

the flows of compassion

The flows of compassion help us feel cared for, to care for others and also to care for ourselves. Ideally, we would as healthy functioning humans have the ability to care for others, allow ourselves to be cared for others and also feel care for ourselves.

There are three flows of compassion: Self to others, Others to Self, Self to Self. Trauma, Mental health conditions, Severe stress, Self beliefs and Past experiences (such as not being valued, bullied, cheated on) all can severely impact and block the flows of compassion. For example, if we are not valued by others for a period of time we are likely to not feel cared for by others. However, we need the care of others - it has benefits; peer support, confidence, nurturing, resources etc.

Like building muscles in the gym, emotional capabilities like the flows of compassion can be practiced, worked out and strengthened.

or difficult to be kind to themselves.

For some it is very hard to accept care

Here are some exercises to try:

* In all of the exercises, a friendly face expression, a warm voice tone and caring intention help.

1. **Self to others** - with a friend or loved one, try to spend some time really connected to them or caring for them. Make it more formal: Stand in front of each other, Set a timer on a phone for 1-5 mins. Trying to send them feelings of care.

2. **Others to self** - go slow, this can be difficult. Get a friend or loved one to help you - stand in front of each other. They are going to try to send you feelings of care and you are going to try to receive it. Set a timer on a phone for 1-5 mins

3. **Self to Self** - set a timer for 1-5 minutes and try sending non-judgmental care and kindness to yourself.

