good friend' advice to try new things, or to not follow bad habits, because of anxiety - use long, slow outbreath breathing to manage the anxiety, and/or bring yourself into the present using mindfulness. That way you will be able to listen to your 'internal good friend'.

Discussion 1

What effects does using the friendly voice have?

- These may include:
 - easier to problem solve effectively
 - encouragement to try new things that feel difficult
 - allow yourself nice things / to be nice to yourself
 - stop you treating yourself badly
 - stop yourself doing things that are tempting but bad for you

Discussion 2

What are the effects when we are unable to use the friendly voice?

Pair work

Practice in pairs - One person gives an example of recent critical voice and the other helps to suggest a friendly alternative. Try choosing a more challenging example this time.

Moving forward

In order to move forward we need to build up the strength of our friendly voice, and be able to use it in a variety of situations (when things go well, when they are more challenging, trying something new).

Summing up

- What changes people have managed to make since starting the group?
- How people can keep the friendly voice gathering strength? What do we need to do and say in order for this happen?